Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)

Prevention of Domestic Violence against Immigrant and Refugee Women: Prevention through Early Intervention

Online Self-Directed Learning Modules

The project is made possible through funding provided by the Government of Ontario, Ontario Women’s Directorate.
Welcome to the Ontario Council of Agencies (OCASI) online self-directed learning modules on prevention of domestic violence against immigrant and refugee women.

About Us

The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) was founded in 1978 as a Council of autonomous community-based agencies that serve the immigrant communities of Ontario. OCASI acts as a collective voice for immigrant-serving agencies, and coordinates responses to shared needs and concerns. Its mission is to achieve equality, access and full participation for immigrants and refugees in every aspect of Canadian life.

OCASI members are primarily service providers that offer programs and services to immigrants and refugees. These services support the immediate settlement needs of persons newly arrived in Canada, as well as long-term settlement and related needs. Many service consumers are members of racialized communities and many are women.
OCASI Online Self-Directed Learning Modules - Background

The online self-directed learning modules are part of the OCASI Domestic Violence: Prevention through Early Intervention project that has developed and delivered training for settlement service providers and any workers who frequently provide services to immigrant, refugee and undocumented victims, but who do not have familiarity with woman abuse issues. The online self-directed learning modules are aimed at those who work at settlement agencies, ethno-specific associations and other immigrant service organizations.

This online component is, thus, meant as a basic course, aimed at filling the gap in knowledge for those service providers. The modules are not targeted to workers who have advanced knowledge of issues pertaining to domestic violence against women.

Project Objectives

- To enhance the professional competency and skills level of service providers by:
  - Equipping workers to recognize signs of abuse and high risk
  - Enhancing the confidence of the frontline workers through knowledge building and discussion with peers
  - Helping workers to discern when and how to refer
- To improve service delivery to victims of domestic violence through enhanced coordination and linkages among immigrant service workers and other service and community workers
- To facilitate the networking and sharing of resources, information, innovative approaches and expertise among service providers, their organizations and newcomer communities
- To ensure sensitive and timely response through increased coordination among service providers

Acknowledgements

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Debbie Douglas
Executive Director
OCASI

April 2007

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Anti-Oppression Anti-Racism Framework

The OCASI Prevention of Domestic Violence against Immigrant and Refugee Women training is conducted from an Anti-Oppression Anti-Racism Framework. The training acknowledges that domestic violence against women and children occurs as a result of a power imbalance. In society, women and children experience inequality and are susceptible to abuse. This training aims to contribute to work that is being undertaken by many organizations and individuals to remove barriers of oppression from the lives of all women and children. The training strives to promote equality at all levels, including assessment, intervention, education, advocacy and collaboration, when addressing domestic violence in the lives of women and children. OCASI recognizes that oppression and racism with regard to women and children is a form of violence.
Free Participant Registration

Even though there is no cost to undertaking this course, in order to help us to better meet your needs, participants must complete the free registration using the form provided below before they can be able to take the course. Please take a minute to complete the registration form below. The information provided here is for purposes of improving the online training and better meeting participant needs. The information is protected under the privacy protection Act and will not be passed to a second party.

First Name:
Last Name:
Male [ ] Female [ ]
Position:
Agency:
City:
Province:
Postal code:
Tel.: Ext.
E-mail:
Are you interested in learning about future related workshops and related-events? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Submit

The information that you provide is used by OCASI for purposes of improving the online learning and for better meeting current and potential participant needs. The information is protected under the privacy protection Act and will not be passed to a third party.
Guest Registration

If you do not wish to proceed as a learner, you can still review the material as a **GUEST**.

Would you like to be given updates or sent information on related events? Yes [ ] No[ ]

If yes, please provide E-mail:
OCASI Online Self-Directed Learning Modules - Training Goal and Focus of Training

The goal of the online self-directed learning modules is to enhance service to immigrant, refugee and undocumented women at risk of domestic violence. The training, which builds on the current settlement service interventions, focuses on:

- Better understand the dynamics of domestic violence
- An appreciation of how women and children are entangled in a cycle of violence
- Greater awareness of the cultural and societal circumstances, including the immigration status of a woman, that pose unique barriers to immigrant women, with respect to domestic violence
- Better understanding of how the barriers impact their decisions
- More knowledge of the legal framework that relates to immigrants, refugees and undocumented women in Ontario
- Improved ability to identify local services and resources
- Better appreciation the need for interagency coordination and case management
- Skills to make effective referrals
- Understand the need for self care, when helping others

Because the online self-directed learning modules are designed for service providers who do not advanced knowledge of domestic violence issues, the training provides basic information to help learners to recognize signs of abuse and to make effective referral to appropriate workers who have the qualifications and experience needed to assist abused women. The material on public education and inter-agency collaboration is included to stimulate discussion on how inter-agency collaboration can enhance prevention of domestic violence against immigrant women.
Learning Outcomes

It is expected that, at the end of the training, participants will possess:

- Better understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence and an appreciation of how women and children are entangled in a cycle of violence
- Deeper understanding of how cultural and societal circumstances, including the immigration status of a woman, pose unique barriers to immigrant women, with respect to domestic violence, and how related barriers impact their decisions, creating the necessity for service providers to be culturally competent
- Improved ability to make effective referrals and to identify local services and resources
- Greater appreciation of the need for interagency coordination and case management
- Greater awareness of the important role that education and advocacy play in preventing and responding to domestic violence
- Enhanced ability to take care of the self, and less guilt about not helping more
- More knowledge of the legal framework that relates to immigrants, refugees and undocumented women in Ontario, and better understanding of how the legal context can be utilized to prevent and address domestic violence
Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I undertake this particular training in prevention of domestic violence against immigrant and refugee women?

Although considerable domestic violence training currently exists, this training is unique because it aims at filling the gap in basic knowledge for immigrant service workers.

Online self-directed learning modules enable individuals that are unable to attend traditional workshops to obtain information in an organized form and to get knowledge at a pace and time that is suitable to their individual learning style and schedule.

The content of Module 5 has also been geared to provide information on some of the local services available in local regions, as a means of stimulating a review of facilities and services that exist in each learner’s vicinity. That information has been compiled from updates provided by some of the project facilitators.

The training has been developed because of an identified need for frontline workers to learn about domestic abuse and to learn to recognize signs of abuse. It is, however, very important that women victims do not become the learning tools in this educational process. With these two concerns in mind, the training focuses on:

- The knowledge needed by frontline workers in contact with immigrant and refugee women
- The need for a frontline worker to locate oneself in relation to other staff in one’s own organization as well as other organizations to whom victims might be referred
- Recognizing how one’s own personal predispositions (including preconceptions and biases and beliefs about class and culture) can have an influence on service provision
- Knowing how to assess the level of risk
- Emphasizing the need for ongoing education to ensure effective service to abuse victims
- Determining when and how to refer, recognizing boundaries

We thank you for your taking this online self-directed learning course with a view to gaining more knowledge in the area of prevention of domestic violence for purposes of improving services to immigrant and refugee women at risk of domestic violence.

Are there admission criteria for this online course?

This training is made up of self-directed learning modules, designed to provide valuable information to assist service providers who serve immigrant and refugee women in Ontario. Based on this, there are no required criteria for undertaking this online self-directed learning course.
What process do I follow to undertake this online course?

To undertake the course, simply complete the above online free registration form. The information that you provide is used by OCASI for purposes of improving the online learning and for better meeting current and potential participant needs. The information is protected under the privacy protection Act and will not be passed to a third party.

Is there a cost for taking this course?

No, there is no financial cost.

Does taking the course require any special computer program?

No, the minimum requirement is an ordinary computer with an Internet browser and a word program.

Will I have to visit OCASI or attend additional face-to-face training as part of the process of undertaking this self-directed learning module?

No, you will not be required to go to OCASI as part of this program. However, OCASI might invite you to some related workshops and events in the future, if you indicate your interest on the free Registration form provided for this training. The aim will be to facilitate networking with other service providers and to enhance sharing of experience.

What is the advantage of taking this training?

Your current or future employer will appreciate your diligence and commitment to improving immigrant services through acquisition of more knowledge on how to recognize signs of abuse, how to assess and how and where to refer women who are victims of domestic abuse.

What Will I do if I do not understand an aspect of the training or if I have a question?

Even though these are self-directed learning modules, if you require some clarification or more information on an aspect of learning you can send an E-mail to domesticviolenceproject@ocasi.org
Is there a start or end date for enrolling or completing the training?

No, the advantage of self-directed learning modules is that the learner starts and proceeds at their own pace and in their time schedule.

How Was the Training Developed?

A Training Needs Survey, developed and placed on the OCASI website at the commencement of the project in 2005 and completed by 170 respondents, was instrumental in identifying priorities and developing training resources with respect to the following content areas:

1. **The dynamics of domestic violence:** Understanding domestic violence and its context; necessary information about violence for staff in contact with immigrant and refugee women; forms of abuse; dynamics of an abusive relationship; consequences of domestic violence, including impact on children; reluctance of some victims to reveal the abuse.

2. **Risk assessment:** The identification of indicators of domestic violence against women – recognizing signs and symptoms of abuse; how to determine whether a woman is in an abusive relationship; risk factors for abuse and conditions that predispose a woman to abuse.

3. **Ensuring early response:** Prevention and intervention; proactive assessment; levels of assessment; levels of intervention; guidelines for reporting domestic violence; understanding and supporting the survivor; education and awareness.

4. **Multicultural issues:** Violence in cross-cultural and/or religious context; working with women from other cultures, ethnicities, languages and religions; working with immigrant and racialized women; working with victims from other cultures; challenges faced by immigrant women; why many women find it difficult to end the violence; challenges associated with the diversity of Canadian society; service providers’ lack of cultural awareness.

5. **Strategies to improve services:** Interagency coordination and collaboration; description of interagency case management in domestic violence; case management – best practices; organizational approach to domestic violence – local policy and protocols; identifying local services and making effective referral to appropriate services; role of Executive Directors and senior management in interagency collaboration.

6. **Legal:** Issues that impact immigrant and refugee women in domestic violence situations.
Structure of the Training

- Content
- Objectives of module
- Resources
- Self-assessment Multiple Choice Questions at the beginning of each module
- Module
- Self-assessment exercises at the end of the module

Each module starts with a statement of the objectives.

OCASI is dedicated to pooling together learning resources to save you the time you would spend searching different websites for information. The list of resources is placed at the beginning of each chapter. To gain better understanding of the content in each chapter, it is advisable that you read the resources provided before proceeding to take the Multiple Choice test that precedes each chapter. The Multiple Choice test is to initiate thought and assist you to self-assess your knowledge of various aspects of domestic violence issues covered in the module before reading the respective module.

This process not only enables more extensive reading of the subject, but also enables self-testing prior to reading each module.

Before proceeding to the next module, please complete a self-assessment exercise, placed at the end of each module, to test the knowledge acquired in each module and knowledge from the reading resources outlined at the beginning of each module.
Module 1:

Understanding the Dynamics of Domestic Violence
1.1 Dynamics of Domestic Violence – Content

1.1 Dynamics of Domestic Violence – Content

1.2 Dynamics of Domestic Violence – Objectives

1.3 Dynamics of Domestic Violence -Resources

1.4 Dynamics of Domestic Violence - Multiple-Choice question and Answer

1.5 Introduction to Domestic Violence

1.5.1 Terms

1.6 Definition of Domestic Violence used in the OCASI Project

1.7 Characteristics of Domestic Violence

1.8 The Gendered Nature of Domestic Violence

1.9 Domestic Violence - Some Statistics

1.9.1 Canadian Statistics on Domestic Violence

1.9.2 Some Statistics on Prevalence and Severity of Abuse

1.9.3 Some Statistics on Effect on children

1.10 Seriousness of Domestic Violence

1.11 Forms of Domestic Violence

1.12 Dynamics of an Abusive Relationship

1.12.1 Characteristics of the Abuser and Circumstances of the Abused

1.12.2 Violence against Women: A Crime of Power and Control

1.12.3 The Cycle of Domestic Violence

1.13 Why Service Providers Need to be Alert

1.14 Dynamics of Domestic Violence – End of module Exercises
1.2 Dynamics of Domestic Violence – Objectives

Understanding the dynamics of domestic violence is important to effective prevention and response to violence against immigrant and refugee women. It is helpful for individuals who come into contact with immigrant women to have a clear understanding of what is meant by the term domestic violence, and to understand the nature and types of violence. This is especially important because abused victims are themselves sometimes not sure what constitutes domestic violence in Canada.

By the end of this module, the learner will possess better understanding of domestic violence and its context.

The objectives of this Module are:

- To create awareness and understanding of the scope of domestic violence, including core characteristics and types of violence
- To give course participants an opportunity to increase knowledge about the context of domestic violence
1.3 Dynamics of Domestic Violence - Resources

FREDA Centre for Research on Violence against Women and Children.
Statistical Highlights.
Violence against Women in Relationships
  • Spousal Homicide
  • Stalking/Criminal Harassment
Responses to Violence against Women in Relationships
  • Transition Houses and shelters
Effects of Spousal Violence on Children
These statistics are based on available data collated from a variety of different sources, some of which are quoted verbatim. Where possible, the most recent statistics have been used, though in many cases these are based on the 1993 Statistics Canada Survey on Violence against Women.

Shelternet.ca
Understanding Woman Abuse: How do I know? Types of Abuse; Power and Control Wheel; Effects of Abuse; Find a Shelter; All about Shelters; Women’s Stories.
Woman abuse is any threat, act or physical force that is used to create fear, control or intimidate you.

Public Health Agency of Canada: National Clearing House
  • What is Woman Abuse?
  • Forms of Abuse
  • How Widespread is Woman Abuse in Canada?
  • What Causes Woman Abuse?
  • Factors that Increase Risk
  • What are the Consequences of Woman Abuse?
What Barriers do Women Experience—when Disclosing Abuse, Seeking Support and Making Choices?
  • Emotional attachment to the abuser.
  • Fear.
  • Feelings of powerlessness
  • Economic dependence.
  • Isolation and lack of social support.
  • Lack of access to adequate or affordable shelter and housing. situation.
  • Language or other communication barriers. Lack of accessible, appropriate services and supports.
What Can You Do to Prevent and Respond to Abuse?
How Can You Support a Woman Who Has Been Abused?
  • You should familiarize yourself with the many tools that are available to you.
  • Where to Get Support if You Have Been Abused
If you are being abused or were abused in the past you are not alone. You can call and ask for support from:

- Shelter or transition home;
- Police department;
- Police or court victim services;
- Crisis centre or crisis line;
- Women’s centre;
- Sexual assault centre;
- Social service agency;
- Health care centre, clinic or hospital;
- Counsellor or psychologist; and
- Community centre or family centre.

Where to Get Help if You are Abusing Your Partner
Where to Get More Information about Woman Abuse

Assaulted Women’s Helpline webpage.
Some Facts about Abuse from
“What is violence against women?”

Health Canada Violence against Women Fact Sheets.
“How is Violence against Women Defined?
Acts that result, or are likely to result, in physical, sexual and psychological harm or suffering to a woman, including threats of such an act, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or private life.

Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women
Isolating the Barriers and Strategies for Prevention: A Kit about Violence and Women's Education for Adult Educators and Adult Learners.
Available at: http://www.nald.ca/canorg/cclow/doc/Isolatin/cover_1.PDF (April 2007).

Department of Justice Canada.
“Spousal Abuse: A Fact Sheet from the Department of Justice Canada”.
“Spousal abuse" refers to the violence or mistreatment that a woman or a man may experience at the hands of a marital, common-law or same-sex partner. Spousal abuse may happen at any time during a relationship, including while it is breaking down, or after it has ended. There are many different forms of spousal abuse, and a person may be subjected to more than one form. Available at: http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/fm/spouseafs.html (April 2007).

Department of Justice website: Family Violence Initiative
Spousal Abuse: A fact sheet from the Department of Justice Canada.
What Is Spousal Abuse?
How Widespread Is Spousal Abuse In Canada?
What Factors Contribute to Spousal Abuse?
What Are the Consequences of Spousal Abuse?
Preventing and Responding to Spousal Abuse
Suggested Resources on Spousal Abuse
Where to Get More Information on Spousal Abuse

Family Violence in Canada
This is the seventh annual Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile report produced by the
Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics under the Federal Family Violence Initiative. This annual report
provides the most current data on the nature and extent of family violence in Canada, as well as trends
over time, as part of this ongoing initiative to inform policy makers and the public about family violence
issues.

Each year the report has a different focus. This year, the focus is on sentencing in cases of family
violence, compared to non-family violence cases. This report examines the role of the victim-offender
relationship on sentencing outcomes by linking police and court statistical records from the Incident-based
Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey and the Adult Criminal Court Survey (ACCS). The report also
analyses spousal violence, violence against children and youth and violence against older adults by
utilising police-reported, victimisation, and homicide data.

Domestic Abuse Intervention Program. Domestic Violence: Power and Control Wheels. Duluth,
Minnesota
What Is Domestic Violence?; Myths and Facts; Statistics; Underlying Causes; the; Power and Control
Wheel; Fairness and Unfairness In Disagreements; Progression of Abuse; About The Perpetrators;
Warning Signs; Barriers to Leaving; I Know Someone Who Is Being Abused; Finding Safety and
Support; Acceptance Vs. Blame; Bill of Rights; Old Way of Thinking Vs. New Way of Thinking;
Stressing the Positive; Dating Violence; What Is Dating Violence?; Power and Control Wheel;
Emotional Abuse Checklist; Is He Really Going to Change This Time?; Healthy Relationships;
Couples Counseling Won't Stop The Violence
Children of Domestic Violence; Children of Domestic Violence Statistics
Available at: http://www.turningpointservices.org/tpmain.htm (April 2007).

Family of Woodstock Inc. Domestic Violence Services Program Domestic Violence
Dispelling the Myths.
Available at: http://www.familydomesticviolence.org/myths.html (April 2007).

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics
Family Violence in Canada
A Statistical Profile 2006
Available at:
1.4 Dynamics of Domestic Violence - Multiple-Choice question and Answer

Module 1: The dynamics of domestic violence

QUESTION

Which of the following best illustrates the Cycle of Violence?

A. Abusive behaviour in which attack from the husband is followed with abuse from the wife and then with abuse from the husband again.

B. A pattern of abusive behaviour in which the abusive partner seems to improve before the violence erupts again. This is followed by a period of calm before the acts of violence escalate again, following which there may be a renewed period of calm before new escalation of violent behaviour.

C. Behaviour involving a vicious cycle in which the next physical and emotional abuse is more severe than the previous one.

ANSWER

B.
1.5 Introduction to Domestic Violence

1.5.1 Terms

Even though domestic violence is a current formal term, there are other terms used to denote domestic violence, such as violence against women, domestic abuse, women abuse, spousal abuse, and family violence. Despite the wide variety of ways in which these terms have been defined by researchers and institutions, they all reflect the presence of:

- Acts of violence, intimidation, and other behaviour likely to cause harm
- Coercive behaviour
- Abusive, sometimes criminal, behaviour that can occur at any time during a spousal relationship
- Abusive behaviour that has a pattern or cycle
- Attempt by one party to maintain power or control over the other

Presence of Acts Causing or Likely to Cause Harm

All of us who work with women and who wish to focus on abuse prevention must be sensitive to the fact that “violence against women” includes any act

that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.


Presence of Coercive Behaviour

In the report Nowhere to Turn?, a report funded by Justice Canada, Silliman’s definition of domestic violence is “a pattern of coercive control that one person exercises over another in order to get their own way” (Silliman, 1995, quoted in Nowhere to Turn?).

Presence of Abusive Behaviour Occurring at Any Time

An important aspect of domestic violence is that it can occur any time during a spousal relationship, often taking place after the relationship ends, for example during or after divorce.

Abusive Behaviour That Has a Pattern or Cycle

As we shall see when discussing the Cycle of Violence, domestic violence acts rarely occur just once. Usually there is a pattern of behaviour that occurs in a cycle, with the offender sometimes
appearing sorry, even giving gifts to the partner, and then becoming violent and abusive again, with the victim experiencing various forms of abuse.

**Presence of Attempt by one party to Maintain Power or Control Over the Other**

On their homepage, the Texas A&M Research Foundation (TAMRF) define domestic abuse as a pattern of behavior used to establish and maintain power or control over a domestic partner or family member. The behavior may include acts of violence, intimidation, threats, psychological abuse, isolation, etc. to coerce and control the other person. Although the violence may not happen often, the potential for violence is constantly present as a terrorizing factor.

Source: Texas A&M Research Foundation Homepage. Domestic Abuse. [http://rf-web.tamu.edu/security/secguide/Eap/Abuse.htm](http://rf-web.tamu.edu/security/secguide/Eap/Abuse.htm)

They further state, although “abuse may not always leave the victim with bruises or broken bones, it does always leave emotional scars whether the victim is an infant, child, spouse, or elderly parent.”

### 1.6 Definition of Domestic Violence used in the OCASI Project

The OCASI project uses the definition of domestic violence developed by the Joint Committee on Domestic Violence. This definition describes domestic violence in the following elaborate terms:

…any use of physical or sexual force, actual or threatened, in an intimate relationship. Intimate relationships include those between opposite-sex and same-sex partners. These relationships vary in duration and legal formality, and include current and former dating, common-law and married couples.

Although both women and men can be victims of domestic violence, the overwhelming majority of this violence involves men abusing women.

These crimes are often committed in a context where there is a pattern of assault and controlling behaviour. This violence may include physical assault, and emotional, psychological and sexual abuse. It can include threats to harm children, other family members, pets and property. The violence is used to intimidate, humiliate or frighten victims, or to make them powerless. Domestic violence may include a single act of abuse. It may also include a number of acts, which may appear minor or trivial when viewed in isolation, but collectively form a pattern that amounts to abuse.

Criminal Code offences include, but are not limited to homicide, assault, sexual assault, threatening death or bodily harm, forcible confinement, harassment, stalking, abduction, breaches of court orders and property-related offences.
1.7 Characteristics of Domestic Violence

As can be discerned from the above, domestic violence acts involve:

- Acts occurring in the home that result or are likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to the victim
- Centrality of power and control
- Manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women
- Inevitability of emotional or physical scars

1.8 The Gendered Nature of Domestic Violence

Why Are We Focusing on Prevention of Domestic Violence Against Women and Not Men?

Domestic violence occurs in all socio-economic groups, religious groups, races, ethnic groups, and within heterosexual, lesbian and gay relationships. Domestic violence also affects people of all ages and physical abilities. However, domestic violence is a description of violence that hides the gendered nature of the violence, as a result of which victims are primarily women and children. This training is focused on women because, as is seen in the statistics below, domestic violence is perpetrated against women in 95% of cases.

1.9 Domestic Violence - Some Statistics

1.9.1 Canadian Statistics on Domestic Violence

Indeed, according to the 1999 General Social Survey on Victimization (GSS), women and men experience similar rates of both violence and emotional abuse in their relationships. The survey found, however, that the violence experienced by women tended to be more severe - and more often repeated - than the violence directed at men. For example, compared to men, women were:

- Six times more likely to report being sexually assaulted
- Five times more likely to report being choked
- Five times more likely to require medical attention, as a result of an assault
- Three times more likely to be physically injured by an assault
- More than twice as likely to report being beaten
- Almost twice as likely to report being threatened with, or having a gun or knife used against them
• Much more likely to fear for their lives, or be afraid for their children as a result of the violence
• More likely to have sleeping problems, suffer depression or anxiety attacks, or have lowered self-esteem as a result of being abused, and
• More likely to report repeated victimization.


1.9.2 Some Statistics on Prevalence and Severity of Abuse

• One in four Canadian women suffers some form of abuse by her partner
• Women are at the greatest risk of increased violence – or murder – at the hands of their partner during the time just before or after they leave an abusive relationship
• Spousal homicide accounts for 15% of all homicides in Canada. Between 1979 and 1998, 1,901 people were killed by a spouse: 1,468 women and 433 men
• A woman is nine times more likely to be murdered by an intimate partner than by a stranger
• Domestic abuse remains an immensely under-reported crime: It is estimated that just 25% of domestic violence incidents are reported

1.9.3 Some Statistics on Effect on children

• Approximately 40% of wife assault incidents begin during a woman’s first pregnancy
• Children are present and witness the abuse in 80% of domestic violence cases
• Boys who witness domestic violence against their mothers are five times more likely to grow up to be abusers, while girls who witness violence are five times more likely to grow up to be victims of abuse
• Children and adolescents who see their mother being abused experience emotional and behavioral problems similar to those experienced by children who are physically abused
• Children who witness woman abuse frequently experience post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

1.10 Seriousness of Domestic Violence

Staff working with immigrant women must therefore be aware that, however domestic violence is defined, it can be, not only criminal and coercive, but may also constitute a pattern which can deteriorate at any time and result in serious harm to the woman.

To be able to detect if a woman is abused, staff must understand that abuse against women does not occur in one form. They must understand that violence involves acts of abuse that range from threatening, intimidating and terrorizing the victim, and various forms of psychological abuse (e.g., isolation and control), which do not always leave the victim with visible physical marks, to outright physical abuse.

1.11 Forms of Domestic Violence

The following are some of the Forms of Domestic Violence:

- Verbal abuse
- Emotional and psychological abuse
- Damage to property
- Abuse of pets
- Financial abuse
- Spiritual abuse
- Physical and sexual abuse

Verbal Abuse

Victims of domestic abuse are usually subjected to any of the following:

- Swearing
- Yelling
- Name calling
- Put-downs
- Deception
- Degrading comments
- Threatening to take children away
- Brainwashing
- Calling her “crazy”
- Blaming
- Demanding
- Interrogating
- Contradicting
- Using threatening tone of voice, etc.
Emotional or Psychological Abuse and Violence

Emotional or psychological abuse, also referred to as mental violence, includes behaviour that causes distress, grief, anguish, stress, worry and pain to the victim, even when there is no physical touching involved. It should also be understood that emotional abuse may occur independently or as part of other forms of abuse.

- Threatening behaviour
- Being verbally aggressive and offensive
- Shouting and screaming
- Behaviour causing mental anguish, including deliberately making unreasonable demands
- Degrading in public, including publicly criticizing and humiliating and undermining a woman’s self-worth publicly and privately
- Intimidating in private
- Engaging in violent behaviour in front of the woman (e.g., burning the victim’s clothes, breaking plates, etc.)
- Blaming the woman for everything that goes wrong, even when she is not at fault
- Terrorizing
- Threatening suicide
- Ignoring and using silent treatment, etc.
- Isolating from friends and family
- Humiliating and Embarrassing
- Neglecting
- Disrespecting and criticizing
- Being intimidating (through looks or body language)
- Playing mind games
- Harassing

Criminal Harassment or Stalking

As indicated in the legal notes developed by the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) as part of this domestic violence project, stalking and harassment are criminal acts that are also categorized as a type of emotional abuse.

More women experience emotional abuse, which is the largest risk factor for suicide among women, than physical abuse: 72% women reported that emotional abuse had a greater impact on them than physical abuse.

Emphasizing that emotional abuse, like other forms of domestic violence, is based on power and control, Public Health Agency of Canada outlines the following forms of emotional abuse:

**Rejecting** – refusing to acknowledge a person’s presence, value or worth; communicating to a person that she or he is useless or inferior; devaluing her or his thoughts and feelings.
**Degrading** – insulting, ridiculing, name calling, imitating and infantilizing, and behaviour which diminishes the identity, dignity and self-worth of the person. Examples include yelling, swearing, publicly humiliating or labelling a person as stupid; mimicking a person’s disability; treating a senior as if she or he cannot make decisions.

**Terrorizing** – inducing terror or extreme fear in a person; coercing by intimidation; placing or threatening to place a person in an unfit or dangerous environment; physically hurting or killing a person or pets the victim cares about; threatening to destroy the victim’s possessions; threatening to have a person deported or put in an institution; stalking.

**Isolating** – physically confining; restricting normal contact with others; limiting freedom within the victim’s environment. Examples include keeping a senior from participating in decisions about her or his own life; locking a child in a closet or room alone; refusing a female partner or a senior access to her or his own money and financial affairs; withholding contact with grandchildren; depriving a person of mobility aids or transportation.

**Corrupting and Exploiting** – socializing a person into accepting ideas or behaviour that are inconsistent with legal standards; using a person for advantage or profit; training a child to serve the interests of the abuser and not of the child. Examples include child sexual abuse; permitting a child to use alcohol or drugs; enticing a person into the sex trade.

**Denying Emotional Responsiveness** – failing to provide care in a sensitive and responsive manner; being detached and uninvolved; interacting only when necessary; ignoring a person’s mental health needs. Examples include ignoring a child’s attempt to interact; failing to show affection, caring or love for a child; treating a senior who lives in an institution as though she or he is an object or burden.


Emotional abuse can also be a result of neglect, when the abuser purposely denies or refuses to procure food and other necessities, including medication, even when he has sufficient financial resources to do so.

**Damage to Property**

- Breaking things in the house that belong to the children and to her
- Throwing gifts given to her by family and friends
- Cutting up her favorite dress
- Throwing her things in the garbage
- Sabotaging her car, etc.
Abuse of Pets

- Kicking or hitting the dog or cat
- Threatening to kill the pet
- Using loud intimidating voice with respect to the pet, etc.

Economic or Financial Abuse

Economic or financial abuse occurs when the abuser takes control of all the family finances. In this circumstance, the woman is not allowed to make any finance-related choices, and may not even be allowed to use any part of her own paycheque without the abuser’s permission.

Acts that make comprise economic or financial abuse include:

- Preventing her from getting or keeping a job
- Putting all bills in her name
- Making her account for every penny spent
- Denying her access to cheque book or account or finances
- Demanding her paycheques
- Spending money allocated for bills or groceries on himself
- Forcing her to beg or to commit crimes for money
- Spending Child Benefit on himself
- Not permitting her to spend available funds on herself or children

Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual abuse involves the abuser controlling the victim’s decisions relating to religion, dictating to which religion she must belong, and expressing hostility or ridiculing the beliefs and religious values of the victim.

Acts that comprise spiritual abuse include:

- Using scripture selectively
- Not allowing her to attend prayer services or celebrate religious holidays
- Stipulating that a woman must respect and obey her husband
- Preventing her from practicing her faith
- Ridiculing her while she prays, etc.

Physical and Sexual Abuse

Physical abuse includes use of physical force that may involve physical assault, such as pushing, pulling, slapping, beating, stabbing, punching, shaking, choking, flogging, kicking or rough handling.

Physical violence includes sexual abuse, which may involve sexual assault, in which the woman is forced to take part in unwanted sexual activity, ranging from unwanted touching, unsafe sexual
activity to rape. Sexual abuse also includes a variety of behaviours that range from withholding sexual affection and criticizing the woman’s sexual performance to unfairly accusing the woman of being promiscuous and strictly controlling her reproductive choices.

Physical abuse can escalate from pushing and hitting, which may start gradually and become more frequent, to weapon use and murder.

Workers who come in contact with a victim must never trivialize any form of physical abuse, however non-life threatening it may seem. Neither must they overlook the serious impact of emotional or psychological abuse and violence. Indeed a woman who is abused does not always have physical signs such as scratches on the face.

Physical abuse involves:

- Pushing
- Punching
- Slapping
- Kicking
- Bitting
- Hair pulling
- Pinching
- Grabbing
- Scratching
- Restraining
- Throwing objects
- Choking
- Using weapons, homicide, suicide, etc.
- Pulling

Sexual abuse involves:

- Unwanted touching
- Sexual name calling
- Inappropriate looks
- Forcing a woman to do unwanted sexual acts
- Pressure to dress in a more “suggestive” way
- Unfaithfulness
- False accusations
- Forced sex
- Withholding sex
- Hurtful sex
- Rape
- Homicide

Sources: Hidden Hurt Domestic Abuse Information. Types of Abuse.  
http://www.hiddenhurt.co.uk/Types/faces.htm

Tubman Family Alliance. Forms of Abuse.  
http://www.tubmanfamilyalliance.org/need_help/for_teens/forms_abuse.html
1.12 Dynamics of an Abusive Relationship

1.12.1 Characteristics of the Abuser and Circumstances of the Abused

While there are some cases where women contribute to the conflict, they are usually victims. Oftentimes the woman is so completely traumatized by the abuser that she fears to antagonize, or in any way anger the abuser.

There are different reasons for the occurrence of woman abuse. Some may link abuse to medical reasons, such as the mental health of the abuser.

Characteristics of the abuser, together with the social and economic context, determine the dynamics of an abusive relationship and the cycle of violence. The victim may be experiencing poverty and be dependent on the abuser. Whether or not she understands the law, she may not be able (e.g., economically) to act upon knowledge of her rights to end the abuse or to leave the abuser.

1.12.2 Violence against Women: A Crime of Power and Control

A principal reason is the power imbalance between men and women in society, which can be influenced by the relative economic circumstances of the abuser and the abused. Power imbalances can also revolve around many other circumstances, for example, the immigration status of the abuser and the abused.

Many who work with victims of domestic abuse as well as those who have experienced spousal abuse realize how “violence against women is a crime of power and control. It occurs in the context of many different types of relationships and takes many forms.”

Indeed, the Assaulted Women’s Helpline webpage outlines how

    Violence against women is also a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and the prevention of women’s full advancement.

1.12.3 The Cycle of Domestic Violence

Usually, in private, abusers are overbearing and vicious to their partners and the abuse often escalates to physical brutality and intense continuous emotional abuse. The abuser may be irritable, bad tempered, and prone to rage. He may call the woman names, shout and scream at her, break household items, or speak disapprovingly of how the woman behaved in public. He may physically strike her.

After this abusive episode, he may switch character and suddenly behave lovingly to the woman, and demand that they engage in sexual activity. The victim, in fear, may consent to this, even when she does not wish to. If she is unwilling to engage in the sexual activity, he may take offence at the rejection and physically hurt her.

The next morning he may become loving toward her again, do helpful things (e.g., preparing breakfast for the family), and apologize to her profusely for his behaviour, promising not to do it again, while at the same time maintaining that she caused him to behave poorly. After a calmer period for a few days or weeks, the violence and emotional abuse may begin again. This pattern of behaviour may dominate the life of an abused woman and may go unnoticed and unreported.

In public, abusers can often masterfully conceal their abusive nature. Because they can be charming, abusers can fool friends and relatives. Even the untrained service provider can be deceived by the practiced abuser who can make the victim’s story seem doubtful. When in public without his partner, the abuser can be pleasant and likable. When with his partner in public, abusers can be intentionally attentive and make displays of affection to mask the abusiveness.

On the other hand, the abuser may subject his partner to constant public humiliation, making jokes about and ridiculing her (e.g., appearance, cooking) or he may criticize her publicly for small things he deems flaws. The enormous stress such treatment can cause the victim in the private sphere becomes even greater in the public sphere. The victim may fear to do or say anything in case it leads to more humiliation or reprimand.

It may become obvious to those around that the relationship is problematic, and a trained service provider coming in contact with the two will identify the presence of abuse in the relationship.

The concept of the cycle of violence originated with Lenore Walker in her 1979 book, \textit{The Battered Woman}. While not all domestic violence cases correspond to this exact cycle, it serves as a useful model. Walker observed that many domestic violence situations usually begin with \textbf{tension building}, during which the abuser gets angry and the victim makes desperate attempts to calm the abuser. Following this is the \textbf{making up} period, in which the abuser may apologize for the abuse and makes promises that the tension situation will not occur again, often blaming the victim for having caused the abuse or denying that the abuse took place. The victim may then experience a \textbf{calm period}, accepting gifts and hoping that the abuse is over.

Others, for example the National Women’s Health Resource Centre, have characterized the cycle sequence as involving three different phases:
**Phase 1**: Tension Builds – the abuser may threaten or physically abuse the victim, and the victim may do whatever is possible to calm him, believing she can prevent a violent incident, even though she usually fails;

**Phase 2**: Violence Occurs – the abuser often hits or sexually abuses the victim; and

**Phase 3**: Honeymoon Phase – the abuser apologizes and promises to stop the abuse, usually blaming the victim. Often, the victim believes in the apologies and forgives the abuser for the violence. However, the cycle resumes and the violence occurs again.


### 1.13 Why Service Providers Need to be Alert

The above complex dynamics of domestic violence require the worker to be alert when dealing with women who might be abused because:

- The encounter with the woman may be at a time when the woman is experiencing the honeymoon phase and she may not be ready or willing to disclose the abuse, either in the hope that the abuse will end, or due to the belief that she has some respite before the next affront
- If a woman is experiencing emotional abuse, it may be difficult to read the signs
- The worker has to be skilled and attentive because undetected abuse may lead to serious harm

It is crucial that workers fully comprehend the dynamics as well as the consequences of domestic violence, to help them understand the importance of detecting, preventing and addressing violence.
1.14 Dynamics of Domestic Violence – End of module Exercises

1. How would you define Domestic Violence?
2. What other terms do you associate with Domestic Violence?
3. Abuse does not always come in one form. Can you list three forms of domestic violence, apart from emotional or psychological abuse?
4. What is the cycle of violence and why does the frontline worker who has regular contact with potential abuse victims need to understand the dynamics of domestic violence and cycle of violence? Why does s/he need to be alert in light of dynamics of domestic violence?

Answers:
1. Domestic abuse is a pattern of behavior used to establish and maintain power or control over a domestic partner or family member. The behavior may include acts that are criminal, abusive, coercive, harmful and occurs in a form of a pattern or cycle.

2. Partner abuse, interpersonal violence, family violence

3. Apart from the emotional or psychological abuse, there is, among others,
   - Physical abuse
   - Abuse of pets
   - Financial abuse

4. The cycle of violence constitutes a pattern of behaviour encompasses the following phases:

   **Phase 1**: Tension Builds – the abuser may threaten or physically abuse the victim, and the victim may do whatever is possible to calm him, believing she can prevent a violent incident, even though she usually fails;

   **Phase 2**: Violence Occurs – the abuser often hits or sexually abuses the victim; and

   **Phase 3**: Honeymoon Phase – the abuser apologizes and promises to stop the abuse, usually blaming the victim. Often, the victim believes in the apologies and forgives the abuser for the violence. However, the cycle resumes and the violence occurs again.

It is crucial that workers fully comprehend the dynamics as well as the consequences of domestic violence, to help them understand the importance of detecting, preventing and addressing violence. Understanding the dynamics of domestic violence helps us:

- Understand the concept of domestic violence and the terms used to describe domestic violence
- Understand the acts and behaviours that constitute violence
• Appreciate domestic violence-related the statistics and, thus, the seriousness of domestic violence
• Understand the forms and cycle of violence, which helps us to appreciate the fact that even when the woman does not specifically present domestic abuse as a problem, we may be able to observe indicators of domestic violence

In addition, we able to understand that the service provider’s encounter with the woman may occur at a time when the woman is experiencing the honeymoon phase. If so, she may not be ready or willing to disclose the abuse, either in the hope that the abuse will end, or due to the belief that she has some respite before the next affront. She may state that her partner has now stopped abusing her.

Knowledge of the dynamics of domestic violence may make us view and address the situation differently from when we have no such knowledge, for example, if a woman is experiencing emotional abuse, as opposed to physical abuse, it may be difficult to read the signs.

The worker has to be skilled and attentive because undetected abuse may lead to serious harm.
Module 2:
Identifying Indicators of Domestic Violence against Women:

Recognizing Signs and Symptoms of Abuse
2.1 Identifying Indicators of Domestic Violence against Women: Recognizing Signs of Abuse – Content

2.1 Identifying Indicators of Domestic Violence against Women: – Content

2.2 Identifying Indicators of Domestic Violence against Women: – Objectives

2.3 Identifying Indicators of Domestic Violence against Women - Resources

2.4 Identifying Indicators of Domestic Violence against Women – Multiple-Choice Question and Answer

2.5 Learning to Read the Physical and Emotional Signs Exhibited by the Woman

2.5.1 Reading Signs and Indicators through Observing the Woman

2.5.2 Verbal Signs and Indicators

2.5.3 Reading Signs and Indicators through Learning about the Woman’s Partner

2.6 Avoiding Prejudging

2.7 Consequences of Domestic Violence

2.7.1 Consequences of Domestic Violence for the Victim

2.7.2 Impact of Domestic Violence on Children

2.7.3 Consequences of Domestic Violence for the Abuser

2.7.4 Financial Costs to Society

2.8 Risk Factors and Conditions that Leave Women Vulnerable to Abuse

2.8.1 Being Young or Elderly

2.8.2 Being Disabled

2.8.3 Being Aboriginal
2.8.4 Having Experienced Prior Abuse
2.8.5 Relationship Factors
2.8.6 Having a Verbally Abusive Jealous and Possessive Partner
2.8.7 Dependence
2.8.8 Lack of Easily Accessible Services
2.8.9 Institutional Constraints
2.8.10 Ideological Beliefs and Values
2.8.11 Isolation and Lack of Social Support
2.8.12 Fear of Judgment or Criticism
2.8.13 Challenges of Leaving the Abuser
2.8.14 Powerlessness
2.8.15 Language Challenges
2.8.16 Shame and Dishonour
2.8.17 Being Marginalized and Devalued

2.9 Difficulties Women Have with Ending the Abuse

2.10 Identifying Indicators of Domestic Violence against Women: - End of Module Exercise
2.2 Identifying Indicators of Domestic Violence against Women: – Objectives

Domestic violence leaves the victims traumatized, often with long-term consequences. Sometimes violence results in fatality. It is important that frontline staff working with women not only recognize the magnitude of the consequences of violence, but also educate themselves on how to recognize signs of abuse, with a view to helping to prevent and address abuse.

In the case of immigrant women, the need for reading signs of abuse is even more critical, due to the reluctance among many immigrant communities to report abuse, and due to the belief some women have that disclosing abuse jeopardizes their chance of becoming landed immigrants or Canadian citizens. Reluctance to report may also be caused by lack of familiarity with the Canadian legal system and unawareness of their human rights or of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

At the end of this module, the learner will possess enhanced skills to be able to recognize the signs of domestic violence for the purpose of making appropriate initial assessment and allowing for early intervention (i.e., referrals, counselling, legal, housing and other support and services).

The objectives of this section are:

- To enhance the learner’s knowledge of the consequences of domestic violence and to create awareness of the importance of preventing and addressing domestic violence against immigrant women

- To increase the learner’s understanding of the need to look for physical, behavioural and emotional signs, given the scope and nature of abuse

- To increase the learner’s ability to make important observations and to ask questions that can enable them to assess whether the woman is abused or at risk of abuse
2.3 Identifying Indicators of Domestic Violence against Women - Resources

Family Services Thunder Bay
Forms of Sexual Abuse.
Impact of sexual abuse on a child
Long-term effects of sexual Abuse
Available at: http://www.fstb.net/abuse.htm (April 2007).

The FREDA Centre for Research on Violence against Women and Children
Mapping Violence: A Work in Progress.
RISK FACTORS
Existing research identifies a number of risk factors for violence. These include - but are not limited to - dependency, isolation, stigmatization, marginalization, devaluation, and poverty. Within this overall framework, researchers have also identified alcohol and substance abuse, television violence, marital conflict and a host of other conditions as risk factors of violence. However, previous experience of violence is a key factor. Previous experiences of violence can traumatize individuals and make them feel as if they do not deserve any better. A major impact of violence is low self-esteem and low self-worth. The accompanying sense of powerlessness is often reinforced by the kinds of responses that victims of violence receive.
Available at: http://www.harbour.sfu.ca/freda/articles/fvpi03.htm (April 2007).

Department of Justice Canada
Family Violence: A Fact Sheet from The Department of Justice Canada.
What are the Consequences of Family Violence?
Preventing and Responding to Family Violence
Suggested Resources on Family Violence
Where to Get More Information on Family Violence

Tina de Benedictis, Jaelline Jaffe, and Jeanne Segal
Domestic Violence and Abuse: Types, Signs, Symptoms, Causes, and Effects.
What are the signs and symptoms of an abusive relationship? Can you do recognize signs of domestic abuse in a co-worker? Domestic violence often plays out in the workplace. For instance, a husband, wife, girlfriend, or boyfriend might make threatening phone calls to their intimate partner or ex-partner. Or the worker may show injuries from physical abuse at home. If you witness a cluster of the following warning signs in the workplace, you can reasonably suspect domestic abuse:
- Bruises and other signs of impact on the skin, with the excuse of “accidents”
- Depression, crying
- Frequent and sudden absences
- Frequent lateness
- Frequent, harassing phone calls to the person while they are at work
• Fear of the partner, references to the partner’s anger
• Decreased productivity and attentiveness
• Isolation from friends and family
• Insufficient resources to live (money, credit cards, car)

If you do recognize signs of domestic abuse in a co-worker, talk to your Human Resources department. The Human Resources staff should be able to help the victim without your further involvement.
Available at: http://www.aaets.org/article144.htm (April 2007).

**Turning Point Website**
Warning Signs.
Available at: http://www.turningpointservices.org/tpmain.htm (April 2007).
2.4 Identifying Indicators of Domestic Violence against Women – Multiple-Choice Question and Answer

Which of the following statements are correct?:

QUESTION

To get an indication that there is domestic abuse, it is important to:

A. Talk directly to the woman about her partner.
B. Call up a neighbour to find out if the woman is telling the truth.
C. Observe the woman’s physical and emotional behaviour.
D. Call the husband and ask if he is abusing her.
E. Observe the partner’s treatment of the woman when they come to the office

ANSWER:

A, C, E.
2.5 Learning to Read the Physical and Emotional Signs Exhibited by the Woman

Even though, in some cases, the woman may not mention the abuse, it is essential that service providers recognize the abuse. The service provider should appreciate that:

- The abused woman could be any woman, irrespective of race, class or wealth
- Violence against women occurs in different forms and is often psychological (e.g., threats, intimidation and fear)
- The victim may have emotional and psychological affliction rather than physical bruises and visible scars
- The woman may be experiencing the stage in the cycle of violence when the partner’s abuse is latent
- The woman may be in denial and not admit that she is abused

Because the victim of violence may not have physical signs of abuse, it is necessary to learn how to discern from a woman’s conversation and from observations of the physical and behavioural signs, if she is in an abusive relationship. We can get some visible indicators through:

- Observing the woman's physical and emotional state
- Looking out for verbal signs and indicators when dealing with the woman

2.5.1 Reading Signs and Indicators through Observing the Woman

Observable signs and indicators of abuse include:

- Appearance of extreme nervousness or visible anxiety
- Difficulty listening and focusing
- Uncontrollable crying or displaying of anger
- Physical signs of violence (e.g., black eye, bumps and bruises)
- Degrading or silencing of woman by partner in front of worker

Other observable indicators that help when trying to determine the presence of abuse can be discerned by asking oneself:

- Does she show a lack of self-worth and self-esteem?
- How does she treat her child in my presence? Does she frighten the child?
• Does she appear extremely nervous and anxious? What might be the cause of the nervousness?
• Does she appear fearful?
• Is she excessively silent?
• Does she find it difficult to focus, listen, or remember?
• Is she prone to extreme emotions (e.g., weeping or anger)?

Physical and emotion signs when observed in conjunction with the consideration of pertinent questions can help to determine whether the woman is, or has been, experiencing abuse.

Physical Appearance

• How does the woman appear?
• Are there physical signs of abuse, such as physical injuries or observable scars, scratches on the body or face, arms, neck, etc,
• Does she look physically exhausted?

Emotional or Psychological Abuse

• Is there deliberate deprivation at material and emotional level?
• Are there other forms of emotional abuse?
• Is there harassment and stalking?
• Does she appear frightened and uneasy?
• Does she appear to be abusing drugs?
• Does she appear to be irrational?

2.5.2 Verbal Signs and Indicators

One can learn about the victim through conversation. In discussion with her, does she mention that she express that she:

• Feels useless and unworthy?
• Would leave the husband but has nowhere to go?
• Would kill herself, if it were not for her children?
• Lost time at work due to problems with the partner?

Other Questions to Ask With Respect to the Woman

• Does the woman reveal that she has no support network outside her home?
• Does she put herself down and blame herself for everything (e.g., things for which she is clearly not at fault, such as her and her husband’s unemployment)?
• Does family responsibility not seem well balanced?
• Does she complain that her chronic illness or disability is getting worse due to the partner’s treatment?
We can also read signs and indicators through learning about the woman’s partner. This can help us determine if abuse exists.

2.5.3 Reading Signs and Indicators through Learning about the Woman’s Partner

Learning about the Woman’s Partner through Conversation with the Woman

When engaged in a conversation with the woman, it is possible to learn about the abusive situation, based on what she may say about her partner. She might reveal, for example, that her partner:

- Pushed, shook, slapped or physically assaulted her, or engaged in some form of aggressive behaviour
- Has the tendency to destroy property when angry
- Yells and uses abusive language when they are alone or in public
- Forces her to have unwanted sexual activity (e.g., rape) or sexually harasses her
- Confines her or forces her to stay at home if she wishes to go to visit her friends or relatives
- Humiliates and criticizes her repeatedly in private or in public
- Undermines her self-confidence
- Deprives her emotionally
- Stalks and harasses her at her place of work in person or by phone
- Killed a pet in anger
- Hits children or locks them in a room or closet on their own
- Denies her access to money, whether it is hers or his
- Prevents her from working, attending school, or going to place of worship she has chosen
- Prevents her from attending social functions on her own
- Allows children to use drugs and alcohol
- Tracks the woman’s time
- Has affairs with other women but repeatedly and unfairly accuses her of flirting with other men
- Gets upset when she dresses up

While dealing with settlement-related or other issues, the woman might say she is frightened of deportation as a result of the husband’s actions.

Reading Signs and Indicators through Observing the Woman’s Partner

One can learn a lot by observing the partner. For example, does he

- Degrade the woman in your presence?
• Make unreasonable demands of the woman?
• Reject all the woman’s opinions?
• Frequently accuse her or put her down?
• Hit or threaten the children?
• Ignore the woman or children, even when they try to communicate with him?
• Switch character from respectful when speaking to you to harsh when speaking with her?

The lists below, adopted from the Middlesex-London Health Unit’s article, Health Effects of Domestic Violence on Women, can be very helpful in the identification of signs/indicators of abuse.

**Physical**

- Broken bones
- Burns
- Stab wounds
- Concussions
- Perforated ear drums
- Loss of hair
- Chronic stomach/bowel pain or discomfort
- Chronic joint or muscle pain
- Palpitations
- Firearm wounds
- Bruises
- Cuts or abrasions
- Bites
- Sprains
- Chipped or lost teeth
- Internal injuries
- Chronic headache
- High blood pressure
- Detached retina
- Substance abuse problems

**Psychological**

- Painful intercourse
- Infertility
- Low self-esteem
- Difficulty in forming or maintaining relationships
- Anxiety
- Lack of appropriate boundaries
- Self degradation
- Chronic stress
- Uncontrolled or rapid anger response
- Memory loss
- Loss of concentration or productivity
- Self-abusive behaviour
- Problems with parenting children
- Frequent crying
- Passivity
- Unusual fear response
- Increased watchfulness
- Sleep disturbances
- Phobias

**Sexual**

- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Chronic genital or pelvic pain
- Bruising or tearing of the vagina or anus
- Frequent pregnancies
- Fear of sexual intimacy
- Miscarriages
- Chronic vaginal or urinary track infections
- Female genital mutilation

**Psychiatric**

- Depression
- Eating disorders
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder
- Suicidal thoughts
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Dissociation

2.6 Avoiding Prejudging

It is important to ensure women’s safety. However, this does not mean that a service provider should look for and treat every immigrant woman as a victim and every immigrant man as an abuser. The key is to:

- Identify whether the woman is from a vulnerable group (e.g., without immigration status or financially dependent)
- Recognize signs of anxiety and abuse through an established assessment system that treats every one in a similar manner
- Develop or adapt an assessment system in the organization to facilitate identification of abuse

2.7 Consequences of Domestic Violence

As suggested above, staff in organizations working with immigrant and refugee women must be aware of the serious consequences of domestic violence because:

- This will increase their understanding of the important role they can play in preventing and addressing domestic violence
- In extreme circumstances, domestic violence results in loss of life

Serious consequences of domestic violence against women include:

- Physical, psychological and other consequences for the victim
- Consequences to children
- Consequences for the abuser
- Financial and other consequences to society

2.7.1 Consequences of Domestic Violence for the Victim

Domestic violence against women has serious short- and long-term consequences to the victim. These range from health to socio-economic issues.

The health impact may be physical, psychological or behavioural. The extent of the impact depends on the nature of the violence and on the duration of abuse.
Physical Impact on the Victim

Some examples of the physical impact on the victim include:

- Long-term as well as immediate physical injury that may include broken bones, broken teeth, burns, cuts, etc.
- Development of physical illness, such as headaches and hypertension, as a result of stress, and other problems such as lack of sleep
- Development of gynecological problems

Psychological and Behavioural Consequences on the Victim

These include:

- Varying degrees of depression and trauma
- Irritability toward children
- Nervousness, phobias and panic attacks
- Memory loss
- Sleep and eating disorders
- Sexual disorders
- Suicidal tendencies
- Difficulty concentrating
- Behavioural problems (e.g., inability to trust people or form friendships, insecurity, loss of self-esteem, tendency to cry, misplaced anger, etc.)
- Inability to deal with people in the presence or absence of the abuser, for fear of annoying the abuser
- Inability to distinguish right from wrong due to constant condemnation and reprimand
- Difficulty taking risks
- High-risk behaviour such as promiscuity, drug or alcohol abuse

Other Impacts on the Victim

Together with the physical and psychological impact there are also a number of existential challenges associated with having an abusive partner:

- Difficulty or inability for the victim to hold down a job due to:
  - Disruption of family life, as she may have to go to a shelter with or without children
  - Failure to concentrate

- Isolation, having been prohibited from associating with any friends, relatives, or with anyone outside the family
It is not uncommon, given the undue stress victims of domestic violence endure, that they develop symptoms similar to those of individuals affected by war or disaster.

2.7.2 Impact of Domestic Violence on Children

Children who experience domestic violence and abuse may not only suffer from physical abuse at the hands of either partner, but also suffer emotional abuse that has immediate and lasting effects. Children who witness or hear serious assaults on their mothers may:

- Be insecure and overly fearful
- Lack confidence
- Tend to misunderstand boundaries
- Tend to distrust adults and authority figures
- Have the belief that they are worthless, and experience feelings of shame
- Have difficulty concentrating
- Have dysfunctional relationships with adults and with other children
- Have a wide variety of emotional and behavioural problems that include anger and aggression, withdrawal
- Physical illness, including headaches, stomach-aches
- Develop eating disorders and other disorders, such as bed wetting

2.7.3 Consequences of Domestic Violence for the Abuser

The consequences may include:

- Destroyed relationships
- Loss of family members
- Loss of job and income
- Involvement in the criminal justice or child welfare systems
- In extreme circumstances, loss of life, sometimes at their own hands or those of their victims
- Potential for escalation of abusive behaviour

2.7.4 Financial Costs to Society

Consequences to society include:

- Disruption of social and societal fabric due to family breakdown, and alienation of some victims from the community
- Disruption of lives, including those of children

Financial consequences to society caused by domestic violence vary from costs for treating the physical, psychological and emotional conditions of the victim, including treating children who have been involved in the violence, to legal costs, advocacy costs, shelter costs, etc.
According to the Department of Justice Canada,

violence against women, including woman abuse in intimate relationships…costs Canadian society an estimated $4.2 billion per year in social services, education, criminal justice, labour, employment, health and medical costs. Criminal justice costs alone total an estimated $871,908,582.00 per year. The total costs related to all forms of family violence have yet to be calculated but would clearly be much higher.


In a Statistics Canada’s National Survey on Violence against Women, funded by Health Canada, Tanis Day estimates, “The total of the measurable costs related to health and well-being alone amounts to $1,539,650,387 per year.” According to Day, “This is just the tip of the iceberg.” For example, she has not included the costs of hospital admissions in this figure since it is not known what proportion of women injured through abuse were admitted for stays in hospitals.”

According to Health Canada Violence against Women Fact Sheets,

The measurable health-related costs of violence against women in Canada exceed $1.5 billion a year,” in the form of “short-term medical and dental treatment for injuries”; “long-term physical and psychological care” due to physical injuries; hospital and other medical bills; “lost time at work”; and “use of transition homes and crisis centres.


2.8 Risk Factors and Conditions that Leave Women Vulnerable to Abuse

Many risk factors not only make women vulnerable to abuse but also make it difficult for them to end the violence by leaving the relationship. These factors may also contribute to the cycle of violence that characterizes domestic abuse.

Numerous agencies, including the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the National Women’s Health Resource Centre, and many researchers have identified the following factors that make a woman vulnerable to abuse:

- Being young (18-24) or being elderly (65 or older)
- Being disabled
- Being Aboriginal
- Having experienced or witnessed abuse
- Having a verbally abusive or jealous and possessive partner
- Dependence, including economic dependence and poverty
- Difficulty accessing available services
- Ideological beliefs and values
- Isolation and lack of social support
• Fear of being judged or criticized
• Difficulty of getting detached from the abuser
• Feelings of powerlessness
• Language challenges
• Feeling of shame and dishonour
• Feeling of being marginalized and devalued

2.8.1 Being Young or Elderly

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada

Women younger than 25 years of age are at higher risk than other women of experiencing violence in their relationships. These women are also at higher risk than others of being killed by their current or ex-husbands or common-law partners.


Abundant literature exists reporting the particular susceptibility of women in their senior years to a variety of abuses, including domestic abuse.

2.8.2 Being Disabled

Women with disabilities are estimated to be 1.5 to 10 times more likely to be abused than are non-disabled women, depending on whether or not they live in a community or institutional setting. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada,

Abuse against women with disabilities includes a wide range of behaviours that women who are not disabled may not experience. For example, women with disabilities often have to rely on others to help them with mobility, toileting, eating, bathing or other daily tasks. This dependence requires quite intimate relationships with a wide range of others, including partners, caregivers, health professionals, transportation providers and other family members. Dependence on a large network of relationships increases the chances that a woman who is disabled will experience abuse.


2.8.3 Being Aboriginal

There is considerable research indicating First Nations and Inuit women experience violence at exceedingly high rates. “In one Ontario study, 8 out of 10 Aboriginal women had experienced violence in their relationships. Of these, 87 percent were physically injured, and 57 percent were
sexually abused. An estimated 75 to 90 percent of women in some northern Aboriginal communities have been physically abused” (Public Health Agency of Canada).

2.8.4 Having Experienced Prior Abuse

Previous experience of violence can leave victims with feelings of helplessness and an inability to believe that they can stand up against abuse. Women raised in a violent environment might, because of familiarity, view abuse as normal.

2.8.5 Relationship Factors

Public Health Agency of Canada stresses how certain factors can increase a woman’s vulnerability to abuse. For example, a woman is more likely to experience abuse if her partner is young (18-24), unemployed for a long period, has little formal education, drinks alcohol immoderately, or has at an early age witnessed violence toward his mother. Women in common law relationships tend to be at higher risk of abuse than women who are married. Moreover, it has been established that when a woman either threatens to leave or leaves the abusive partner, the risk of violence, including being killed, is greatly increased. This is because the abusive partner sees this as a challenge to his desire for power and control.

2.8.6 Having a Verbally Abusive Jealous and Possessive Partner

A jealous and possessive partner is more likely to be abusive. The abuse is even more likely where the partner or both individuals use alcohol or illicit drugs.

2.8.7 Dependence

This includes psychological, financial or physical dependence that results in the abuser having power. In some cases, the abuser may be a caregiver or other provider.

Poverty is a major challenge and one of the greatest risk factors that keeps the victim in an abusive and dangerous relationship. Without financial resources of her own, poverty or fear of poverty make it very difficult for a woman to leave. The risk of economic dependence is increased with lack of employment, which is exacerbated by lack of skills or experience. The situation is even more precarious when women have children, as they often fear leaving will render them unable to provide adequate support. Dependence and lack of economic power therefore makes women more vulnerable.

2.8.8 Lack of Easily Accessible Services

Abused women sometimes have difficulty accessing affordable housing and other necessary services. Subsequently, they may not be able to take the necessary risk of leaving their abusive situation
because they lack uncomplicated alternatives. The idea of staying with her children in a shelter is often dispiriting.

2.8.9 Institutional Constraints

Many times, institutions, including places of worship, reinforce the bond of marriage and may discourage the victim from leaving an abusive relationship. Sometimes police personnel and prosecutors fail to treat domestic abuse as a serious crime, and may even dissuade the victim from filing a complaint or prosecuting the abuser. Knowing that restraining orders are not terribly effective and because certain institutional obstacles seem insurmountable, victims sometimes decide to stay in the relationship, convinced they will get little or no support if they leave.

2.8.10 Ideological Beliefs and Values

A woman’s ideological beliefs may pose a challenge to the woman’s ability to leave an abusive relationship. For example, if a woman believes that children must grow up with both parents, at whatever cost, she may not be inclined to leave an abusive situation if children are involved.

2.8.11 Isolation and Lack of Social Support

The abuser may actively isolate the victim from relatives and friends. Without social networks, the victim may have no one to turn to and may find herself isolated. In a study of rural women and violence, it was found that many of the women who had experienced abuse in their relationships had been moved by their partners to rural isolated areas (Jiwani et al., 1998). As well, the abuser may ensure isolation from institutional support by intimidating the victim, discouraging her from having contact with any individual, group or institution that might intervene.

2.8.12 Fear of Judgment or Criticism

Many women may see the fact that they are abused as shameful, and may not tell, due to fear of being despised or misjudged and held culpable. They may fear being judged for jeopardizing their marriage, especially in cases where the woman feels pressured by family, friends or members of the community to keep the family together.

2.8.13 Challenges of Leaving the Abuser

For a variety of reasons, including material dependency, or due to still having feelings for the abuser, some women find it emotionally difficult to break the attachment with the abuser. Some women believe the abuser loves them, some find reasons and excuses for their partner’s abuse, others believe the abuse will change.


2.8.14 Powerlessness

Victims of abuse are usually unable to stop the violence against them and find it difficult to change their personal situation. Victims may feel powerless not only physically, because the abuser is usually stronger than them, but also legally, socially and in other respects. Despair and hopelessness and lack of confidence and self-esteem typically accompany feelings of powerlessness, which does not facilitate leaving an abusive relationship. Victims often feel depressed and may be unable to make rational decisions.

2.8.15 Language Challenges

Language limitations can be an important barrier to a victim of violence. Women who do not speak either of the Canadian official languages may not be in position to communicate with anyone, as translation services may not be readily available to them. Even when translation is available, it may be from members of the community or from family members, which may make it difficult for the abused woman to disclose because of privacy and confidentiality concerns.

2.8.16 Shame and Dishonour

Some women who are in a situation of abuse do not inform anyone and do not leave the dangerous situation for fear of being stigmatized and judged, and consequently facing further isolation. In some communities, stigmatization may occur when members of another race, sexual orientation and class are involved.

2.8.17 Being Marginalized and Devalued

In a society in which the socially powerful tend to marginalize and exclude those without means and power, many abused women experience alienation and isolation. They feel they must cope by themselves, even when their survival strategies are limited by what they can do without support from society. In fact, cultural and societal issues not only make immigrant women vulnerable to abuse but also form further barriers for the immigrant women who are already experiencing domestic abuse.

2.9 Difficulties Women Have with Ending the Abuse

Sometimes, despite the trauma, depression or the physical ailments that the victim might be suffering, she may not admit she needs help, and she may, for the reasons mentioned, be unable to reveal the abuse, even when she wishes she would get some help. It is, therefore, important for the service provider to recognize the signs and to reduce the risk because, in extreme circumstances, the consequence of domestic violence is loss of life.
A service provider must understand that many women have difficulty ending an abusive relationship. Wondering why a woman stays in an abusive relationship tends to imply that the woman is to blame, whereas the focus should be on the abuser and his behaviour. Indeed, asking a woman why she does not end the relationship embarrasses her and makes her feel there is something wrong with her.

A woman who is abused by her partner is in great need of supportive people who understand the difficulties that relate to her situation. She can only leave the relationship when she feels strong enough emotionally to take that step, and when she can see the possibility of building a new life for herself.
2.10 Identifying Indicators of Domestic Violence against Women: - End of Module Exercise

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do we need to know indicators of domestic violence?

2. Drawing from content above, and from other experience, can you list 4 behaviours (a) on the part of the abuser (b) on the part of the woman that may be signals or indicative of the presence of emotional or psychological abuse?

3. Can you list three reasons why immigrant and refugee women in domestic violence situations would have difficulty revealing or ending the abuse?

4. What are the effects and implications of domestic violence for children?

ANSWERS:

1. Knowledge of indicators of domestic violence enables us to better understand the signs and may indicate that the woman is abused or at risk of abuse.

2. (a) On the part of the abuser, indicators that he is an abuser include:

   • Ignoring and using silent treatment, toward the woman
   • Isolating the woman from friends and family
   • Humiliating and Embarrassing the woman in public and in private
   • Neglecting the woman

   (b) The woman may exhibit signs of abuse through, among others, the following:

   • Excessive crying
   • Difficulty listening and focusing
   • Uncontrollable displaying of anger
   • Extreme nervousness and anxiety
   • Being excessively silent

3. Immigrant and refugee women in situations of domestic violence would have difficulty for, among others, the following reasons:

   • If they have children, they may fear having their children taken by the Children’s Aid Society
• If they are undocumented immigrants, they may fear that the police may report them to immigration, which might lead to deportation
• Lack of financial resources and dependence on the partner

4. Consequences of domestic violence for children include:

• **Emotional Problems:** Anger (which can be directed toward either parent or toward other children, etc.), confusion, depression, crying, suicidal behaviour, nightmares, anxiety and sadness, fears and phobias, feelings of worthlessness and shame. Distrust of adult figures

• **Behavioural Problems:** Withdrawing into or isolating themselves, being aggressive, exhibiting problem behaviours at home or school, possibly displaying regressive behaviour (e.g., baby-talk, reverting to bottle feeding or wanting a soother), experiencing lower academic achievements

• **Physical Problems:** Children may complain of headaches or stomach-aches, nausea or vomiting, develop eating disorders, bed-wetting, and insomnia
Module 3:

Cultural Issues and Competencies in Preventing and Addressing Domestic Violence in Ethno-cultural and New Canadian Communities
3.1 Cultural Issues and Competencies in Preventing and Addressing Domestic Violence in Ethno-cultural and New Canadian Communities – Content

3.1 Cultural Issues and Competencies in Preventing and Addressing Domestic Violence in Ethno-cultural and New Canadian Communities – Content

3.2 Cultural Issues and Competencies in Preventing and Addressing Domestic Violence in Ethno-cultural and New Canadian Communities - Objectives

3.3 Cultural Issues and Competencies Related to Addressing Domestic Violence against Immigrant and Refugee Women - Resources

3.4 Cultural Issues and Competencies Related to Addressing Domestic Violence against Immigrant and Refugee Women - Multiple-Choice question and Answer

3.5 Challenges Faced by Immigrant Women

3.6 Service Providers’ Limited Cultural Awareness

3.7 Working with Immigrant and Racialized Women

3.7.1 Ensure Official Multiculturalism Policy of Canada is Followed When Providing Services

3.7.2 Ensure Service Staff Accumulate Diverse Cultural Knowledge and Cultural Awareness

3.7.3 Ensure Cultural Competence of Workers in Agencies Serving Immigrants

3.8 Additional Questions that Service Providers Working With Women From Other Cultures, Ethnicities, Languages, and Religions Should Ask

3.9 Checklist for Service Providers Working with Abused Immigrant Women

3.10 Working with Victims from Other Cultures – Highlights

3.11 Cultural Issues and Competencies in Preventing and Addressing Domestic Violence: - End of Module Exercise
3.2 Cultural Issues and Competencies in Preventing and Addressing Domestic Violence in Ethno-cultural and New Canadian Communities - Objectives

It is important for service providers who are in direct contact with immigrant women, not only to understand the dynamics of violence against women, but also to understand the cultural issues that can hinder or help to enhance the prevention of and response to domestic violence against immigrant women.

At the end of this module, the learner will possess an understanding of the barriers specific to immigrant and refugee women, and gain an appreciation of the influence of personal biases and opinions when serving victims from other cultures.

The objectives of this module are:

- To highlight the societal dimension of domestic violence, with a view to aiding service providers in understanding the nature of challenges that immigrant women face when dealing with domestic violence
- To enhance understanding of why immigrant women experiencing domestic violence might not seek help
- To review options available to victims of abuse (e.g., safety planning if a woman remains in the abusive relationship)
- To help service providers determine the kind of assistance they need to provide in order to prevent or address domestic violence against immigrant women in a sensitive and appropriate manner
3.3 Cultural Issues and Competencies Related to Addressing Domestic Violence against Immigrant and Refugee Women - Resources

Community Legal Education Ontario
Immigrant women and domestic violence, Immigrant and Refugee fact Sheet 2004. This fact sheet has important information about violence and woman’s immigration status. It has also deals with some of the concerns that women may have. For example, a woman may be afraid that she and her children will be deported if she reports abuse by her spouse or sponsor. She may also be afraid of what could happen to the person who is abusing her:
- Immigrant women with permanent residence status
- Family class sponsorship
- Refugee protection claimants
- Pre-removal risk assessment

Family Violence Prevention Fund
Immigrant Women.
Battered immigrant women face many difficult barriers. The obstacles they encounter can be attributed to a combination of language, culture, citizenship status, or lack of access to services. In addition to the physical violence, a battered immigrant woman may experience:
- Isolation
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Citizenship or Residency Privilege Used Against Her: the Economic Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Children Used
- Language Barriers
- Cultural Issues
- Lack of Access To Services

Family Violence Prevention Fund
Power and Control Tactics Used Against Immigrant Women.
Family Violence Prevention Fund

Barriers.
Battered Immigrant Women Face Many Difficult Barriers. The Obstacles They Encounter Can Be Attributed to A Combination Of Language, Culture, Citizenship Status, or Lack Of Access to Services. In Addition to the Physical Violence, A Battered Immigrant Woman May Experience:

- Isolation
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Citizenship or Residency Privilege Used against Her
- Economic Abuse:
- Emotional Abuse
- Children Used
- Language Barriers
- Cultural Issues
- Lack of Access To Services


Smith, Ekuwa for Canadian Council on Social Development

Nowhere to turn?Responding to partner violence against immigrant and visible minority women. Identifies the complex set of issues, attitudes, barriers and gaps in service that make immigrant and visible minority women uniquely vulnerable when faced by domestic violence. Emphasizes the importance of providing information on Canadian laws, rights and services to immigrants in their own language and increasing the availability of professional interpretation services for police, courts, crisis centres and other services, and ensuring that services for abused immigrant and visible minority women are sensitive to and respectful of diverse cultural practices, histories and life experiences.


Outreach to Underserved Communities.

Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence

Some definitions:

- Culture.
- Cultural Awareness
- Cultural Competence
- Cross Cultural Attitudes
- Diversity.
- Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups.
- Multicultural
- Race and Racial Group
- Ethnicity/Race
- Immigration/Citizenship Status
- Religious/Cultural
- Language
- Education/Literacy
- Economic Status
- Housing
- Isolation
• Geographic Isolation
• Semi-Closed Communities/ Ethnic Segregation


**United Nations 22 November 1994**

Preliminary report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

“Immigrant women often fear jeopardizing their Canadian immigration status due to a sponsor relationship with their abuser. Women often stay in abusive situations as they await the sponsorship of their parents or other family members”.

“Due to systemic discrimination in employment and multiple barriers to accessing education and training for immigrant women, they have a strong and realistic fear that they will not be capable to provide for their children and that they will lose them if abuse is reported”.

Immigrant and refugee women fear being ostracized from their ethnic community and family. Sometimes they also worry about causing the family shame. Immigrant women are often hesitant to seek help within the justice system due to strong fear, distrust and lack of confidence in police.


**Women’s Refuge**

Why Don’t They Leave?

Instead of Asking “Why Doesn't She Just Leave”, Try Asking “Why Doesn't the Abuser Stop Being Violent?”

Leaving Can Be The Most Dangerous Time

• Lack of Money
• No Where to Go
• Fear of Losing The Children
• Belief In Family Values
• Not Being Believed
• Still Feeling Some Love
• Social Isolation
• Not Wanting to Be Judged By Others
• Seeing Abuse As Normal

3.4 Cultural Issues and Competencies Related to Addressing Domestic Violence against Immigrant and Refugee Women - Multiple-Choice question and Answer

QUESTION

You are given an incomplete statement. Select the choice that will correctly complete the statement.

Barriers that relate to a service provider’s unfamiliarity with the culture of an immigrant woman who is a victim of abuse can be reduced by a service provider:

A. Applying the knowledge acquired from watching Cable Television.
B. Receiving appropriate awareness training in multicultural issue.
C. Applying the knowledge acquired from High School History class.
D. Consulting with colleagues each time a decision is made.

ANSWER:

B.
3.5 Challenges Faced by Immigrant Women

Domestic violence occurs in different cultures and affects women of all backgrounds. All women who are victims of domestic violence live in fear and suffer physical and emotional abuse. Immigrant women can be especially vulnerable to partner abuse because of being newcomers: their precarious immigration status (e.g., sponsored or non-status) can cause them to fear reporting the abuse, as many have come as dependants or spouses. Some immigrant women become vulnerable because their partner develops abusive behaviour as a result of being frustrated by the daunting challenges in the host country.

Challenges faced by some immigrant women include:

- Need to adapt to a new way of life in the host country
- Exposure to abuse for the first time and lack of knowledge about how to end the violence
- Dependence on spouse for status in Canada
- Isolation and absence of social support
- Reluctance to report abuse due to potential hostility from ethnic community or family members
- Misinformation and threats by the abuser
- Unfamiliarity with Canadian system
- Lack of language competence
- Absence of professional interpretation and translation facilities in some areas
- Lack of knowledge of the existence of free translation and interpretation services
- Reluctance to report abuse due to fear of children being taken away
- Insufficient economic power necessary required to motivate or enable independence
- Dire economic situation and financial dependency on spouse
- Health challenges that include inadequate response to issues related to abused immigrant women

1. Challenges of Adapting from Patriarchal Societies

Some of Canada’s recent immigrants come from societies in which the man traditionally holds the position of superior, and is not frowned upon if he physically dominates the partner. Having to follow Canadian rules requiring that a woman be treated equal is maddening to some men. This loss of power and control can turn to frustration and violence toward the woman, making some immigrant women more vulnerable to abuse.

2. Exposure to Abuse for First Time

Many women who come to Canada have never experienced abuse before, having lived in closely-knit communities with strict traditional taboos that establish and regulate limits to male authority. Some women are completely traumatized to find themselves in a situation where, due to economic and social pressures, they are experiencing partner abuse for the first time and have no skills or knowledge to deal with the violence.
3. Dependence on Spouse for Status in Canada

Many immigrant women arrive in Canada as dependants whose husband may have made the choice to immigrate. For a variety of reasons, including systemic reasons in the case of racialized minorities, many men are unable to find a job upon arrival in Canada. A man’s frustration resulting from loss of economic status, combined with the sudden loss of social status, may develop into misguided anger toward his wife, which may eventually lead to domestic violence.

4. Isolation and Absence of Social Support

A characteristic of many immigrant women is that they belong to small ethnic communities. Some immigrant women are completely isolated from any community, particularly since many are not employed and without any job-related network. Many immigrant women lack the kind of social supports that they may have had in their country of origin. Isolation makes women more susceptible to domestic violence as the abuser knows the woman does not have a support system that will challenge him or bring him to account.

5. Reluctance to Report Abuse: Fear of Community or Family Reprisal

Due to the beliefs and family values held in some communities, an immigrant woman may be shunned if abuse is reported to the authorities. This is particularly true where the religious and social beliefs do not sanction family breakups. In some cases, reporting the abuse results leads to hostility from the ethnic community or from family members in Canada and overseas.

6. Misinformation and Threats

Often, the abusive partner deliberately misinforms the immigrant woman about her rights and status. This is an even more serious problem in the case where the woman may not speak or read any of the official languages and is not able to obtain the information directly. In many cases, the abused woman is kept isolated from family and friends, and from anyone who speaks her language or poses a potential threat to the abuser. Consequently, without a network, or having a limited one at best, and experiencing intimidation and threats from the abuser, the woman may fear being deported if she reveals the abuse to any one.

7. Unfamiliarity with Canadian System

Many women are unfamiliar with their rights and have insufficient knowledge of the way the Canadian legal system works. They may have a general distrust of the police and court system and may not believe it can work for their protection.

8. Lack of Language Competence

Many immigrant women who speak neither of Canada’s official languages are vulnerable. Abusive husbands often do not allow the victim to learn the official languages, English in particular.
Immigrant women who cannot speak the official languages find themselves isolated, which makes them vulnerable, as their abusers know they are powerless to act to prevent the abuse. Worse, language limitations reduce an immigrant woman’s access to employment, further depriving her of any opportunity she might have had to meet more people and be less financially dependent.

9. Absence of Professional Interpretation and Translation Facilities

Lack of interpretation services is a serious barrier with respect to domestic violence against immigrant women. An abused woman may go to a domestic violence agency, but may fail to get the required assistance because there may be no one available to translate. When an immigrant woman does not speak English, she may decide to resort to contacts (e.g., a family doctor) who speak her language. Unfortunately, in such situations, a woman may not disclose the abuse for fear that the husband may learn of the disclosure. This is true for meetings with service providers, where the abusive man is often the interpreter for the woman.

10. Lack of Knowledge of the Existence of Free Interpretation and Translation Facilities

Even when free interpretation and translation facilities exist, the woman or the service provider may not be aware of where they are located and either may not seek services or may go to inappropriate organizations to seek help.

11. Reluctance to Report Abuse Due to Fear of Children Being Taken Away

Many women fear that reporting abuse will put them at risk of losing their children to child protection authorities.

12. Insufficient Economic Power

Victims of domestic violence also tend to experience economic abuse. This involves the abuser denying the victim access to family finances, restricting her from handling cheques, often including her own paycheque, not taking an interest in and not providing support for the woman with respect to her job, constantly harassing her about why she does or does not work. Sometimes the abuser may threaten to report, or he may in fact report, the woman to authorities, if she works without the appropriate work permit. Usually this is done to prevent the woman from becoming financially independent and to keep the woman in fear so that she does not dare talk to anyone about the abuse. The abuser may prevent the woman from attending any type of training, for the purpose of denying her the knowledge and skills that would enable her to find employment and become more independent.
13. Threats and Intimidation

An abused immigrant woman may be intimidated in various ways. The abuser may destroy important official documents and items that she holds dear, such as souvenirs, certificates or family pictures. If she shows any ability to expose the abuse, the abuser may threaten to report, and may even report the victim to immigration authorities. He may threaten to take away the children or to abandon efforts to legalize her immigration status. Being so intimidated, the victim may have difficulty believing it is possible to find an individual she can trust to give her advice, information, or other assistance.

14. Dependent Relationship

Given the dependency relationship and reliance on the abuser, and the environment of threat and intimidation in which she lives, the woman may feel powerless and unable to take action. Lacking information, she may have no hope of changing her situation. Coping with unemployment, insufficient financial resources, fear of immigration authorities, and having no skills to bring hope of future employment, the abused woman may decide to stay with the abuser, especially where there are children involved.

15. Dire Economic Situation and Financial Dependence on Spouse

Economic problems that make women more vulnerable to abuse due to the domination of the male partner (who may be the main provider or who may also be unemployed and frustrated) are not restricted to immigrant women. Immigrant women, however, face enormous challenges finding employment in Canada because their foreign-earned degrees and certificates are often not recognized by Canadian regulating bodies and by many employers. Many do not even have the possibility of licensure, which makes it even more difficult for them to imagine having a future in a well-paid job. As various studies have indicated, visible minority women in particular encounter immense job-related challenges because of systemic barriers. Even many highly educated immigrant women find themselves unemployed and lacking economic independence, which makes leaving an abusive situation difficult.

16. Health Challenges and Inadequate Response

From the health point of view, it has been noted (e.g., Jiwani et al., 2001) that physicians sometimes “trivialize” women’s health issues. In health facilities where there is no screening for domestic violence, the response in relation to immigrant women who have been abused is inadequate. Sometimes a woman’s mental health is not considered in the context of violence, even when this may be a significant cause. When time constraints do not enable proper assessment of a patient, consequences can be serious.
17. Additional Abuse Due to Racism

When immigrant women are married to non-ethnic group members, they sometimes experience racism from their partners, and that may add other dimensions to the causes of abuse.

3.6 Service Providers’ Limited Cultural Awareness

Because Canada is a multicultural country, immigrant women in Canada belong to many different races and cultures.

When service providers are not knowledgeable about an immigrant woman’s cultural background and the immigration-related issues that she might face, they fail to understand the victim’s reasoning and choices.

Subsequently, a woman may face barriers related to service providers’ limited cultural awareness. Barriers related to service providers’ lack of cultural awareness include the following:

A service provider

- Having an ethnocentric view when dealing with abused women
- Contributing additional abuse due to racism, ageism, sexism and ableism
- Lacking awareness of culturally sensitive issues that impact the abused immigrant woman (e.g., female genital mutilation (FGM), war crimes, arranged marriages)
- Using his/her own moral and ethical judgment in evaluating an abused woman’s situation
- Contrasting their professional status to that of the abused woman (e.g., acting like an authority and making decisions for the woman because it is assumed she lacks education)
- Generalizing in relation to an ethno-cultural group (e.g., believing that all Africans have the same needs)
- Not adapting safety planning to the abused woman of a different culture (e.g., providing shelters when that is something with which the woman is not familiar)

Limited Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity

- Service providers are sometimes frustrated by the immigrant woman’s reluctance to report abuse or to leave the abusive environment
- Service providers may mistakenly think it is best to refer the victim to an agency within their community where staff speak the language and understand the culture, but the victim may not wish to have her situation known by anybody in her community, and language may not even be an issue

Making referral decisions based on wrong assumptions about the victim’s needs may result in an inappropriate response.
Role of Immigration Status

Many service providers do not have accurate knowledge relating to both domestic violence and immigration law. This means that they are not able to provide accurate information or appropriate referrals and other services to the immigrant women who experience domestic violence. Many service providers need more training about sponsored or non-status women and their rights. This will enable them to know how to provide appropriate assistance. They also need to familiarize themselves with the protocols in their organization.

3.7 Working with Immigrant and Racialized Women

Given the overwhelmingly vulnerable situation faced by immigrant women, there is need for more sensitive and more appropriate responses to violence against immigrant women. Below are some suggestions relating to how to ensure effective response. The suggestions reflect the multicultural environment in and policies of Canada:

3.7.1 Ensure Official Multiculturalism Policy of Canada is Followed When Providing Services

It is very important to:

- Ensure that the service provision (prevention and response) acknowledges awareness of the diversity of the immigrant women
- Ensure sensitivity to the beliefs and values of the woman concerned
- Ensure that service staff accumulate diverse cultural knowledge and cultural awareness
- Ensure that all workers in agencies that serve immigrants are culturally and religiously sensitive

The Multiculturalism Policy of the Government of Canada:

- “recognize[s] the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their historic contribution to Canadian society, and enhance[s] their development
- [strives to] ensure that all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, while respecting and valuing their diversity
- [strives to] preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada”

### 3.7.2 Ensure Service Staff Accumulate Diverse Cultural Knowledge and Cultural Awareness

One of the ways of ensuring the implementation of Canada’s multiculturalism policy is for all individual service providers who work with immigrant women to augment their knowledge of the wide variety of cultures served by their organization.

To achieve this end, Adam’s definition of “cultural knowledge” is useful: “Familiarization with selected cultural characteristics, history, values, belief systems, and behaviors of the members of another ethnic group” (Adams, 1995).

Knowledge acquisition assists service providers to become more culturally sensitive and better able to understand the beliefs, values, and choices of immigrant women from different ethnic groups.

It is essential for workers to:

- Check their own personal values, their biases, and their attitudes
- Aim to be objective, understanding cultural and community factors that impact individuals’ choices
- Respond to the issue of domestic violence in accordance with the facts and circumstances specific to the victim, not through one’s own lens
- Listen to and interact with the victim without being judgmental about her cultural beliefs

Through self-monitoring and remaining open and sensitive to other cultural groups, service providers are able to approach their work with abused women in a more flexible manner.

Some useful definitions relating to cross cultural attitudes made by the National Resource Center can assist with the process of monitoring one’s perceptions, and those of one’s organization with respect to other cultural groups:

- “Superiority. The provider considers the client’s culture inferior or worthless and actively tries to impose his/her values and world-view
- Incapacity. The provider acknowledges differences, but has no skills or tools to address them effectively
- Universality. The provider considers that all humans share basic values and therefore treats all people alike, regardless of their differences”


It is important to consider the position of one’s organization in relation to the above definitions.
Settlement as well as mainstream organizations that serve immigrants and, in particular, abused immigrant women, should have mandatory multicultural training for all staff. Government funding should be available for such training, and each staff person should be required to obtain multicultural training to enhance competence.

### 3.7.3 Ensure Cultural Competence of Workers in Agencies Serving Immigrants

As staff working with abused immigrant women, the following definitions should be employed to determine personal cultural competence.

Cultural competence is

> a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.


Cultural or ethnic competence refers to the development of skills that help people behave in a culturally appropriate way with a given group, demonstrating both sensitivity to cultural differences and the use of appropriate cultural symbols when interacting and communicating with members of diverse populations. It involves the acceptance of ethnic differences in an open, genuine manner, without condescension and without patronizing gestures.


In light of the need for cultural awareness and competence, the following are some examples of questions frontline workers should ask themselves:

- What are correct behaviours and attitudes?
- How might my beliefs impact the service I provide?
- Do I have the correct behaviors?
- Do I have appropriate attitudes when dealing with an abused woman?
- What policies exist in our organization that encourage effective collaboration with immigrant communities and with immigrant abused women in particular?
- Am I comfortable with those policies?
- Has the organization provided training to the workers to develop the necessary skills to enable them to behave in a culturally appropriate way?
- How sensitive are we to other groups’ cultures?
• Is there any picture, artifact or other symbol that puts immigrant communities and/or abused women at ease when they enter the offices? (E.g., welcome sign in different languages, flags, pictures of different ethnicity)
• How genuine are we when we say we accept other groups’ cultures?
• Does race or colour of the woman affect the way I talk to them or the way I make a referral?
• Do I consider women as experts of their lives or do I see myself as the expert?

A preliminary report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women at the United Nations, 22 November 1994 gives the following recommendations that are also relevant to us in Canada:

• Provide Violence Against Women training for settlement workers and for other programs serving immigrants, such as the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs
• Provide funding to Immigrant Settlement agencies to allow them to utilize the services of trained cultural interpreters from agencies in the community
• Provide funding for culturally accessible and multi-lingual information about Violence Against Women services, agencies, programs, and legal aid clinics specifically developed to address woman abuse
• Provide information to immigrant and refugee women, particularly those in abusive relationships
• Obtain and allot funds for the dissemination of information through multi-lingual hotlines, the settlement.org website and through immigrant services and ethno-specific organizations.
• Provide culturally sensitive programs for immigrant, refugee women, and women of colour
• Agencies that receive Violence against Women funding should ensure access to services in both the official languages. (This requires appropriate staffing and salary funding sufficient to facilitate outreach, supervision, training and promotion.)

Serving Immigrant Women and Preventing Abuse

• Recognize the cultural beliefs and practices of the woman
• Inform of services and provide appropriate referrals
• Adapt the safety planning according to the unique situation of the abused woman
• Educate the woman on the illegality of abuse
• Educate on the seriousness of the abuse

3.8 Additional Questions that Service Providers Working With Women from Other Cultures, Ethnicities, Languages, and Religions Should Ask

The worker who comes into contact with an immigrant woman who is identified as a victim of domestic violence should ask the following questions:
• Do I realize what the woman is going through?
• Does the woman have somewhere else to go for help?
• What is her emotional situation?
• How frightened is she of her husband?
• Do I have a way of assisting her? Do I have the skills?
• Do I have the skills to deal with a woman from a different culture than my own?
• Who in my organization is better equipped to assess the victim? Have I discussed with my supervisors how to assess if the woman who came to me for some other service is a victim of abuse? Do I know what next steps to take?
• Am I aware that, as an immigrant woman, she might be facing challenges that relate to her immigration status, and that her status might be worsening the domestic abuse? What exact challenges is the immigrant woman who is before me in this case facing? In light of those challenges, how will I approach the intervention?
• Am I aware of what barriers the woman will be facing?
• Where am I going to refer the woman? Does my own organization have a woman abuse program? If not, do I know what procedure to follow to refer the woman?
• Is my organization going to report to authorities, if this is the chosen course, or will the report be done by the organization to which the referral is being made? What procedure has been established?

**What kind of assistance is needed by immigrant women who have been abused?**

The kind of assistance that immigrant abused women need is dictated by the complex situation of each woman. The complexity of the situation requires a multifaceted approach that should be underlined by both cultural sensitivity and by sensitivity to immigrant-related issues. The assistance required includes the following:

1. **Information, including:**
   - Legal information (e.g., individual rights, Canadian abuse law, immigration law and policy)
   - Information on location and mandates of help centres and resources
   - Support group information, including groups that might be using specific languages if language is an issue
   - Children’s Aid Society-related information and the rights of children
   - Education around the scope and prevalence of violence
   - Information on Peer groups (i.e., the option of having women in their communities provide information)

2. **Legal assistance, including:**
   - help understanding the legal information
   - assistance related to the legal process (e.g., dealing with documentation, the police, lawyers and the courts).

3. **Affordable housing to enable women to get into a safe environment as soon as possible.**

4. **Shelter facility for the woman and her children.**
5. Financial assistance and eventual income. This may mean arranging for social assistance. Long term it will include assisting the woman to get access to job training.

6. Counselling.

7. Community services and programs that will provide social opportunities to counter isolation.

### 3.9 Checklist for Service Providers Working with Abused Immigrant Women

**Exercise**

Can you suggest a checklist that could be used when working with abused immigrant women? Do you know of any existing tools that are helpful in responding to immigrant women?

For example:

1. Know the immigration status of the woman and establish if the woman might be in jeopardy due to her status. If you come into contact with immigrant women, you must have some knowledge of Canadian immigration policy and practices and how this affects the women you serve.

2. Without judgment, establish how the woman’s social, cultural and religious background might have an impact on her circumstance.

3. Establish whether the woman needs translation or interpretation services.

4. Have an organizational plan on how a woman who is identified as a victim of abuse should be handled (e.g., use the best practice manual of your organization).

5. Listen to what the woman needs first, and ask if the subsequent referrals are adequate for her.

### 3.10 Working with Victims from Other Cultures – Highlights

Working with victims from other cultures, ethnicities, language groups and religions requires the following:

- Using appropriate language
- Ensuring interpretation and translation services are available
- Understanding the role of stress related to settlement
- Maintaining ongoing dialogue and learning
- Being aware of and minimizing our own biases with respect to different communities and cultures
- Understanding agency beliefs and organizational culture
- Learning about and acknowledging the experiences of people from different countries
- Building trust between ourselves and the immigrant women
- Informing the woman of existing options
- Being patient and courteous
- Avoiding the use of our own ethical and moral biases
- Being sensitive to a woman’s decision not to leave her community
- Being sensitive to a woman’s desire not to deal with her own community (In small communities, everyone knows each other.)

**Language**

When referring to individuals who lack important immigration documents (e.g., students or visitors whose visas have expired) use the term “undocumented” instead of “illegal.” This minimizes discomfort, fear, and the possibility of further victimization that could result from being seen as illegal.

Tapestri’s advice never to assume that a woman does not know English or French just because she speaks with an accent. In fact, many immigrant and refugee women come from countries where French or English are the official language. So it should not be assumed that a woman does not follow what is being said simply because she has an accent. Moreover, many women understand and speak English or French but are shy to speak for fear of not being understood. In these cases, we should train ourselves to be good listeners.

**Interpreter and Translation Services**

For women who do not speak the official languages, translation services should be available. Currently, some organizations use the abuser as the main translator each time a woman uses offered services, and this makes it impossible for her to disclose the abuse. Ensure, where possible, that an interpreter is scheduled at every stage of the process in dealing with the woman, instead of looking for interpreters at the last minute. This is very important particularly when dealing with protective order hearings, criminal hearings, etc.

It is our responsibility to ensure that the woman fully understands what is happening. It is not enough to simply ensure translation of her statements. She must also receive proper translation of all statements of others with whom she interacts (e.g., social workers, law enforcement officials, lawyers, judges, etc.)

**Role of Settlement-related Stress**

The stress of settling in a new environment, possibly having to deal with a new language, and unfamiliarity with the new culture should not be viewed as the cause of abuse, but rather as a “unique aggravator” of violence. Subsequently, focusing attention on factors that minimize the stress experienced by new families is very important in violence prevention.
Maintaining Ongoing Dialogue and Learning

It is possible to learn about a woman’s culture through ongoing dialogue with her, her family and community, and other sources and experts. Being well informed enhances one’s capacity to help as a frontline worker.

Awareness of Biases

It is important to review and appreciate our own beliefs in relation to other cultures and to understand how our own culture is similar to or different from other cultures and how those differences might bias the way we treat certain issues. This self-understanding would also assist us in the way we tolerate and appreciate culture-related behaviour and practices of others.

Understanding Agency Beliefs and Organizational Culture

This involves acknowledging the culturally predominant beliefs of our own organization and being aware of any ethnocentricity that may exist in the organization. Ethnocentricity is defined as “the belief that your own ethnic group is superior, or normal and that other groups are abnormal.” As Tapestri states:

> It is helpful to identify our beliefs to a point where we can understand how other groups differ, and respect those differences. Ethnocentricity leads to individuals making judgmental statements that may alienate the woman. Are there posters and materials that represent people from different cultures in your agency? Domestic violence occurs in all cultures. They just manifest themselves in different ways.

Source: Tapestri. Immigration and Refugee Coalition Challenging Gender Based Oppression. What to Keep in Mind When Working with Victims/Survivors from Other Cultures. [http://www.tapestri.org/article_working_w_women_other_cultures1.html](http://www.tapestri.org/article_working_w_women_other_cultures1.html)

Learn about Experiences in Different Countries

Learning about the political and social realities of various nations may enhance our understanding of the trauma women from those regions may have experienced. It may also help us to understand the need to develop specific violence prevention measures to meet unique needs stemming from women’s experiences in their countries of origin.

Building Trust

Building trust is very important to effective prevention of violence toward immigrant women, because some cultures have a norm where talking about private matters is done only within the family. Although an immigrant woman may lack the family structure she had in her country of origin and may desire to speak with someone about the abuse, overcoming the ingrained cultural norm could be a challenge. It is imperative that, as frontline staff working with immigrant women from different cultures and backgrounds, we endeavour to gain the confidence of the woman. How do we do this? In many cultures when a woman tells a problem to a family member or to a member of the community,
it does not mean that the person listening is expected to take action. How do we draw the line between listening with empathy and not taking action, and listening with the knowledge that what is being stated involves illegal actions that have been committed?

**Informing the Woman of Existing Options**

Given the differences in cultures and practices, it is important to provide explanations rather than just a list of relevant options. For example, explain in some detail, her legal or housing options, or the services that exist and the differences among them. It must be understood that in most cultures, communication is done in an oral, rather than a written form. If a pamphlet or important instructions are given to a woman, it is prudent, irrespective of the woman’s education level, to first explain what is important in the document, for example if there are closing dates for applying for a desired service. Do not just hand the woman the document with the expectation that she will read it on time. There have been cases where important appointments have been missed because the woman read the information after the given date. This is even more important if the woman is not a fluent speaker of the language in which the documentation is written.

**Patience**

Remember that working with a victim requires time and careful planning, with respect to resources. This is particularly true when working with immigrant women who might require interpretation services and, since many are not familiar with the cultural and societal expectations, more explanations are necessary. Because many immigrant and refugee women are reluctant to discuss or report the abuse, it is important to allow more time to avoid missed opportunities to make effective response.

**Sensitivity to Woman’s Choices Regarding Her Community**

As already stated, many immigrant women prefer not to take legal action against the abuser for a variety of reasons. Weigh the balance between safety and sensitivity, and educate the woman on the risks. Use your many skills (e.g., cultural sensitivity, trust building, patience, etc.) and knowledge to encourage the woman to agree to a referral to the appropriate service.
3.11 Cultural Issues and Competencies in Preventing and Addressing Domestic Violence: - End of Module Exercise

QUESTION 1: (a) Name three challenges faced by men and women in new Canadian societies.  
(b) How do these impact spousal relationships?

QUESTION 2: List six kinds of assistance the immigrant woman in a domestic violence situation needs. Determine whether short- or long-term assistance is required?

QUESTION 3: Do you know of any existing tools that are helpful in responding to immigrant women?

Question 4: Why are cultural competencies important?

ANSWERS:

1. (a) Isolation with no community and professional networks; unemployment; lack of knowledge of Canadian system; in some cases, racial discrimination  
   (b) These can lead to frustration and stress, which may, in some cases, translate into spousal violence

2. Among others, six forms of assistance that the woman may need include:

   - Assistance on legal matters
   - Financial aid
   - Housing
   - Health related assistance
   - Immigration related
   - Social networks, for example support group

All of the above could be long- or short-term.

3. Risk Assessment Tool by the Women Abuse Council of Toronto

4. Cultural Competencies are important because they enable us to:

   - Examine our own personal values and biases. For example what is the basis for our concerns? Are we making assumptions or being judgmental? Is this a result of our ethnocentric or euro-centric bias?
   - Recognize that we are in a position of power and, depending on our values and level of cultural sensitivity, can make this a positive or negative experience for the woman
• Become familiar with our comfort level with the topic of domestic violence
• Become aware of our skill level, responsibilities and boundaries
Module 4: Conducting an Assessment, Intervention, and Making Referrals for Domestic Violence
4.1 Conducting an Assessment, Intervention, and Making Referrals for Domestic Violence – Content

4.1 Conducting an Assessment, Intervention, and Making Referrals for Domestic Violence – Content

4.2 Conducting an Assessment, Intervention, and Making Referrals for Domestic Violence - Objectives

4.3 Conducting an Assessment, Intervention, and Making Referrals for Domestic Violence - Resources

4.4 Conducting an Assessment, Intervention, and Making Referrals for Domestic Violence - Multiple-Choice question and Answer

4.5 The Concept of Prevention in Domestic Violence

4.6 Abuse Prevention: Client, Agency and Community Focus

4.7 Assessment in violence Prevention

4.7.1 Assessment - Definition

4.7.2 Levels of Assessment

4.7.3 Important Pre-Assessment Requirements

4.7.4 Issues Relating to the Woman’s Disclosure of the Abuse

4.7.5 Guidelines for Conducting an Effective Assessment

4.7.8 Tips to Remember During the Assessment

4.7.9 Language Use during Assessment

4.7.10 Assessing the Presence and Level of Abuse

4.8 Intervention in Violence Prevention
4.8.1 Intervention - Definition

4.8.2 Goals for Effectively Responding to Domestic Violence Victims

4.8.3 Types of Intervention

4.8.4 Levels of Intervention

4.8.5 Process and Extent of Response in Intervention

4.8.6 Some Safety Procedures

4.8.7 Guidelines for Conducting an Effective Intervention

4.8.8 Learning about Ourselves as Workers Before Assessing and Intervening

4.8.9 Managing the Self

4.8.10 Frontline Worker Intervention Skills

4.2.11 Role of the Organization in Intervention

4.2.12 Frontline Intervention Tips

4.9 Referral

4.9.1 Making referrals to local Resources

4.9.2 Guidelines for Reporting Domestic Violence

4.9.3 Understanding and Supporting the Survivor

4.10 Conducting an Assessment, Intervention - End of Module Exercises
4.2 Conducting an Assessment, Intervention, and Making Referrals for Domestic Violence - Objectives

Domestic violence has drastic consequences, which could, in some cases, mean loss of life. For this reason, proactive assessment is very important, not only in addressing, but also in preventing domestic violence against immigrant women.

At the completion of this module, trainees will possess an understanding of how to conduct an effective assessment, intervention and referral for immigrant and refugee women who are victims of domestic violence.

The objectives of this module are:

- To enhance the learner’s knowledge relating to preventing violence against women
- To provide the learner with tools to identify how they can best intervene to assess the risk and to provide the woman with appropriate options and inter-agency support and referrals
- To increase the learner’s ability to make observations and ask questions that will enable them to make an informed assessment of the woman’s risk of abuse
- Enhance the learner’s knowledge of how to support the survivor, including skills and resources for subsequent action
4.3 Conducting an Assessment, Intervention, and Making Referrals for Domestic Violence -Resources

Woman Abuse Council of Toronto

Prevention Institute
Violence Prevention
Prevention Institute's approach to violence prevention addresses the complex and multiple underlying contributors of violence including: poverty, unemployment, oppression, substance abuse, educational failure, fragmented families, witnessing or experiencing past violence, and feelings of powerlessness. Prevention Partnerships.

Assaulted women’s Helpline webpage
Services for Assaulted Women.
Women who are abused require, among others, the following services:
  • Emergency shelter
  • Emotional support
  • Short/long term counselling
  • Legal assistance and advocacy
  • Financial assistance
  • Affordable housing
It is essential that these services be provided in a manner that validates the women's experience and empowers her to undertake her own healing process. Accessibility to these services is crucial to the healing and rebuilding processes. Fear and shame caused by abuse are real barriers to access (from Assaulted women’s Helpline webpage http://www.awhl.org/abuse.htm).
**Education Wife Assault**

“How to Help an Assaulted Woman.”

- Know the facts about woman abuse
- Assure her that you believe her story
- Listen and let her talk about her feelings
- Do not judge or give advice. Talk to her about her options
- Physical safety is the first priority. If you believe she is in danger, tell her. Help her plan an emergency exit
- Respect her right to confidentiality
- Let her know you care and want to help
- Allow her to feel the way she does and support her decisions. Let her talk about the caring aspects of the relationship as well. Don't try to diminish her feelings about her partner. Don't criticize her for staying with him, but share information on how abuse increases over time without intervention
- Give clear messages, including:
  - Violence is never okay or justifiable
  - Her safety and her children's safety are always the most important issues
  - Wife assault is a crime
  - She does not cause the abuse
  - She is not to blame for her partner's behaviour
  - She cannot change her partner's behaviour
  - Apologies and promises will not end the violence
  - She is not alone
  - She is not crazy
  - Abuse is not loss of control, it is a means of control

- Discuss how the violence affects the children
- Be encouraged that every time she reaches out for help she is gaining the emotional strength needed to make effective decisions. She may be too fearful and immobilized or confused to take any step immediately
- Although police can be asked to accompany a woman going back home to retrieve personal belongings, encourage her to be prepared for the possibility of leaving home in a hurry. She should have necessary documents or photocopies ready, as well as important items such as:
  - credit cards, cash, bank books
  - keys
  - medications
  - passport, birth certificates, citizenship papers
  - house children's favourite toy, clothing, etc.

- An abused woman needs our support and encouragement in order to make choices that are right for her. However, there are some forms of advice that are not useful and even dangerous for her to hear:
  - Don't tell her what to do, when to leave or when not to leave
  - Don't tell her to go back to the situation and try a little harder
  - Don't rescue her by trying to find quick solutions
  - Don't suggest you try to talk to her husband to straighten things out
Don't place yourself in danger by confronting the assaultive man
Don't tell her she should stay for the sake of the children
Never recommend joint family or marital counselling in situations of emotional or physical abuse. It is dangerous for the woman and will not lead to a resolution that is in her interest
Encourage separate counselling for the man and woman, if they want counselling”

**Department of Justice Canada**
Preventing and Responding to Spousal Abuse.

In Canada, certain categories of abuse, such as assault, sexual assault and criminal harassment are crimes under the *Criminal Code of Canada*. In recent years, a series of amendments have been made to the *Criminal Code* to strengthen the laws related to spousal abuse (see Reforming the Law and Enhancing its Implementation below). In addition, a number of provinces have put in place specific family violence legislation that provides additional protective measures, such as emergency intervention orders, for victims of spousal abuse. Other non-legislative measures have been implemented including the introduction of mandatory charging polices, which require that charges be laid in all spousal abuse cases where reasonable grounds to charge exist, and mandatory prosecution policies, which require Crown prosecutors to prosecute in all spousal abuse cases where a reasonable likelihood of conviction exists. Other non-legislative measures include dedicated domestic violence courts, victim/witness assistance programs, and mandatory counselling for offenders.

Given the extent of spousal abuse in Canada - as well as the complexity of this issue and its enormous impact - an effective response requires the ongoing commitment and collaboration of community members, practitioners and policy makers across Canada. Community services and support for victims, such as shelters, are essential.

According to Department of Justice Canada, the following responses are important:

- increase information about spousal abuse, its dynamics and impacts
- improve information exchange
- enhance policy and improve efforts to prevent and respond to spousal abuse
- enhance services and supports for those who are abused and their children, and
- ensure that abusers are accountable for their actions through the criminal justice system.
- Support for program and service delivery
- Providing sensitive, accessible and effective supports and services for individuals who are abused, and their children, is essential.


**Women’s Voice 1997. Chatham Kent Women’s Centre:**
What Can An Assaulted Woman Do To Protect Herself?
  - Consult a legal expert or family court worker about your rights.
  - Consider laying a charge of assault even while staying at home, or else leave home temporarily until the court case is heard.
  - Find a supportive women's group.
  - Find a supportive counsellor.
  - Become involved in community activities so you are not so isolated and so you can gain self-confidence.
• Try to predict the times he might blow up and send the kids to a neighbour's or to a relative's house for help.
• Be familiar with the resources in your community (e.g., local shelter).
• Try to save a little emergency money for yourself. Open a bank account in your own name, preferably at a different bank from that of your husband. Request the bank not to send the statements to your home; pick them up in person.
• Ask your neighbours to call the police if they hear a fight.
• Plan an emergency exit. Hide extra clothes, money and/or car keys at a friend's house.
• Take a part-time job outside the home.
• Upgrade your education or skills with part-time or correspondence courses.
• Never make a threat or give an ultimatum to your partner, unless you are prepared to act on it.

Available at: http://www.ckwc.org/n197_08.htm (April 2007).

**Family Violence Prevention Fund**

Domestic Violence Assessment and Intervention.

“It is critical that providers understand how to respond to domestic violence victims once they have been identified. Policies and protocols on domestic violence must also include guidelines on effective assessment, intervention, documentation and referral. The Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF) recommends that providers receive training on these skills prior to implementing a protocol screening. Model training materials, department guidelines, protocols and other tools are available through the FVPF’s toll free number 888-Rx-Abuse, TTY:800-595-4889”.

**Assessment**

- Assess the immediate safety needs of the victim.
- Assess the pattern and history of the abuse.
- Assess the connection between domestic violence and the patient’s health issues.
- Assess the victim’s current access to advocacy and support groups.
- Assess patient’s safety: Is there future risk or death or significant injury or harm due to the domestic violence?

**Intervention**

- Goals for effectively responding to domestic violence victims:
- Listen to the patient and provide validating messages:
- Provide information about domestic violence to the patient:
- Listen and respond to safety issues:
- Make referrals to local resources:


**Shelternet.ca**

Making a Safety Plan.

Many organizations have developed safety plans that can be used by women who are at risk of violence. Shelternet.ca have outlined a plan in which a woman should, among others, have a set of keys; keep small change for taxis, and have at hand important documents such as health cards.

The Peel Committee against Woman Abuse (PCAWA)
The Peel Committee against Woman Abuse (PCAWA) has launched a website, where you can find safety planning resources for women and children in 12 different languages including Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Arabic.
Available at: http://www.pcawa.org/rp1.htm (April 2007).

SOME DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ONLINE RESOURCES IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

SOME BASIC SAFETY PLANS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES:

Peel Committee against Woman Abuse has Safety Plan in Hindi.

Peel Committee against Woman Abuse has Safety Plan in Punjabi.

Peel Committee against Woman Abuse has Safety Plan in Urdu.

Sheltanet.ca has resources in:
- Punjabi
- Farsi
- French
- Portuguese
- Polish
- Vietnamese
- Arabic
Available at: http://www.shelternet.ca/splashPage.htm (April 2007).
4.4 Conducting an Assessment, Intervention, and Making Referrals for Domestic Violence - Multiple-Choice question and Answer

QUESTION

You are employed at the front desk of a community organization. Nadaro, an immigrant stay-home mother comes to your organization. Nadaro states that she wishes to talk with you in private. You take her to an empty room nearby. She reveals that her husband, who had come with her to Canada two years ago, under the professional category, has been behaving in a strange manner, often accusing her of having been the cause of their immigration to Canada because of her expensive ways while they were in their home country. According to Nadaro, he is bitter that he had left a well-paid and prestigious job in their country to Canada where he was now working in a factory. Whenever he arrives from work, he complains that the house is untidy because of the kids’ toys around the house. He says he cannot stand the noise made by their 2 children Mickey and Jyiaz when he is tired from work. At first he was rude to her only when he came home from work, however, he now constantly calls her ‘bitch’ and ‘lazy’ and shouts at her constantly throughout the day, even when it is his week off. In the last week, the situation has become worse because he has started slapping and punching her. The night before, he got himself drunk and then punched her in front of the children and threatened to kill her the dinner is not ready when he comes from work.

Which of the following steps should be taken?

A. Tell her to leave the house at once and offer to give her the number of the shelter.

B. Immediately call Children’s Aid Society because when you were at lunch break recently, you overhead a conversation in which people were talking about the duty to report.

C. Listen attentively and emphatically and tell Nadaro that you are very concerned about the situation. Explain that Winnie, a colleague of yours, is very knowledgeable and has a lot of experience in family matters. Tell her that Winnie is also designated to work with women who have this kind of problem. Refer her to Winnie immediately.

A. 1 only
B. 2 only
C. 2 and 3 only
D. 3 only

ANSWER:
C

You should immediately refer the woman to Winnie who is qualified and designated to handle this family matter. She will carry out appropriate risk assessment and appropriate intervention, including appropriate counselling and referral. She will talk to the Nadaro about the duty to report and try to convince her to make the call with her to appropriate authorities.
4.5 The Concept of Prevention in Domestic Violence

Prevention entails:
- Avoiding and deterring
- Prevention of escalation
- Prevention of reoccurrence
- Motivating change to stop violence
- Empowering change

4.6 Abuse Prevention: Client, Agency and Community Focus

Client focused prevention in domestic violence entails:

1. Preparing and providing information to the women on the rights of women and children in Canada.
2. Providing information on where the woman can find support services in case of abuse.
3. Providing information on family counselling services.
4. Providing safety planning in all situations, no matter the level of risk.
5. Emphasizing the seriousness of abuse and providing education on the signs of abuse.
6. Discussing with the woman the power and control model with respect to her relationship.
7. Using sensitive and appropriate language when referring to issues of abuse. (The woman may not be familiar with the term “abuse,” so, instead, provide examples of what constitutes abuse.)

Agency and Community focused prevention in domestic violence entails:

1. Providing information and knowledge on abuse (e.g., flyers at places of worship, at seminars, ESL classes, grocery stores, laundry facilities, and other appropriate sites; provide other educational materials (audio or print) in different languages, etc.).
2. Providing community activities in order to get prevention materials into women’s hands.
3. Mobilizing various community organizations to offer prevention workshops.
4. Mobilizing community leaders to share information.
5. Encouraging the involvement of youth and women.
6. Establishing a best practice manual for organizations to promote effective response.
7. Training service providers on a regular basis on domestic violence.
8. Working closely with the domestic violence unit of the police department and of other institutions to promote understanding of what takes place prior to first contact.
It is always important to consider what kinds and levels of prevention are necessary to reduce immigrant women’s experiences of domestic violence incidents.

4.7 Assessment in violence Prevention

4.7.1 Assessment - Definition

Assessment entails a review, an appraisal, and evaluation. It involves estimation but, ultimately, involves a conclusion or result.

Proactive assessment of an individual means assessing and evaluating an individual, not after, but before the occurrence of an event, with a view to preventing it. Because of the importance of assessment in prevention, it is important that service providers obtain appropriate assessment training. This is because assessment training increases our knowledge of proactive assessment in preventing and addressing abuse, enhances the skills related to making accurate and proactive assessment to establish the risk level of abuse, and enhances knowledge of how to support the victim, including the skills and resources for subsequent action.

4.7.2 Levels of Assessment

There are different models of intervention.

Given that the OCASI Prevention of Domestic Violence against Immigrant Women project focuses on training those frontline workers who do not have the qualifications and extensive experience with woman abuse programs, what is outlined below is a simple model, based on frontline workers being in the position of first line response. Subsequent to an initial assessment, such a worker must refer the victim to a member of staff in the organization, or if the organization has no woman abuse program, to an organization where there is qualified staff who will carry out Level 2 assessment and begin the intervention. Each agency needs to have a well-defined and stipulated protocol indicating how frontline workers are to work with women identified as victims. The levels of assessment proposed here are only suggestions and are not prescribed to any specific agency.

Level 1 Assessment

This is the initial assessment by a frontline worker who may or may not be experienced in responding to woman abuse.

Level 2 Assessment

This is a more in-depth assessment by a worker who is specialized in woman abuse issues, including immigration issues (e.g., the challenges related to immigration status).

Level 3 Assessment

Assessment is also done at various levels as the woman seeks and makes use of a variety of services. For example, assessment will occur when legal or financial aid is sought, or when housing is requested by her or on her behalf.
The OCASI Prevention of Domestic Violence against Immigrant Women project is concerned with level 1 assessment because the training is targeted at workers who come into contact with immigrant women seeking services, but who do not have the qualifications and extensive experience with woman abuse issues.

4.7.3 Important Pre-Assessment Requirements

Before starting the assessment:

- Establish if the woman needs an interpreter
- Ensure she has access to an interpreter and only use family or friends if she requests it (Children should not be used under any circumstances)
- Ensure the environment is safe for disclosures
- Validate and normalize the woman’s experiences
- Ask the woman’s permission to write some facts to aid memory. Explain to her why you are writing notes and what you will use them for

4.7.4 Issues Relating to the Woman’s Disclosure of the Abuse

- Women need to be given an opportunity to present a domestic violence problem
- The issue of abuse may not be raised at an early meeting before trust has been built
- Sometimes the woman will not present the issue of abuse. She may present a different problem (e.g., housing)
- A woman may speak about a friend who is being abused, when in fact it is she who is the victim
- A child may have presented concerns about abuse
- The occurrence of abuse could be denied at one stage and disclosed later
- A worker has to recognize that this is a way for the person to keep the abuse confidential
- A worker may need to educate a client about abuse – some cultures do not recognize physical or emotional abuse as abuse
- Women may be afraid of disclosing because they think it could result in their children being taken away

Source: National Association of Social Workers. Domestic Violence Assessment and Intervention provided by the Family Violence Prevention Fund.  
4.7.5 Guidelines for Conducting an Effective Assessment

Quoting the Family Violence Prevention Fund, the National Association of Social Workers recommends the following steps:

- **Assess the immediate safety needs of the victim [by asking:]** "Are you in immediate danger? Where is your partner now? Where will he or she be when you are done with your [care here]? Do you want or need security, or the police to be notified immediately?"

- **Assess the pattern and history of the abuse.** Assess the partner’s physical, sexual, or psychological tactics, as well as the economic coercion of the patient. "How long has the violence been going on? Has your partner forced or harmed you sexually? Has your partner harmed your family, friends, or pets? Does your partner control your activities, money, or children?"

- **Assess the connection between domestic violence and the patient’s health issues.** Assess the impact of the abuse on the victim’s physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being. What is the degree of the partner’s control over the victim? "How is your partner’s abusive behavior affecting your physical health? (For example, arthritis, migraine and other frequent headaches)."

- **Assess the victim’s current access to advocacy and support groups.** Are there culturally appropriate community resources available to the woman? What resources (if any), are available now? "What resources have you used, or tried in the past? What happened? Did you find them helpful or appropriate?"

- **Assess [the woman’s] safety: Is there future risk or death or significant injury or harm due to the domestic violence?** Ask about the partner’s tactics: escalation in frequency or severity of the violence, homicide or suicide threats, use of alcohol or drugs, as well as about the health consequences of past abuse.


It will be helpful also to do the following:

- Determine, using the above questions, whether there is future risk of death, or of significant injury or harm due to domestic violence
- Read verbal and non-verbal signs
  - Observe any hesitation or anxiety. Consider that hesitation and anxiety could be due to the woman speaking a foreign language
- Listen actively and validate the woman’s story, for she needs to know that you are listening to her and that you understand her situation

- Conduct a high risk assessment if the woman is in danger (See High Risk Assessment Tool)
- Determine when it is appropriate to ask about children and their ages
- Remember there are implications for workers with regard to “duty to report” (See Duty to Report)
- Recognize and encourage the woman’s strengths, asking narrative questions, such as:
  - What did you do today?
  - What did you do before you came to Canada?
  - Tell me about your friends
  - What resources or help have you used, or tried in the past? What happened?
- Develop an inventory of strengths and a history of behavior
- Consider safety of the space where disclosure is occurring (e.g., an open concept office could be problematic)
- Consider the woman’s fear that disclosing could result in children being taken away
- Consider the ‘message’ given when a person is led through the reception area in tears to a private room, or to the counsellor known to work with domestic violence
- Consider the impact of companions (e.g., friends and family members, children, in-laws, husband, parents) who are present
- Understand that there may be substance abuse or mental health issues
- Help the woman to feel comfortable by demonstrating concern about her welfare
- Be mindful of your body language; appropriateness of touching or not and how to touch is dependent on culture (e.g., a light touch on the shoulder was identified as being appropriate in the Tamil culture)
- Allow the woman to determine how much she wants to disclose
- Be compassionate and empathetic
- Clarify for the woman what will happen after information has been obtained regarding domestic violence
- Learn about the woman’s informal and formal supports (e.g., a trusted family member or friend, someone from her faith community)
- Discuss whether identified supports are reliable and easily obtainable
- Provide information about options and resources
- Make a referral to intra-agency staff (specialized in domestic violence counselling) or inform and assist women in gaining intervention through an appropriate agency that deals with issues of domestic violence

4.7.8 Tips to Remember During the Assessment

- Communicate and emphasize confidentiality
- Read signs
- Observe hesitation
- Listen and validate
- Conduct a high-risk assessment if the woman is in danger
- Consider when it is appropriate to ask about impact on children. There are implications for action.
• Recognize woman’s strengths (e.g., Use narrative questioning to learn about her, “What did you do today? What did you do before you came to Canada? Tell me about your friends,” and develop an inventory of strengths and a history of behavior.)
• Consider safety of space (e.g., open office)
• Consider woman’s fear that disclosing could result in children being taken from her
• Consider the ‘message’ given when a person is led through the reception area in tears to a private room, or to the counsellor known to work with woman abuse
• Consider the impact of companions (e.g., friends and family members, children, in-laws, husband, parents, who are present)
• Use questions from existing assessment tools
• Understand substance abuse
• Use written forms when questioning about abuse to provide another channel for disclosure, as the woman might feel safer responding to written questions
• Help the woman to feel comfortable
• Demonstrate concern about her welfare
• Determine if there are children involved
• Remember the importance of body language
• Listen effectively
• Allow the person to determine how much she wants to talk about the problem
• Avoid questions that are presumptive
• Be compassionate
• Validate what the woman is saying (e.g., active listening)
• Use interpreters (a free service exists)
• Communicate clearly what the next steps are now that the information has been shared
• Provide support and inquire about the person’s informal supports (e.g., a trusted family member or friend)
• Remember faith communities may or may not be supportive
• Discuss what support looks like, whether it is really support
• Inquire whether support is close or distant
• Help the person to make decisions so she is central in the decision making
• Ask the woman what she needs
• Inform her of her options. Do not assume that a woman would prefer to be referred to someone in her own ethno-cultural community
• Recognize that some women have never been encouraged or allowed to make decisions
• Do not assume that the woman knows what the options are (e.g., she might not know what a shelter is)

4.7.9 Language Use during Assessment

Language is very important. During verbal communication, workers need to pay attention to how they express themselves. When communicating verbally, workers need to be mindful of:

• The line of questioning
• Heightened sensitivity on the part of the victim
• Tone of voice
• Upsetting quality of “Why?” questions, which can sound inculpating
• Using open ended questions
• Being non-judgmental
• Not raising one’s voice
• Using simplified language. Crises can affect how people hear and process information, so do not use professional jargon or acronyms
• Inappropriateness of using really direct language

Example scenarios

Scenario One
A woman comes to the agency seeking employment. She does not speak English; however, the worker speaks her language. Then the worker tries to inform her about LINC classes in order to prepare her for the labour market. The woman identifies that her partner will not allow her to attend any kind of educational setting and begins to cry.

[This is a critical point for identifying the safety of the environment at your office. If the environment is not safe (i.e., not an appropriate location of this kind of disclosure), calmly and sensitively relocate to a location that is safe within the office.]

The worker responds, “It seems like this is something that really bothers you. Is it that you want to go to school but your partner doesn’t let you?”

[This type of question will help validate the woman’s emotions and elicit information about power and control issues without being invasive.]

The woman may begin to talk about the reasons why her partner has not allowed her to go to school, including the environment of power and control in which she lives. This leads to the opportunity for the worker to talk with the woman about the nature of abuse, the options available, and services. The worker can then ask the woman whether she would like information about the options and services available.

[If the woman says no, the worker should not pass judgment for declining support. The worker should validate her decision and indicate that the door remains open if and when she feels ready.]

If the woman desires to know about services and options, the worker can present and discuss them with her. If appropriate, referrals are made.

[Workers should not assume how much or how little the woman knows about options and services available. The worker will need to gear this information to the woman’s needs.]

When dealing with the woman, it is important:

• To put oneself in their place to understand their challenges and discomfort.
• Avoid stereotyping about women seeking help
• To use humor, where appropriate, to help people be able to look at themselves
• Beware of things that make some people feel uncomfortable (e.g., dress, speech, mannerisms, and perceptions that newcomers are from a “lower class” and are inferior)
• Develop a self-awareness checklist

97
Asking Questions to Help Learn about the Abused Woman

To understand a woman’s current situation and identify potential risks, it is important to ask critical questions. This involves not only understanding client challenges but also identifying client strengths.

Points for discussion in your own organization:

- Address case management (e.g., referring a client concludes your work with her). This ensures there is no intra-agency conflict.
- Consider gender concerns. Sometimes counsellors are men and it is hard for women to disclose. Inquire whether they prefer a woman.
- Consider your alliance if you are working with a woman and her family
- Remember your role (e.g., build trust, create safe environment for disclosure, educate about abuse, validate, and listen empathically, etc.)
- Make decisions when there is no one to whom you can refer
- Be careful of vicarious trauma. Practice self-care and seek assistance if you need it.
- Make appropriate referrals (e.g., appearing sad or down could be situational and not an instance of clinical depression requiring psychiatric care).

4.7.10 Assessing the Presence and Level of Abuse

- Determine whether abuse is present. (Look for signs of physical and emotional trauma, fear, denial, etc.)
- Assess for indicators of high risk for serious injury if abuse is present. (Refer to Women Abuse Council of Toronto’s High Risk Assessment Tool.)
- Consider and begin to address the survivor’s needs, keeping in mind immediate and long-term needs
- Establish her existing support networks

4.8 Intervention in Violence Prevention

4.8.1 Intervention - Definition

Intervention entails an act that results in an effect. It is intended to alter the course of a process or an event. In domestic violence cases, it is hoped that the overall outcome of intervention will be, among others, a reduction or removal of the risk to the victim.

Following the initial assessment by the frontline worker who may or may not be a specialist, interventions should be conducted by workers specialized in domestic violence.
4.8.2 Goals for Effectively Responding to Domestic Violence Victims

According to the NASW, the Goals for effectively responding to domestic violence victims should be the following:

- Increase victim safety and support victims in protecting themselves and their children by validating their experiences, providing support, and providing information about resources and options
- Inform [victim] about any limits in confidentiality for example, child abuse or domestic violence reporting requirements
- The goal is not to get [the woman] to leave their abusers, or to "fix" the problem for the woman, but to provide support and information

Source: National Association of Social Workers. Domestic Violence Assessment and Intervention provided by the Family Violence Prevention Fund.

4.8.3 Types of Intervention

In woman abuse cases, intervention can take a variety of forms. The following is a list of matters with which a skilled worker can help through information provision or referral:

- Information to make survivors aware of various existing intervention options
- Emergency shelter
- Permanent housing
- Emotional support
- Medical interventions
- Counselling
- Support networks
- Legal and financial assistance
- Family support
- Support around immigration-related issues

4.8.4 Levels of Intervention

Once the assessment is complete, the next step is to make an intervention.

Intervention entails an act that results in an effect. It is intended to alter the course of a process or an event. In domestic violence cases, it is hoped that the overall outcome of intervention will be, among others, a reduction or removal of the risk to the victim.

There are several levels of intervention:
Level 1 Intervention
The initial Level 1 Assessment, carried out by a frontline worker who may or may not be experienced in woman abuse responses, can also be regarded as a Level 1 Intervention, the next step in the intervention process is, thus, the Level 2 Assessment (above) by a worker who is qualified to work with an abused woman.

Level 2 Intervention
This level of intervention is accomplished after in-depth assessment by workers who are specialized in woman abuse issues. As previously suggested, any mismanagement of the process may result in greater risk for the woman.

As in the case of assessment, intervention is also done at various levels as the woman seeks assistance from a variety of services. For example, intervention, just like assessment, occurs when legal or financial aid is sought, or when housing is requested by herself or on her behalf.

4.8.5 Process and Extent of Response in Intervention

- Without frightening the survivor, explain to her the kind of danger she might be in and remind her that, in extreme circumstances, it could cost her life (Using the Woman Abuse Council of Toronto’s High Risk Assessment Tool is a way to assess for this risk. The process of completing the tool is useful in that women are able to self-assess their level of danger).
- Acknowledge the difficulty relating to the fact that there are children involved and discuss with the woman what resources might be available (What resources are available in your area?)
- Discuss existing options that would enhance her safety

The response should be limited because it is very risky to try to effect a comprehensive intervention without experience and, more importantly, without being qualified to do so. For agencies that do not have a woman abuse program, policies should exist detailing the extent of intervention to be provided.

Response in agencies that do not have a program should be limited to:

- Recognizing whether or not the woman is abused (e.g., observe for physical and emotional signs of abuse)
- Informing the woman about abuse if she does not recognize that she is abused (e.g., reviewing with her what constitutes abuse)
- Communicating to the woman that help exists and with her consent connections to services can be made
- Calling ahead to a relevant organization to ensure services to which she is being referred are still available
- Making a specific referral to a specified organization and individual once the woman has indicated her desire for help
- Recording necessary information (See legal section about recording)
• Performing follow-up

With respect to intervention, the NASW also recommends the following intervention steps

**Listen to the [woman] and provide validating messages:**

1. "You don’t deserve this. There is no excuse for domestic violence. You deserve better."
2. "I am concerned. This is harmful to you (and it can be harmful to your children)."
3. "This is complicated. Sometimes it takes time to figure this out."
4. "You are not alone in figuring this out. There may be some options. I will support your choices."
5. "I care. I am glad you told me. I want to work together to keep you as safe and healthy as possible."
6. "Stopping the abuse is the responsibility of your partners, not yours."

Provide information about domestic violence to the [woman]:

- Domestic violence is common and happens in all kinds of relationships
- Most violence continues and often becomes more frequent and severe
- Violence in the home can hurt children (if the [woman] has children).
- Domestic violence impacts the [woman’s] health
- Stopping domestic violence is the responsibility of the perpetrator, not the victim

Listen and respond to safety issues:

- Show the [woman] a brochure about safety planning and go over it with her or him
- Review ideas for how to keep information private and safe from the abuser
- Offer the [woman] immediate access to an advocate 24 hour local, state, or national domestic violence hotline number
- Offer to have a provider or advocate discuss safety then or at a later appointment
- If the [woman] says she or he feels she or he is in danger, take this very seriously
- If the [woman] is at high risk and is planning to leave the relationship, explain that leaving without telling the partner is the safest alternative
- Make sure the [woman] has a safe place to go and encourage her or him to talk to an advocate. Reinforce [the woman’s] autonomy in making decisions regarding [next steps]

4.8.6 Some Safety Procedures

The following are some safety procedures that can be discussed with the woman to reduce risk:

- Having the woman ask a neighbour in advance if she/he could call police should a violent act occur
- Removing all weapons from the house
- Developing an escape and safety plan (A number of safety plans currently exist and should be used by the worker instead of reinventing the wheel)
• Informing close supports about the conditions of the restraining order (if one exists) and what to do if the order is violated

**Exercise**

Can you list what you perceive to be an effective response? Can you compare your list with the one below and add to it any features that are missing?

There are effective and ineffective responses. An effective response:

• Acknowledges diversity (e.g., groups are not homogeneous and often need specific responses because they have different value systems and practices, different religious and social backgrounds, etc.)
• Constitutes an early response that is also preventative
• Recognizes cultural and societal issues and acknowledges that race and ethnicity have an impact on one’s existential reality (e.g., how groups are impacted by colour; how systemic beliefs and barriers can work to minimize the abuse)
• Recognizes that women must be treated as individuals, even when they are perceived as belonging to the community. For example, they
  - May or may not have support from members of the community
  - May or may not have a language challenge
  - May not want to be assisted by a member of their own community
• Takes into account the woman’s input

**4.8.7 Guidelines for Conducting an Effective Intervention**

• Remain calm
• Be patient because the woman may find it difficult to make a disclosure of abuse
• Provide information about domestic violence to the woman (e.g., forms of abuse, effects of the abuse, cycle of violence, etc.)
• Inform her of your role (i.e., to help her make informed choices and decisions)
• Listen to the woman and provide validating messages.
• Determine the extent of danger she may be in
• Determine whether it is safe for her and her children to remain in the home
• Work on increasing safety for the woman and her children by validating their experiences, providing support, and providing information about resources and options
• Listen and respond to safety issues (See Creating a Safety Plan)
  - Discuss safety planning and review it with her
  - Discuss with her how to keep information private and secure from her abuser
  - Take seriously any feelings the woman has of being endangered
  - Explain to women who are at high risk and planning on leaving the relationship that leaving without telling the partner may be the safest option
  - Ensure the woman has a safe place to go and encourage her to obtain advice from a lawyer
- Reinforce the woman’s right to make decisions regarding her choices and options
  - Make suggestions regarding different ways she can be helped (e.g., housing, shelter, police, legal, welfare, etc.)
  - Inform the woman about any limits in confidentiality for example, child abuse or domestic violence reporting requirements (See Appendix 4)
  - Explain to her that abuse is a crime, that children may be at risk of harm, and that you have a duty to report the abuse
  - Assure her that any actions regarding support and referrals will not be done without her input
  - Remember that the goal is not to get the woman to leave her abuser, or to “fix” the problem, but to provide support and information
  - Provide outside referral, support and monitoring, to ensure that the woman has access to a trained domestic violence counsellor and to relevant services

4.8.8 Learning about Ourselves as Workers Before Assessing and Intervening

The starting point is:
- Asking questions that help us learn about ourselves as workers
- Knowing how to manage our own tendencies and biases to ensure they do not interfere with the assessment or intervention
- Asking questions necessary to learning about the woman, in order to understand her current situation and identify the potential risks

Before assessing and intervening in a domestic violence case, it is essential for workers to first reflect upon their own role in preventing or addressing abuse with respect to the case at hand.

Self reflection and consideration of one’s role as a worker entails the following:

- Recognizing how our cultural beliefs might impact service delivery (e.g., with respect to family, male roles, gender biases, same sex issues, parenting, etc.)
- Being aware of our values and beliefs
- Being aware of our tone, wording, body language
- Understanding and locating our position within society’s power hierarchy (e.g., class, race, gender) and with respect to the newcomer
- Considering our responsibilities, boundaries (e.g., self disclosure), abilities, knowledge, skills, authority
- Recognizing our own comfort level
- Reflecting on transference of our experiences and assumptions
- Examining our ability to empower and to enable others to take action (e.g., the degree to which we can help women to make their own choices)
- Reflecting upon client dependency
- Recognizing our strengths
- Being aware of the need for ongoing training and knowledge building
• Considering what is required to facilitate improvement in each particular case

4.8.9 Managing the Self

• It is important to be self-aware and to manage ourselves (e.g., biases, tendencies, limitations) to ensure we do not interfere with assessment or intervention.

• Understand that a worker’s role is defined by agency mandate and organizational culture
• Do not think it is possible to save someone – you can help but it is not possible to rescue
• Deal with personal biases (e.g., thoughts about abuse, religious beliefs, education bias, skin privilege, professional power imbalance), and learn how to step out of the role if you are feeling uncomfortable
• Provide choices for your clients – do not withhold information
• Avoid assumptions (e.g., do not assume you understand the woman’s experience of immigration and domestic violence)
• Do not make assumptions about who is a “real immigrant” and who is an “invisible immigrant” (i.e., mainstream assumptions about immigrants)
• Undertake ongoing education and training opportunities to improve knowledge base and skills
• Avoid assumptions about the abuse and the woman’s related choices

Ensure sympathy, empathy, and active listening

4.8.10 Frontline Worker Intervention Skills

To be able to respond effectively, the following skills are required:

• Assessment skills to recognize the signs of abuse
• Communication skills, including empathic listening
• Decision-making skills – knowing when to refer, how to refer, where to refer, as well as how to support the decision-making skills of the victim
• Non-judgmental and understanding service provision
• Patience and motivation to help the woman and put her at ease
• Willingness to learn from the woman’s experiences and her own expertise
• Sensitivity to the woman’s culture and beliefs

4.2.11 Role of the Organization in Intervention

• Ensure all the staff are aware, committed and have the skills to intervene
• Ensure ongoing anti-oppression and anti-racism training takes place
• Develop relevant policy, based on the needs of abused women
• Ensure an environment in which women feel safe and comfortable to talk openly
• Develop protocols to deal with other settlement or mainstream organizations that have women abuse projects, support groups, etc.
• Develop protocols to deal with institutions such as the police and the courts, and with social workers
• Ensure all protocols are transparent and accountable
• Create an evaluation process and satisfaction survey to get feedback from women who use the service
• Have only one worker, if possible, do the initial intervention and reference
• Ensure that translation and interpretation services are available

4.2.12 Frontline Intervention Tips

• Have a list of the names and telephone numbers of services available. Ensure that this is kept updated. It is also helpful to have a contact person attached to each service.
• Connect with local woman abuse initiatives (e.g., Woman Abuse Council of Toronto, North York Family Violence Network, workshops, training, etc.) to keep up with pertinent issues
• Explain how abuse is defined by the Canadian legal system, and discuss legal help available
• Remember the various forms abuse takes (e.g., physical, emotional, sexual)
• Follow your agency’s intervention guidelines
• Remember your role is Level 1, that is, to support and refer the client
• Observe language (e.g., possible language challenges, need to avoid jargon, etc.)
• Focus on client empowerment and avoid building dependency
• Don’t make assumptions about how much or little a women knows about services
• Always ask if she would like a referral
• Provide relevant support, service or emergency phone numbers
• Help women make their own choices and decisions
• Facilitate women making decisions (some women have not made many decisions)
• Ensure safety
• Remember the woman is the expert on her own life
• Know how and where to refer
• Explain free services (e.g., legal aid)
• Adhere to reporting requirements (i.e., duty to report)
• Make inquiries on behalf of client without using identity
• Describe available services and the different mandates of their agencies
• Inform the woman of what will happen at other agencies, and provide relevant service information and contacts
• Consider a woman’s safety and accompany her if necessary
• Consider interpretation needs
• Ensure all actions taken have the woman’s prior permission
• Provide safety tips and plans
• Mobilize external supports and options (e.g., family and community based intervention, support for the couple, support for relatives, etc.)
• Discuss positive relations and the importance of moving from woman abuse to healthy relationships

It is vital that policies and procedures for intervention in domestic assault cases be founded on a sound theoretical basis which protects battered women, helps judicial system practitioners discharge their public duties, and renounces the practice of victim blaming. The following principles that guide the policies and procedures of the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in the USA can also be very helpful:
The first priority of intervention should be to carry out policies and protocols which protect the victim from further harm and whenever possible, the burden of holding abusers accountable should rest with the community, not the victim.

To make fundamental changes in a community's response to violence against women, individual practitioners must work cooperatively, guided by training, job descriptions, and standardized practices that are all oriented toward the desired changes.

Intervention must be responsive to the totality of harm done by the violence rather than be incident or punishment focused.

Intervention practices must be accountable to the victim, whose life is most impacted by our individual and collective actions.

Victims must have access to safe emergency housing, information and advocacy necessary to act in the courts, and should not be denied protection because of the cost of professional assistance.

Except in the case of self-defense, violence is a criminal offense and the police and court are used to prevent further assaults. The intensity of intervention is based on the need for protection from further harm and on creating a deterrence to the abuser.

The primary focus of intervention is on stopping the assailant's use of violence, not on fixing or ending the relationship.

In general, the court avoids prescribing a course of action for the victim, e.g., does not force a victim to testify by threatening jail, nor mandate treatment for the victim.

The courts and law enforcement agencies work cooperatively with victim advocacy programs and provide the advocacy/shelter program and victim with the broadest possible access to legal information.

When appropriate, the courts mandate educational classes for assailants and impose increasingly harsh penalties for any continued acts of harassment and violence.

All policies and procedural guidelines benefit from review by members of the communities not represented by majority culture (e.g., communities of color, the gay/lesbian/bisexual community, people who are low income). Their review should include a close look at monitoring procedures to safeguard against the use of race, class, or lifestyle biases in implementing policies.

Policies and procedures should act as a general deterrent to battering in the community.

All practices and policies should be continually evaluated for effectiveness in protecting victims and to plan ongoing training for agencies.

All interventions must account for the power imbalance between the assailant and the victim. Adherence to these principles helps to produce consistent results regardless of the beliefs or values of an individual practitioner.


Source: Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project. Domestic Violence Information Manual. History
http://www.eurowrc.org/05.education/education_en/12.edu_en.htm
4.9 Referral

In domestic violence situations, referral comprises the act of sending a woman to another destination for appropriate service.

Prior to providing referrals for a woman who is experiencing domestic violence, it is important to:

- Know your organization’s relevant referral protocols and guidelines
- Know the resources in your community, such as shelters specifically for domestic violence, police (any special units working with victims of domestic violence), legal aid, etc.
- Develop resources for your region and organization
- Make referrals to local resources
- Refer the woman, when possible, to organizations that reflect her cultural background or that address her special needs, such as organizations with multiple language capacity

However, it should be remembered that, for a variety of reasons, a woman may not want to be referred to an organization associated with her cultural group, as she may have the fear of encountering and being recognized by members of her community and the fear of having her marital issues discussed in the community.

Source: National Association of Social Workers. Domestic Violence Assessment and Intervention provided by the Family Violence Prevention Fund.

4.9.1 Making referrals to local Resources

- Explain any advocacy and support systems [that exist within the community]
- [Review] advocacy and support services within the community including legal options, advocacy services, etc.
- When possible, refer [the woman] to organizations that reflect their cultural background or address their special needs such as organizations with multiple language capacity, those that specialize in working with teen, disabled, deaf, hard of hearing, or lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender clients.

If no local resources are available, refer [the woman] to an advocate from the multi-lingual National Domestic Violence Hotline 24 hours a day by dialing 800-799-SAFE, TTY 800-787-3224.

Source: National Association of Social Workers. Domestic Violence Assessment and Intervention provided by the Family Violence Prevention Fund.
4.9.2 Guidelines for Reporting Domestic Violence

If the intervention involves reporting the violence, what are the guidelines? There is a duty to report to the Children’s Aid Society. Also, a report must be made to police in situations of high risk. What are these high-risk situations? (Answers to these questions are provided in the legal material that form the second part of this online self-learning course).

At what point and by whom should the reporting be done?

What are the implications to the woman?

4.9.3 Understanding and Supporting the Survivor

To be able to effectively support the survivor, it is essential that the agency staff ask and answer the following:

- How can we support a woman who has been abused?
- What should be the process for supporting a victim?
- Where in the process should the woman be supported, by whom should she be supported, and what kinds of support are necessary?
- What is the cost of support?
- What skills enhance understanding of the victim?
  - Do we all have active listening skill, patience and empathy?
  - Are we operating in an anti-oppressive framework to understand structural barriers experienced by the woman?
- Do we have a nonjudgmental attitude and demeanor?
4.10 Conducting an Assessment, Intervention - End of Module Exercises

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some key aspects to remember when conducting an assessment?
2. What are the key services and information to remember when making a referral?.
3. What skills Enhance Understanding of the Victim?

ANSWERS:

1. Key aspects to remember when conducting an assessment include:
   - Determining whether abuse is present by looking for signs of physical and emotional abuse
   - Looking for indicators of high risk
   - Determining immediate and long-term needs
   - Establishing the woman’s existing support networks
   - Determining the appropriate service for referral

2. Some key services and information to remember when conducting an intervention and making a referral include:
   - Provision of information on rights
   - Support through the legal and social systems
   - Education
   - Information on Safety planning
   - Information on Shelters, legal services, counselling for housing, etc

3. The following skills are important in enhancing the service provider’s understanding of the victim
   - Active listening skills
   - Patience
   - Empathy
   - Operating through an anti-oppressive framework to understand structural barriers experienced by the woman
Module 5:
Strategies to Improve Services
– Case Management, Best Practices, Interagency Coordination and Local Services
5.1 Strategies to Improve Services – Case Management, Best Practices, Interagency Coordination and Local Services – Content

Strategies to Improve Services – Case Management, Best Practices, Interagency Coordination and Local Services

5.1 Strategies to Improve Services – Case Management, Best Practices, Interagency Coordination and Local Services – Content

5.2 Strategies to Improve Services – Case Management, Best Practices, Interagency Coordination and Local Services – Objectives

5.3 Strategies to Improve Services – Case Management, Best Practices, Interagency Coordination and Local Services – Resources

5.4 Strategies to Improve Services – Case Management, Best Practices, Interagency Coordination and Local Services - Multiple-Choice questions and Answers

5.5 Organizational Approach to Domestic Violence

5.6 Victim Treatment, Counselling and Support

5.6.1 Counselling - Goals of Basic and Boundaries of frontline work

5.6.2 First Responder’s Goal

5.6.3 Establishing Protocols with Respect to Victim Treatment, Counselling and Support

5.7 Effective Referral, Information and Advice - Identifying Local Services

5.8 Case Management

5.8.1 The Concept of Case Management

5.8.2 The Goal of Case Management
5.8.3 Inter-Agency Case Management in the Area of Domestic Violence

5.9 Collaboration of Services

5.9.1 Need for Inter-Agency Collaboration

5.9.2 Streamlining Inter-Agency Coordination - Identifying Gaps in Services

5.9.3 Goals of Collaboration

5.9.4 Expected Outcomes of a Coordinated System

5.9.5 Forms of Collaboration

5.9.6 Forming a Network

5.9.7 Agencies to Be Included in Collaborative Network

5.9.8 What Makes Effective Collaborations

5.9.9 Example of Interagency Collaboration for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

5.10 Community Education, Advocacy and Outreach

5.10.1 Community Education and Advocacy - Content to Be Developed and Disseminated

5.10.2 Channels of Distribution and Outreach

5.10.3 Target Audience for Education and Advocacy Material

5.10.4 Outreach for Education and Advocacy

5.11 Best Practices and General Improvements to Services for Immigrant Women

5.12 A Sample of Services Identified By Past Participants in OCASI Domestic Violence Workshops

5.13 End of Module Exercises
5.2 Strategies to Improve Services – Case Management, Best Practices, Interagency Coordination and Local Services – Objectives

The violence prevention online self-directed modules are meant for frontline staff that come in first contact with survivors or potential victims of abuse. Therefore, this section is not about providing professional counselling for abused women. Professional counselling should only be done by qualified professionals. One of the reasons for this is that attempting to provide a service for which one is not qualified can, in fact, put the woman at even further risk. However, basic counselling is central to frontline work, especially when learning the victim’s narrative and connecting her to desired services.

It is also essential that the case is managed in a professional manner and that it is clear who is doing the follow-up and why.

At the end of this module participants will possess an understanding of effective case management, interagency coordination and collaboration, as well as resource development for the prevention of domestic violence toward immigrant and refugee women.

The objectives of this section are to:

- Review boundaries relating to what a frontline worker can and cannot do and to emphasize referrals
- Provide an opportunity for service providers to review who should be responsible for case management and why
- Assist service providers with identifying key sources of information for educational and referral purposes
- Identify some gaps and barriers affecting services for immigrant women
- Enhance understanding of how working collaboratively with other agencies adds value to services provided to abused women
- Provide input regarding how inter-agency collaboration can be enhanced, and some of the protocols that can ensure expeditious response
• Outline some networking strategies and service approaches, based on existing expertise among service providers, within their organization and among immigrant communities.

• Discuss the importance of best practices in prevention of domestic violence and review what aspects of best practice are important.

• Provide an opportunity for service providers to review institutional changes required to improve services for immigrant women.

• Raise service providers’ awareness of the need to educate the community around issues relating to domestic violence against immigrant women, with a view to preventing and addressing these issues.

• Provide information on topics to be included in education and advocacy, on modes of outreach, and targets for education and advocacy.

• Provide an example of an inter-collaborative set up in one Ontario region and examples of existing services in Ontario.
5.3 Strategies to Improve Services – Case Management, Best Practices, Interagency Coordination and Local Services – Resources

Baukje (Bo) Miedema
Barriers and Strategies: How to Improve Services for Abused Immigrant Women in New Brunswick.
This paper attempts to document some service needs and explores ways to improve services to abused immigrant women in New Brunswick, a province with few immigrants. Most research participants identified the interplay of cultural norms and structural oppression as very profound barriers to services for abused immigrant women. The proposed strategies for change represent one small step forward to making services more accessible to abused immigrant women. Many of the specific suggestions provided can be carried out informally and without much cost. However, the most important and the least costly "change" in services is the desire by abused immigrant women, to be assured that they can expect understanding and respect regardless of their country of origin, religious or cultural background.

The FREDA Centre for Research on Violence against Women and Children
In a context marked by inequalities and imbalances of power, recognition of the reality is a necessary first step toward intervention. Violence prevention education seeks to impart an understanding of this reality. However, education is not enough. Structural change is necessary in order to balance unequal power relations.
Interventions include:
- Economic and Social Empowerment
- Support and Solidarity
- Empathy and Advocacy.
- Eliminating Inequalities.
- Inclusion and Valuing Difference
Available at: http://www.harbour.sfu.ca/freda/articles/fvpi05.htm (April 2007).

Prevention Institute
Prevention Partnerships.

Prevention Institute
Toward a Community Solution: Fostering Strategic Partnerships to Prevention Violence against Women. Eight Steps to Effective Coalition Building Learning Activity.
“Violence is complex and requires a comprehensive approach. Determinants of violence and safety must be addressed. Violence prevention requires an integrated strategy for action.
Objective: This exercise is intended to help you use Eight Steps to Effective Coalition Building to
enhance the effectiveness of your coalition. Directions: Considering your coalition, answer the questions to determine how you can strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of your coalition. Available at: http://www.preventioninstitute.org/pdf/8_Steps_Learning_Activity_4_18_05.pdf (April 2007).

Humphreys, Catherine; Gill Hague; Marianne Hester and Audrey Mullender
Developed from a project supported by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
Domestic Violence Good Practice Indicators - From Good Intentions to Good Practice: A Mapping Study of Services Working with Families Where There is Domestic Violence. It represents best practice in domestic violence work currently, and aims to provide senior managers, policy-makers and practitioners with a clear set of achievable indicators, developed by nationally acknowledged experts in the field. This is for the UK but is relevant in Canada. Available at: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/shss/swell/dv_gpi_booklet.pdf (April 2007).

Smith, Ekua for Canadian Council on Social Development
“No Where to Turn? Responding to Partner Violence against Immigrant and Visible Minority Women”
A report by Dr. Ekuwa Smith for the Canadian Council on Social Development, funded by the Department of Justice Canada.
The study identifies a role for public education to help prevent abuse – but not necessarily big advertising campaigns. For many ethno-cultural communities, there may be more promise in small, neighbourhood gatherings where people can talk about their backgrounds and their new life in Canada. There is also a role for schools to teach young people that physical violence by a spouse is a crime, and that all people are entitled to live free of abuse of all kinds, including emotional abuse. Public education can also play a role in creating a fairer and more accepting environment for immigrants to Canada. Frontline workers said that some women are reluctant to speak out about abuse because they feel it will bring more harm to a community that is already suffering from systemic racism. Prevailing attitudes of mainstream society are perceived as part of the problem. Available at: http://www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2004/nowhere/nowhere_to_turn.pdf (April 2007).

Sujata Warrier, Ph.D for National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. February 2000
Outreach to Underserved Communities.
Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence
1. What reasons are there for you to do outreach now?
2. What would the goal of that outreach be?
3. Think about the women your program serves. List the groups in the community that are not represented among your clients – that you are not serving or think you should serve better.
4. How do you know whether or not you are serving all groups in the community? Is there a way to make sure your assumptions are correct?
5. Of the groups you listed in #3, which group(s) will be the focus of your efforts in the next year? After next year?
6. How many months will you need to complete a planning process?
7. If you know that there is a group that is very small – i.e., less than 1% of the population – how will you decide whether or not to reach out to them?”
QUESTION 1

Which 4 of the following 6 statements are important in improving services for immigrant women at risk of domestic violence?

A. It is important to continuously update counselling skills of staff who are designated to handle domestic violence cases.

B. Since a designated staff member deals with domestic violence cases, there is no real reason for sending all staff for training in domestic abuse issues.

C. Developing relationships with other organizations such as shelters, legal aid offices and community health clinics creates better referral opportunities for the woman.

D. Training staff in domestic violence issues is not good because it leads to individuals who have acquired training leaving the organization for better jobs.

E. It is useful for an agency to review practice from other experienced agencies for the purpose of learning from their experience.

F. It is essential to provide orientation to all staff and to streamline agency protocols so that staff whose work brings them in contact with immigrant and refugee women who are potential victims of abuse are aware of their role and know what to do when a woman comes to their organization with an abuse issue.

QUESTION 2:

Which of one the three following statements best illustrates good Case Management?
A. Case Management relating to abuse victims is not necessary, since my organization does not have a woman abuse program. We can just tell the woman to go to the ‘other’ agency that has a program.

B. Good Case Management is still important, even where there is no abuse program. Once a woman comes to the organization, the first organization must apply internal protocols that facilitate appropriate referral. This includes a staff member calling a counterpart in the organization to which referral is being made, to ensure that the referral is smooth and to ensure that the women is not referred to an organization in which the appropriate service does not exist.

C. Even though I have no social work training and do not know much about abuse issues, I am now an expert and know enough to deal with complex abuse issues after attending a 2-day awareness workshop.

**ANSWERS:**

**QUESTION 1:**

A, C, E, F.

**QUESTION 2:**

B.
5.5 Organizational Approach to Domestic Violence

An organizational approach to domestic violence encompasses the process that occurs in an organization when dealing with a woman in matters related to domestic violence. This is the process that occurs, whether or not an organization has a domestic violence program. An organizational approach assumes that, whether or not the organization has a domestic abuse program, there is a process for dealing with victims of violence that come to the organization. This process can be a protocol for direct external referral or for an internal referral from the frontline worker at the front desk to the appropriate staff member within the organization who is responsible for passing on the victim to an organization that has a program. Indeed, an organization that does not have a domestic abuse program needs to have clear protocols, as these ensure that the woman does not get referred to inappropriate or non-existent programs.

Streamlining the Process, in Light of Mandate

- In the case of an organization that has a domestic abuse program, the organizational approach comprises streamlining the types of services that are available for abused immigrant and refugee women (e.g., assessment, counselling referrals, training, anti-violence education)

- In the case of an organization that does not have a domestic violence program, the process should be clear about the level of basic assessment to be done and the steps that must be followed internally thereafter (for example, a clarification relating to whom in the organization the woman should be referred to, or a stipulation that the frontline intake worker who first receives the case must refer to an organization that has an appropriate program). The process should identify the contact person(s) in the organization to which the woman is being referred. It should oblige the staff who make the referral to call ahead to ensure that the woman will not be given the merry go round. There must be clarity on which organization is to manage the case

- Whether the organization has the mandate through having a domestic violence program or not, having various languages is important to mitigate accessibility issues
Ensuring Existence of Developed Framework
Apart from the stipulation of the process, the organizational approach to domestic violence requires organizations that deal with the woman who is a victim of domestic violence to have:

- A commitment to cultural, linguistic and religious diversity
- A dedication to anti-racism/anti-oppression approach
- A recognition of the role that racism, ethnicity and linguistic barriers pose for women who experience domestic violence

Making Use of Existing Best Practices
An organizational approach to domestic violence ensures that agencies that have domestic violence programs, as well as those that do not, endeavour to implement the features that exist in current good practice. For example, management must ensure that:

- Agency staff are trained in domestic violence
- Clear procedures and policies exist to support the work of staff and provide information on responsibilities associated with servicing abused women
- Detailed protocols and policies are in place, delineating how to intervene, refer and work with professionals and institutions, such as the police, courts, lawyers, Children’s Aid Society and social workers
- Relevant policies and services are implemented, based on the needs of women
- Protocols are transparent and allow for accountability
- Evaluation processes are used to obtain feedback from service users

5.6 Victim Treatment, Counselling and Support

5.6.1 Counselling - Goals of Basic and Boundaries of frontline work

Usually settlement counsellors provide direct, frontline services specifically to immigrants and refugees. Settlement counsellors provide a wide variety of services because of the diverse needs of clients. The same is true of frontline workers in many other organizations, such as places of worship, social centres and shelters, where immigrant and refugee women go for services.

The services include, among many others, information and referral, advocacy, basic counselling, health services, community development and education. The type of service provided by an organization and, thus, by a frontline worker, is determined by the type of organization (e.g., settlement agency) and by the funding source (e.g., some funders are very specific about the activities to which their funding is to be allocated).

Because settlement workers should only be practicing basic counselling, this section focuses on clearly understanding the boundaries of frontline work. Since they are the first contact with victims
or potential victims of domestic abuse, the frontline worker must know where to refer the woman for appropriate assessment, and appropriate intervention and follow-up as soon as possible.

**Qualified and or authorized Staff Handling Specialist Service**

It is important to ensure that, apart from frontline staff that first come into contact with the woman, staff that provide subsequent services must be qualified and or authorized to handle specialist service. This will reduce mismanagement of cases and will also reduce the risk to the victim.

Receiving wrong or ill-timed advice, for example, around leaving the abuser, could lead to further risk for the woman. It has been established, that most women who are murdered by the abuser are usually killed when attempting to leave him. Directing the woman as quickly as possible to staff who have the relevant training and skills will enhance her chances of receiving the appropriate help and support. It will also assist the victim with decision-making.

Workers should be able to assess and respond to the degree to which the client is at risk. In cases of risk this would include discussing safety and protection.

### 5.6.2 First Responder’s Goal

As a first responder, the goal is to link the woman to the most appropriate staff person or professional as soon as possible. When dealing with a victim of abuse, it is important to remember that every facet of an interaction with her is important and potentially weighty. For this reason, one must never attempt any type of counselling that one is not qualified to give. Subsequently, these self-learning modules do not extensively cover material related to counselling as practiced by professionals. Remember the boundaries of what you can and cannot do.

If the woman has been abused, take the following steps:

- Be a good listener and listen with empathy. Listening empathically means listening with understanding, sympathy, compassion, and attention
- Encourage her to share by listening supportively and letting her know that you believe her. Be patient, as it might take some time to gain her trust. It is important for the woman to be comfortable about disclosing and to know what happened was not her fault
- Assess to what extent she is in danger and ask further questions
- Make suggestions about available services. Provide information about the immigration process, about legal and financial aid, and about important contacts and services
- Remain calm and do not show alarm. But, if she is in danger, let her know the extent to which you feel she might be in danger
- Remember that domestic violence is a crime and every woman has the right to be safe. Each woman experiences abuse in her own way and needs individualized support to meet her needs
- Inform her that you wish to arrange for assistance from a professional so that she can receive advice on legal action or the next steps. The woman might need to have a protective order. Discuss suggested options and let her decide which options she would like to pursue. Be aware of cultural variations and communication barriers and be culturally sensitive. Different cultural groups may need different interviewing skills
• Communicate clearly that information is confidential. However, explain the limits of confidentiality, the circumstances for which you are bound to report. Also let her know what information you will have to use for referral
• Ensure that the woman is safe, if possible by finding a safe place for her away from the abuser. This could be in a shelter or with relatives or friends

Arrange immediately for the woman to get to the appropriate staff person to handle her case.

5.6.3 Establishing Protocols with Respect to Victim Treatment, Counselling and Support

A protocol must be established in each agency in relation to victim treatment, counselling and support. The following need to be established:

• When is the referral to treatment made?
• At what stage?
• Who makes the referral? Is it by the organization to which the woman first came for assistance or by the organization to which the woman is going to be referred?
• To where should the victims be referred for a support group? At a centre based in the community where she will be able to understand the language?
• If not, which organization is best for her and why?
• Is there such an organization in the network or is it necessary to go outside the network for some services?

5.7 Effective Referral, Information and Advice - Identifying Local Services

To effectively address and prevent domestic violence against immigrant women, it is essential to have access to a wide variety of resources.

As service providers we should be able to outline the key resources required in an effective referral in our region. For example,

• Can you identify and access key sources of information?
• What service provision exists in your geographical area and how can you get the information?
• How can you ensure you receive updated information from agencies to which you refer? (Websites do not necessarily have current information about informal services provided.)
• Can you identify skills and knowledge necessary for effective information and referral?

An information and referral system needs to be developed with workers in a variety of organizations. If a woman receives services at one agency and then is referred to another, the second agency should have knowledge of this.

122
Customizing Information and Advice

Information and advice should be customized to client needs. For example, does the client need information about housing, employment, legal matters, or finance? Using the Internet to find resources online can be helpful in this process. Please remember that some immigrant and refugee women may not be as familiar with the use of the Internet as you are. As far as possible, avoid doing everything for them, however, do not expect them to be as proficient as we might expect for example in the use of technology, transit system etc. If you regularly refer women to a clinic, it is better for you to have a map available instead of telling them to find the location by using the Internet.

5.8 Case Management

5.8.1 The Concept of Case Management

As frontline workers it is good to clearly understand the scope of frontline work to have a strong sense of the boundaries.

Case management is defined by the NASW as

a method of providing services whereby a worker assesses the needs of the client and arranges, coordinates, monitors, evaluates, and advocates for a variety of services to meet the client’s complex needs.

A worker is the primary provider of case management. Case management is both micro and macro in nature, as intervention occurs at both the client and system levels. It requires the worker to develop and maintain a supportive relationship with the client, which may include linking the client with systems that provide her with much needed services, resources, options and opportunities. Services provided under case management may be located in a single agency or may be spread across numerous agencies or organizations.

5.8.2 The Goal of Case Management

The primary goal of case management is to optimize and provide quality services in the most efficient and effective manner to individuals with multiple complex needs. Case management is based on the foundation of professional training, values, knowledge, and skills used in the service of attaining goals that are established in conjunction with the client, and the client’s family when appropriate. Such goals include:

- Providing a service delivery approach, based on the assumption that clients have complex and multiple needs
- Enhancing problem-solving and coping capacities of clients
- Creating and promoting the effective and humane operation of systems that provide resources and services to people
- Linking people with systems that offer resources, services, options and opportunities
• Improving the scope and capacity of the delivery system
• Contributing to the development and improvement of education and social policy


5.8.3 Inter-Agency Case Management in the Area of Domestic Violence

Inter-Agency coordination is essential in the area of domestic violence. This is because, while many organizations that provide services to immigrant and refugee women have abuse programs, some organizations that have regular contact with immigrant women, for example faith communities and many settlement agencies, may not have specialized programs for abused women or contact with organizations that provide these services to immigrants and refugees. Such programming may not be within the organization’s mandate or may exceed the organization’s resources. There is often insufficient contact and networking between settlement organizations and more mainstream organizations offering women abuse programs.

Inter-agency collaboration with respect to Case Management in the area of domestic violence is also important, due to the fact that, in some regions, there is a general lack of information and coordination among service providers around strategies for violence prevention and intervention, even though some coalitions do exist.

Staff engaged in interagency case management should ensure that it:

• Allows for the creation of an individualized approach to meet specific needs of women who have been abused, based on a comprehensive assessment
• Is developed in collaboration with the woman and that it reflects her decisions
• Empowers the woman through effective service delivery
• Creates a seamless coordinated approach to violence prevention

5.9 Collaboration of Services

5.9.1 Need for Inter-Agency Collaboration

Although many organizations providing services to immigrants have woman abuse programs, some do not. Indeed some organizations that have contact with immigrant women on a regular basis, for example faith communities, are not linked in any way with settlement organizations having woman abuse programs. The opportunities for immigrant women who frequent such organizations to learn about existing woman abuse programs and the range of services available are therefore limited.

Hence, there is need for collaboration and coalition building because it:
• Facilitates the harmonization of services and practices, making it possible to identify gaps in services to women who have been abused
• Allows for the coordination of information, increasing the awareness of existing services provided by other agencies, enabling coordinated referral
• Facilitates a coordinated response for advocacy, helping to define who is responsible for providing particular services and when, which ensures an effective monitoring and support process
• Allows for the development of education and training and for advocacy for the prevention of domestic violence against immigrant and refugee women
• Creates opportunities that reveal the impact of domestic violence on immigrant and refugee women, and the need for increased resources from government and other funding sources

This lack of contact between organizations that do and those that do not offer woman abuse programs creates an information and coordination gap among service providers around strategies for violence prevention and intervention, despite the existence of relevant coalitions.

5.9.2 Streamlining Inter-Agency Coordination - Identifying Gaps in Services

Understanding current gaps in services and how enhanced strategies can help improve services to abused immigrant women is central to effective prevention and response in domestic violence against women cases.

Gaps in services may include the following:

• Lack of services and supports, linkages and coordination (e.g., agencies often do not have the time and resources to offer court accompanying services to the victim/survivor
• Currently some agencies have tended to be territorial and compete for dollars. Establishing the appropriate collaboration mechanisms would reduce this disconnect
• Even though many organizations indicate that they have woman abuse programs, there is a need to establish:
  • Which agencies have women abuse counsellors
  • What services they offer
  • Whether they accompany a woman to court
  • What supports they offer
  • What their eligibility requirements are
  • What kind of counselling they provide
  • Whether they conduct friendly visits
• There is no single resource bank within their communities
• There is still a need for more comprehensive community outreach and information dissemination for victims and survivors (e.g., it would be beneficial to place information brochures and pamphlets in locations women use – grocery stores, laundry facilities)
• There is need to build relationships with referral agencies
• There is need to seek out existing protocols and adapt them to create generic best practices
5.9.3 Goals of Collaboration

Service coordination should ensure that organizations and individuals with resources, including skills and expertise, material resources (e.g., rooms) and services (e.g., child care) that are useful to the abused woman are pooled for her benefit. The purpose is to make the service delivery to the woman:

- Preventive
- Accessible and speedy with respect to response time
- Integrated and seamless due to use of established mechanisms and more streamlined procedures

When forming alliances, coalitions or networks, it is important to ask questions that will answer Who? What? Why? When? Where? How? How much? and How many?

Example 1: (Who, Why, How and How much questions)

Among others, the goals of collaboration should include:

- Advocating for resources to support abused women, including increased housing for battered women
- Advocating for resources for shelters
- Advocating for resources to enhance and maintain coordination among service providers to ensure timely and appropriate response and prevention
- Seeking resources for education with regard to immigrant women who are victims of domestic violence
- Advocating to ensure funders commit to short- and long-term programs

5.9.4 Expected Outcomes of a Coordinated System

Outcomes of a coordinated system include the following:

- Awareness of abuse on a larger societal scale
- Development of policies to train frontline and other workers in the organizations involved, ensuring training in multicultural sensitivity, and an agreed general curriculum on domestic violence with tailored training where necessary
- Development of policies pertaining to support groups (e.g., who is to host them, who is to provide spaces, etc.)
- Creation of mechanisms to implement agreed policies
- Agreement on mechanisms of intervention for facilitation of prompt response and for integrated service provision for immigrant women
- Agreement on role and use of the media for education purposes (To what extent can the media be relied upon to educate without creating bias in the community?)
- Development of measures to ensure accountability to communities and to funders
• Provision of comprehensive information, improved resources, and ensured accessibility to resources
• Development of better systems to actively monitor and address service delivery and related issues
• Creation of a long-term social safety net
• Standard policies on information disclosure

5.9.5 Forms of Collaboration

Collaboration could be in the form of:

Coalitions

This includes:

• Alliance
• Association
• Partnership in which the partners agree to undertake and endeavour to achieve a common purpose.

An alliance is a formal agreement in which an association is established between groups to achieve a specified aim. A coalition is group of organizations that decide to work together on the basis of an agreement to achieve common goals. Usually a coalition takes on interests of a general nature that individual organizations are not able to effectively accomplish on their own.

A coalition is an alliance between groups as a form of cooperation in joint action, each with its self-interest. It is really for convenience and can be short- or long-term. It can be an ad hoc arrangement between two or more parties and is less formal than a covenant.

Networks

This is an interconnected system of individuals, groups and organizations. They could be a:

• Set of connections
• Set of contacts
• An association
  A group
• Simple agreements and referral arrangements

The above are loose statements of what a coalition, a network and alliance can be. They are only examples of what kind of collaboration can occur among organizations. Quite often organizations cooperate very well with no formal agreement apart from, for example, instruction to staff in the agencies concerned.

Service providers must determine what kind of collaboration and thus, what kind of formal arrangement to have when it comes to preventing and addressing domestic violence. Whatever the
arrangement, the aim should be to prevent and address abuse in an appropriate and timely manner, using all available resources.

**5.9.6 Forming a Network**

When forming a network it is important to consider:

1. **Goals and objectives.** Do the organizations have the same goal on the issue in question? Always keep the focus on the woman, and on prevention and addressing domestic violence.

2. **Practicability and compatibility.** Are the organizations in the coalition or network able to provide the desired solutions?

3. **Who will bear the costs?** How will the benefits balance out?

4. **What kind of support will the women and children need?** Does the woman need education and prevention? Is she in an abusive relationship? How best can the needed services be coordinated and delivered?

5. **What is the relationship between the woman’s needs and what can be provided through social services?**

6. **Does she need preventive counselling and education about rights and freedoms?** Who in the network can provide this centrally?

7. **Is there need for medical resources, particularly for non-status women?** Is there expertise in the network?

8. **Which organizations have crisis management and long-term resources?**

9. **Which organizations have mental health or ethno-cultural counselling resources?**

10. **Is there a need to have an organization that has alcohol or substance abuse expertise as part of the network?**

11. **Is housing resource expertise needed in the network?**

12. **Is non-status and immigration-related expertise needed in the network?**

13. **Are there resources for handling family disruption, including expertise in dealing with parental and child-related issues?**

14. **Is there need for legal expertise in the network?**

15. **Where can linguistic services be sought?**
16. Is there sufficient knowledge and experience of cultural appropriateness and sensitivity within the network?

17. Is training expertise needed in the network?

18. Are there sufficient resources for public education, and for lobbying for more funding?

19. What special groups do we need to have in the network?

Sound information is essential to decision making in the collaboration process. This helps to identify and select who should be in the network or coalition. It is important to know:

- Where diagnostic services (assessment) are located
- Where local resources and services are located, and the types of services available
- The best way to choose who will provide specialized service to the woman
- How language services can be obtained
- Where appropriate shelters are located
- Where language services can be quickly accessed
- Where expertise is required to service the individual woman
- What relevant coalitions or networks should be formed to ensure efficient referral and response

### 5.9.7 Agencies to Be Included in Collaborative Network

But what kind of service coordination is required to improve services to abused immigrant women? Who are the key players in the lives of immigrant women? To which institutions do immigrant women go?

Some institutions and programs with which immigrant women have contact include:

- **English as a Second Language (ESL) classes** which they take at local schools or in immigrant-serving agencies
- **Schools** where their children are being educated
- **Places of worship**, including mosques, churches and synagogues
- **Service providers**, including immigrant-serving agencies, where they seek a wide variety of settlement and other services
- **Hospitals and medical centres** where they go for medical care for themselves and for their children. It is also ultimately at the hospitals that women who are victims of domestic violence will have to go for treatment for violence-related conditions
- **Homeless shelters**, where they might go if they have no alternative housing options
- **Police**, who often have got to be involved because domestic violence is against the law
- **Legal services**, which may be required by the woman who is a victim of violence
- **Counselling services**
- **Support groups**, where the woman may be referred to find support
5.9.8 What Makes Effective Collaborations

For coalitions or networks to work effectively, it is necessary to agree on:

- Protocols for assessing the nature and degree of risk faced by the woman
- How the assessment will be handled within the initial organization and the boundaries relating to the assessment
- Where the woman will be referred for more detailed assessment and where her case will be managed and why
- The degree of subsequent exchange of information relating to the case

In addition, for coordination to occur effectively, all frontline workers and managers in the organizations concerned must:

- Appreciate the fact that domestic violence against women is a serious problem with serious consequences
- Know their own strengths and purview relative to other organizations serving victims of abuse
- Devise a collective agreement of a system of referral that will facilitate effective response, and an agreement on who is to provide what service

Due to the complex funding requirements of settlement agencies, there is need for each agency to agree internally and for the network to discuss protocols in light of funding requirements and limitations.

It is good to be aware how practical a network or a coalition can be, but also to remember the limitations.
5.9.9 Example of Interagency Collaboration for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Abbreviation Key

AGVWAP — Attorney General Victim Witness Assistance Program
CAS — Children’s Aid Society
CCC — Community Crisis Centre
DVU — Domestic Violence Unit (PD)
DVU — Domestic Violence Unit (HOSP)
ESL — English as a Second Language Class
HOSP — Hospital
LA — Legal Aid
PROB — Probation
PD — Police Department
SS — Social Services
VS — Victim Services

Example from organizational inter-relationships in Windsor, Ontario
5.10 Community Education, Advocacy and Outreach

5.10.1 Community Education and Advocacy - Content to Be Developed and Disseminated

Community education involves information that assists the entire community to learn and become aware of an issue. Advocacy involves promoting a cause and actively supporting it. Both advocacy and community education are important because both involve awareness and information provision that are central to preventing and addressing domestic violence.

Community education entails planning, developing and distributing educational information. There is a lot of material currently available in different agencies so it is preferable to use, or modify, existing material rather than develop entirely new material.

The information should:

- Outline basic facts about domestic violence, including the prevalence of abuse and the consequences to women, including health consequences.
- Detail how to prevent and address abuse and the role of different organizations and individuals in this process.

Topics to be covered in the educational materials include:

- Connection between domestic violence and substance abuse and the impact on mental health
- Dangers of domestic violence, warning signs of abuse, risk for violence and the need for prevention
- Magnitude of immigrant woman abuse and statistics
- Domestic violence in the workplace
- List of organizations, services, support groups, and other resources offered
- Information on how individuals and organizations can help
- Telephone numbers to call
- Legal and other options available
- Where to find available community resources
- How to prevent violence
- Information about available legal assistance, including information on victim’s rights and on assistance available through courts
- Where to get financial support for victims
- Available medical services including counselling programs for abused victims and medical care for children
• Information of Women’s Rights as Human Rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
• Training resources for service providers and volunteers who come in contact with abused women
• Information relating to the elderly and other special groups
• Family resources, including information relating to children
• Self-care and empowerment for immigrant women

With respect to information and outreach material, it should be remembered that a lot of material is currently available. Subsequently, the effort might require acquisition of appropriate material from agencies that have done relevant work.

5.10.2 Channels of Distribution and Outreach

The following can be helpful in relation to information distribution and advocacy:

• World Wide Web
• Newsletter
• Public education brochures
• Ethnic media, including community newspapers, radio, television
• House to house
• Town hall and other meetings
• Working with local school districts
• Collaborating with existing education and outreach services addressing domestic violence issues
• Distribution at local events
• Videos
• Manuals
• Online support networks
• Places of worship

5.10.3 Target Audience for Education and Advocacy Material

Among others, the target audience for advocacy material include:

• Various levels of government
• All levels of the community, including parents, children, elderly people and the Business community
• Law makers
• Criminal justice personnel, including attorneys
• Victims of domestic violence
5.10.4 Outreach for Education and Advocacy

With respect to education and outreach, the following questions should be asked:

- Who has expertise in prevention education?
- How much does it cost and who is to cover the costs?
- Do we need to collaborate on education and outreach or should each organization practice education and outreach to women?
- Can some organizations that have resources prepare publicity material and those with outreach capacity in the local geographical region assume the outreach role?
- How are the roles to be shared?
- How does collaboration on this issue affect the target community?
- Who in the community can assist?
- Is there need to seek further financial resources to be able to accomplish the education task?
- Who should approach the funder?

Example 2: (When and Who questions)

5.11 Best Practices and General Improvements to Services for Immigrant Women

Best practices offer great learning opportunities and have the potential to enhance our work.

When looking to share good practice, we should seek to find examples where preventing and addressing domestic violence has been successful because of effective:

- Assessment
- Intervention
- Case management
- Collaboration and sharing of inter-agency resources

Ensuring appropriate services for immigrant women is important, given that immigrant women are vulnerable to abuse, and because the challenges that they face may be amplified by immigrant- and ethno-culture related issues.

There are many ways of improving services with respect to domestic violence.
1. Some General Improvements

- Ensuring that Executive Directors, managers of frontline workers as well as other stakeholders are clear about the need to coordinate
- Increasing collaboration among existing domestic violence coordinating committees throughout the province
- Bringing settlement agencies and specialized agencies together
- Involving places of worship
- Conducting outreach visits (e.g., at a shelter staff-to-staff, and staff-with-resident outreach)
- Conducting an audit of existing services:
  - Establish mandate of each agency with respect to woman abuse program, and identify services offered
  - Ensure that all relevant agencies know what services are available and that this information is updated
  - Create an annotated list of services within the province
- Building relationships with referral agencies
- All staff, Executive Directors and other management staff, as well as frontline staff must keeping up to date on changes at other services
- Establishing links to Children’s Aid Societies and to shelters
- Assisting communities to build a resource bank within their communities
- Sharing information and resources:
  - Make use of resource manuals on family violence (e.g., *Understanding Wife Assault*) and ensure that different organizations know about them
- Finding out more about agencies that state they have woman abuse counsellors (e.g., what services they offer, whether they accompany a woman to court, what supports they offer, what eligibility requirements they have, what kind of counselling they provide, and if they conduct friendly visits). Women may go to different agencies for different services
- Recognizing that organizations and individuals in organizations develop informal reputations (e.g., “that person separates families”)
- Improving public education
  - Use existing resources (many organizations have good brochures and handouts). Do not reinvent the wheel
  - Ensure information is provided in the appropriate languages
  - Place information in locations that women frequent
  - Find ways to get information to women (e.g., tampon holders, lipstick holders)
  - Ensure information includes contact numbers
- Seeking out existing protocols and adapting them to create generic best practices
- Recognizing the key role played by a wide variety of organizations that serve immigrant women and promoting the important services played by the various organizations
- Providing orientation, education and information, including information on human rights, women’s rights etc.

2. Recruiting Ethnically Diverse Staff

In many cases women feel more at ease when they observe the presence of an ethnically diverse staff team. This can signal that her immigration challenges or those relating to her cultural beliefs are
likely to be appreciated by an organization having staff from different countries. Even when the woman may not wish to be served by an individual from her own ethnic group, seeing a diverse staff team can still be calming and assuring. Where a qualified staff member from her ethnic group is available, a woman should be informed of the options and asked whether she wishes to see a staff person from her own ethnic group. It should not be assumed that a woman always desires to be served by a Canadian staff just because she is an immigrant. Some women may prefer to be served by an immigrant to enable them to be more open. On the other hand, some do not wish to have contact with individuals from their own community when they are in a domestic abuse situation.

3. Acknowledging Diversity

There are many cultural groups in Ontario, even among immigrants who speak the same language. One way of treating women from different ethnicities, cultures and religions is to treat each woman as an individual and to acknowledge that, even when they might have some common experiences, immigrant women are not a homogenous group.

4. Reducing Automated Telephone Services

Replace automated telephone systems with live staff. Automated systems are too challenging for many abused immigrant women. In many countries, including developed countries outside North America, the answering machine had delayed popularity as a method of communication. Many women who are not particularly recent arrivals do not have familiarity with, or appreciation for, the automated system. Even when women are familiar with the system, they may change their minds and give up trying to access information or services when they do not reach an actual person.

5. Ensuring Privacy

When making assessment and when addressing abuse, ensure that the woman’s right to privacy is respected. Ensure that the woman is aware of the need to exchange information professionally for referral, but reassure her that only the necessary information will be shared. Follow the recommendations that are given in the legal section. The organization must be careful in the way it selects staff who act as first contact or who manage the case.

6. Assisting Women with Legal Aid Matters

One way of assisting the woman is being proactive and explaining the woman’s situation to the Legal Aid office, instead of having her go to the office on her own. Many women feel helpless and powerless when they are in the presence of a uninformed, ‘indifferent’ individual with whom they have to interact to obtain needed services. While immigrant women may find obtaining any number of services daunting, a visit to the Legal Aid office is especially so.

7. Working with Funders in the Area of Domestic Violence

In a focus group that was held as part of the prevention of domestic violence against immigrant women project, it was expressed that the funding community should recognize the resources required to effectively prevent and address domestic violence toward immigrant women. It was stated that
organizations that do not receive funding, however, should still promote the safety of immigrants through ensuring staff recognize signs of abuse and refer the victims to organizations that have appropriate programs. Focus group participants articulated that organizations should continue to seek funding to assist abused immigrant women, as women’s safety should be acknowledged as being integral to their successful settlement. Indeed, participants asserted that advocacy should not stop until funding for abused women’s programs is part of the mandate of all settlement agencies.

8. Improving Case Management

A most significant aspect of improving services is appropriate follow-up programs. It is important that organizations streamline procedures for case management and establish networks with appropriate referral services, ensuring clarity regarding who is to follow up on a short- and long-term basis. Even where initial assistance has been given to a woman, or an appropriate support group has been identified, there has to be ongoing follow-up to monitor the woman’s changing condition and to identify any developing challenges.

9. Ensuring Follow-Up Services

The woman’s isolation can be reduced by linking her with appropriate support groups, chat groups and other relevant services. Find support services that are related to legal issues or services that are of a cultural nature, if the woman requires or prefers this.

10. Improving Shelter System

Provide resources to increase and to improve the shelter spaces. Many women who go to shelters have difficulty coping with the lack of privacy. Some also have problems related to meals served and the cramped space. Improvements to shelters (e.g., layout, dimensions, cultural sensitivity, etc.) could help abused women have as normal a life as possible. Housing should be found quickly, to prevent the discouragement that sometimes occurs in shelters, and to foster hope.

11. Multicultural Training for social Workers

Provide multicultural and ethnic training for social workers and social service providers. This will prepare workers for dealing with issues relating to culture and help to improve services for the abused woman.

12. Providing Interpretation Services

This will reduce dependence on the abuser as a translator.
5.12 A Sample of Services Identified By Past Participants in OCASI Domestic Violence Workshops

Below is a list of some of the available services for domestic violence victims identified by some of the past participants in OCASI Domestic Violence Workshops. Do you know of local services available in your area that can be useful to service providers for referral purposes? Are you aware of websites that can be used by service providers as resources? List them.

1. Services Identified By Participants from Windsor Essex Children’s Aid Society
   • The Shelter for Abused Women Hiatus House

2. Services Identified By Participants from Victim Services, Wellington, Guelph
   • Guelph Wellington Women in Crisis Mariann's Place, Trasition Program, Sexual Assault Centre, 24 Hour crisis line. P.O. Box 1451 Guelph, ON, N1H 6N9
   • Guelph Wellington Sexual Assault Care and Traditional Treatment Centre, General Hospital. Delhi St., Guelph, ON, N1E 4J4
   • Family and Children Services of Guelph & Wellington. 55 Delhi St., P.O. Box 1088, Guelph, ON, N1H 6N3
   • Victim Witness Assistance Program, 36 Lyndham Street South, Guelph, ON
   • Homewood Health Centre, 150 Delhi St., Guelph, ON
   • Family Counselling and Support Services, 409 Coolwich St., Guelph, ON, N1H 3X2
   • Community Mental Health Clinic, 147 Delhi St., Guelph, ON, N1E 4J3
   • University of Guelph, University of Guelph Centre, 3rd Floor Guelph, ON, N1G 2U1

3. Services Identified By Participants from North York Community House, Toronto
   • Barbara Schlifer Clinic
   • COSTI
   • Elspeth Heyworth

4. Services Identified By Participants from Rexdale Women's Centre, Etobicoke
   • Micro skills
   • YWCA
• Emestine Women’s Shelter;
• George Hull Centre
• Rexdale Community Health
• Rexdale Legal Clinic
• Family Services Association
• Albion Neighborhood Services

5. Services Identified By Participants from Family Counselling Centre of Niagara, St. Catharines

• Nova House, Women’s Shelter, Niagara Falls, 905-356-5800
• Women’s Place North Niagara, Women’s Shelter, St. Catharines, 905-684-8331
• Women’s Place South Niagara, Women’s Shelter, Welland, 905-788-0113
• Design for a New Tomorrow, Counselling for Women, Niagara Region, 905-684-1223
• Niagara Region Sexual Assault Centre, Counselling for Sexual Assault Victims
• Niagara Region-Welland, 905-734-1141
• Women’s Resource Centre, Beamsville, 905-563-5910
• Women’s Resource Centre, Smithville, 905-957-1838
• Women Against Violence (W.A.V.E), Fort Erie, 905-871-1122
• Niagara Victim Support Services, Niagara Region, 905-682-2626
• Bethlehem Place, Supported Housing, St. Catharines, 905-641-1660
• Centre de Sante Communautaire, Violence Against Women Program in French.

6. Services Identified By Participants from Catholic Family Services of Peel, Stratford

The following types of organizations are offering services to abused women and their children: shelters, counselling agencies, ethno-specific agencies. Contact Victim Services of Peel to get more information.

7. Services Identified By Participants from Catholic Family Services of Hamilton Wentworth, Hamilton, Ontario

• The Sexual Assault Centre
• Elizabeth Fry Society
• All five shelters in Hamilton

8. Services Identified By Participants from My Friends’ House, the Collingwood Crisis Centre, Collingwood

• My Friends House
• The Collingwood Crisis Centre shelter, residency, 24 hour crisis line, womens group 444-2511
• Catulpa Tamarac, Partner Abuse Program, 446-1120
9. Services Identified By Participants from Guelph-Wellington Women In Crisis, Guelph

- Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis
- Family Counselling and Support Services
- Guelph-Wellington Care and Treatment Centre for Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence
- Couple and Family Therapy Centre, University of Guelph

10. Services Identified By Participants from Education Wife Assault, Scarborough

- Scarborough Women Centre
- South Asian Community Centre

Both are offering community services to women including training and workshop to immigrant and refugee women, relaying information about abuse and violence. They are also providing support counselling.

11. Services Identified By Participants from Children’s Aid Society of Toronto

- Transitional Support Workers, Shelters, Police, Victim Witness Assistance Program, Here To Help Programs, Counselling Agencies

12. Services Identified By Participants from Savis, Oakville

- S.A.V.I.S, open multicultural meetings on fridays, school presentations. (educator program)

13. Services Identified By Participants from St. Christopher House, Toronto

- St. Christopher House
- Abrigo Centre
- Redwood Shelter
- Parkdale Community Health Centre
- St. Joseph Hospital F24 center

14. Services Identified By Participants From Women’s Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor Inc.

- Children’s Aid Society (Child Protection)
- Domestic Assault Treatment Centre
- Domestic Violence Shelter, Hiatus House
- Domestic Violence Unit, Windsor Police
- Sexual Assault Treatment (Medical)
- Sexual Assault Crisis Centre (Counselling)
- Sexual Assault (Safe Kids)
- Sexual Assault Unit, Windsor Police
- Victim Services of Windsor & Essex County
- Victim Witness Assistance Program (Court)
5.13 End of Module Exercises

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the Organizational Approach and how does this ensure effective services to women in situations of domestic violence?
2. What constitutes Case Management?
3. What is the concept of ‘Boundaries’ and why is it important in domestic violence situations?
4. List key areas of Good Practice in domestic violence prevention.
5. List ten institutions and programs with which immigrant women have contact.
6. Can you outline ten ways of improving services to immigrant and refugee women?

ANSWERS

1. The Organizational Approach in domestic violence assumes that whether an organization has the mandate to implement an Abuse program or not, there is a protocol and clear processes of dealing with a woman who may come to that organization. This approach ensures effective services to the woman because it ensures:

- Organizational streamlining of the process, in light of the organization’s mandate or lack of it
- The existence of a developed framework through a commitment by the organization to cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and a dedication to anti-racism/anti-oppression approach
- A recognition of the role that racism, ethnicity and linguistic barriers pose for women who experience domestic violence
- Making use of existing Best Practices that may motivate enhancement of:
  - Appropriate staff training to facilitate provision of the expected level of service
  - Development of clear procedures and policies
  - Development of detailed protocols on how to intervene, refer and work with professionals and institutions, such as the police, courts, lawyers, Children’s Aid Society and social workers
  - Institutionalization of accountability
  - Establishment of a process of service evaluation

- The frontline worker knows exactly what to do if a woman comes with the issue
- S/he knows who in the organization is to give comprehensive and specialized assistance to the woman
- Knowledge of boundaries due to the fact that they are delineated
- Understanding in the organization of when and where to refer and instruction that when making referral staff should call ahead to ensure that the woman is not being sent to a non-existing service or that she is not going to go without service
- Streamlining of inter-agency collaboration to ensure that the woman receives the best service
2. Case management is a method of providing services that involves assessing the needs of the client and thereafter organizing and coordinating to ensure that the woman gets relevant services. The worker continues to monitor and to evaluate as well as to advocate for better services for the woman.

3. Acknowledging Boundaries entails doing only what one is qualified and mandated to do. It is important in domestic violence situations because it reduces mismanagement of cases and reduces the risk to the victim. Giving wrong or ill-timed advice, for example, can lead to further risk for the woman. The key is to direct the woman as quickly as possible to staff who have the relevant training and skills to provide appropriate help and support.

4. Aspects that can demonstrate Good Practice include:
   - Assessment
   - Intervention
   - Effective case management
   - Effective collaboration and sharing of inter-agency resources

5. Some institutions and programs with which immigrant women have contact include:
   - English as a Second Language (ESL) classes which they take at local schools or in immigrant-serving agencies
   - Schools where their children are being educated
   - Places of worship, including mosques, churches and synagogues
   - Service providers, including immigrant-serving agencies, where they seek a wide variety of settlement and other services
   - Hospitals and medical centres where they go for medical care for themselves and for their children. It is also ultimately at the hospitals that women who are victims of domestic violence will have to go for treatment for violence-related conditions
   - Homeless shelters, where they might go if they have no alternative housing options
   - Police, who often have got to be involved because domestic violence is against the law
   - Legal services, which may be required by the woman who is a victim of violence
   - Counselling services
   - Support groups, where the woman may be referred to find support

6. Some of the improvements that may improve service for immigrant and refugee women are:
   1. Providing interpretation services
   2. Recruiting ethnically diverse staff
   3. Acknowledging diversity
   4. Reducing automated telephone services
   5. Ensuring privacy
   6. Assisting women with legal aid matters
   7. Working with funders in the area of domestic violence
   8. Improving case management
   9. Ensuring follow-up services
   10. Improving shelter system
Appendix 1

WOMAN ABUSE COUNCIL OF TORONTO
Available at
http://www.womanabuse.ca/HighRiskAssessmentTool.doc

HIGH RISK RESOURCE KIT
BACKGROUND:
The High Risk project evolved out of the concern raised by members of the Support Services / Cultural Issues Committee of the Woman Abuse Council of Toronto. The concern was regarding the need to identify an effective and timely response to situations where one or more players are involved in a high-risk case. Sandra Quigley, a high-risk woman who was killed by her intimate partner, had a number of key players involved in her case. All of those involved, despite their best efforts, were unable to protect her safety. In response to her untimely death, the High Risk Response Model was developed to ensure early identification of high risk and an intervention model. The project has three main aims; the first is the development of a model for risk assessment, the second is to plan timely and appropriate interventions, and the third is to ensure that practitioners’ are able to facilitate appropriate responses from all sectors to help protect a woman’s safety through training and consultation.

THE MODEL HAS THREE COMPONENTS:

1. **Regular And Ongoing Use Of Risk Assessment Process And Procedures:**
   Use of a risk assessment process by all those involved with a woman who they believe is at high risk for death/serious injury. Ideally, the practitioners should encourage woman to participate in her own risk assessment process using available tools with the practitioners.

2. **In Cases Of Identified High Risk – Safety Planning:**
   Convening of a safety planning group meeting to identify an action plan to be put into place in a timely fashion to respond to the immediate needs. This plan will include ways to protect her safety in conjunction with key stakeholders i.e. The Police, family members, friends, etc.

3. **In Cases Of Concern And Need To Consult – Constraining the Abuser:**
   Bring a specific case situation to inter-sectoral group by using the specialized domestic violence court advisory meetings to consult on difficult cases and brainstorm possible interventions.
PRINCIPLES IN INTERVENING IN HIGH RISK AND LETHAL SIUTATIONS:

4. Safety of women and children is paramount and should determine action. Safety must encompass both emotional and physical aspects.

5. All intervention must support self-determination while balancing safety as a priority and duty to protect.

6. In order to be most effective at protecting safety, it is vital to gather as much information about the specifics of the current high-risk situation.
7. There must be effective and appropriate communication between sectors on a need-to-know basis. An integral aspect of any involvement must be providing information to women so that they can make informed choices and decisions.

8. The relationship between the woman and her children MUST be recognized and taken into account in any and all interventions. All interventions should attempt to support this relationship and not re-victimize the mother. The response to women victims should support, empower and assist women to be able to better protect their children.

9. Practitioners should attempt to respond to the woman’s needs as she defines them.

10. Practitioners must balance self-determination of the woman/victim with the need to protect the safety of her children.

11. Practitioners should be clear and direct about the limits to confidentiality and their own duty to warn and protect victims.

12. The system must recognize that the victim is often at the highest risk when she leaves the abusive relationship.

13. High risk and potentially lethal situations require an immediate response.

14. The system must be challenged to monitor abusers and systematically increase sanctions when they breach court order and/or re-offend.

15. An effective response must include an inter-sectoral approach and one which both holds the abuser accountable (through the courts) while supporting the woman and her children.

16. Interventions should attempt to be culturally appropriate and must be relevant to the woman and her community.

17. Interventions must account for diversity and be flexible to meet individual and specific needs and situations.

18. Responses must meet the needs of all communities and respond to the diversity of women, particular issues faced by women with disabilities.

19. Long term supports for women and children both separately and together, should be made available in order to concretely assist rather than re-victimize women.

20. The system must be challenged to provide adequate emergency and long term housing to ensure a woman can protect her safety and that of her children.

21. Practitioners must recognize the social and economic realities of the woman/ victim’s life and attempt to both provide services and advocate with women.
Indicators Of High Risk

22. Threats of homicide or suicide

23. The presence of weapons in the house or plans to acquire weapons on the part of the abuser.

24. Use/Abuse of drugs or alcohol by the abuser.

25. Access to the woman by the abuser, through access visits, etc.

26. Disregard on the part of the abuser of court orders; including restraining orders, bail conditions, probation conditions, etc.

27. Threats against the victim that are:
   - specific with respect to time, place, weapon, etc.
   - frequent and ongoing
   - public in nature-tells other people, the children, friends, family

   The woman believes that the abuser will carry out the threats.

28. A change in the behavior of the abuser. The victim knows the behavior of the perpetrator and can identify changes even if they are incremental.

29. Abuse or killing of pets within the home.

30. Woman has made attempts to leave or has left the situation.

31. Abuse has included sexual coercion or attacks.

32. Victim believes that the offender may seriously injure or kill her.

33. Abuser lacks remorse about an incident/his behavior.

34. Abuser seems preoccupied or obsessed with the victim (following, monitoring, stalking, exceedingly jealous).

35. Abuser shows signs of mental health problems.

36. Abuser has inflicted serious injury on the victim or others in the past.
A Tool for Risk Assessment in Woman Abuse Situations

This tool has been developed to identify indicators where a woman is at high risk for death or serious injury. This tool is to be used by a counselor/advocate with a woman. It is not meant to be filled out by a woman alone as it can be traumatic.

WOMAN/VICTIM: ________________________________________
CHILDREN IN THE HOME: _________________________________________
CHARGES LAID: ____________________________________________
DATE OF OFFENCE: _________________________________________
POLICE INVOLVEMENT: ___Yes ___No
INVESTIGATING OFFICER: _________________________________________

37. To the best of your knowledge, has your partner assaulted any previous spouses/partners or children from another relationship?
   ____Yes ____No     ____Don’t know

38. Has your partner assaulted/threatened you before?
   ____Yes ____No

39. Has there been a recent increase in assaults/threats?
   ____Yes ____No

40. Have your children been assaulted by your partner?
   ____Yes ____No

41. Have the police been called to respond to any domestic situations involving your partner prior to this incident?
   ____Yes ____No

42. Has your partner destroyed or damaged any of your belongings or contents of your home?
   ____Yes ____No

43. Has your partner injured or killed your pet?
   ____Yes ____No

44. Has your partner threatened to kill or harm you?
   ____Yes ____No
45. Has your partner threatened to harm/kill the children?
   ___Yes ___No

   Has your partner forced you to engage in sexual activity against your will?
   ___Yes ___No

   If so, was this during an abusive episode?
   ___Yes ___No

   Does your partner have full control over the finances?
   ___Yes ___No

   Does your partner prevent or limit your access to money?
   ___Yes ___No

46. Has your partner threatened/attempted suicide?
   ___Yes ___No

   In these threats, have there been specific details of a plan (e.g. a specific weapon, time, place or dangerous act)?  
   [THIS QUESTION WAS DIVIDED INTO TWO, BUT IS THE ORIGINAL QUESTION]
   ___Yes ___No

47. Does your partner own/have access to firearms or weapons?
   ___Yes ___No ___Don’t know

48. Does your partner have a Firearms Acquisition Certificate?
   ___Yes ___No ___Don’t know

49. Has your partner recently applied for a Firearms Acquisition Certificate?
   ___Yes ___No ___Don’t know

50. Has your partner used, or threatened to use guns or other weapons against you, the children or any other person?
   ___Yes ___No

51. Have you separated or discussed separation with your partner?
   ___Yes ___No

   If so, is your partner reacting in an aggressive and/or threatening manner?
   ___Yes ___No

52. Is your partner obsessed, overly-jealous, or extremely dominant with you?
   ___Yes ___No
53. Has your partner forcibly confined you, or prevented you from using the telephone, leaving the house, or contacting family or friends?
___Yes  ___No

54. Has your partner engaged in any stalking behaviors with you in the past?
___Yes  ___No

55. To the best of your knowledge has your partner engaged in any stalking behavior with any other person?
___Yes  ___No  ___Don't know

56. Is your partner isolated from others?
___Yes  ___No

57. Can your partner rely on friends and family for support?
___Yes  ___No

58. Has your partner ever threatened to remove the children from your care?
___Yes  ___No

59. Does your partner abuse drugs or alcohol?
___Yes  ___No  ___Don't know

60. Is your partner under psychiatric care, or has your partner been under such care in the past?
___Yes  ___No  ___Don't know

61. Is your partner on any medication?
___Yes  ___No

62. Is your partner taking such medication as prescribed?
___Yes  ___No

63. Has your partner ever received counseling for domestic violence or substance abuse issues? (Indicate by circling)
___Yes  ___No

64. Has your partner breached any court order, such as bail conditions or a restraining order?
___Yes  ___No  ___Don't know

65. Do you believe your partner is capable of severely injuring or killing you (or your children)?
66. Do you have any fears for your safety, or the safety of your family?
   ___Yes ___No

67. Do you have a personal safety plan in place to help protect yourself or children in the event of a problem with your partner?
   ___Yes ___No

   Are there other members of your partners’ family engaging in abusive behaviour towards you (and your children)?
   ___Yes ___No

68. Have you consulted a lawyer?
   ___Yes ___No

   If so, has your partner been served or about to be served with legal papers requesting a divorce/custody/access?
   ___Yes ___No

69. Have you obtained a custody order, or a restraining order?
   ___Yes ___No

70. Is there anything else that is causing you to fear your partner?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

   Woman/Victim’s Signature ________________________________ Date ____________________
   (optional)

   Witness’ Signature ______________________________________ Date ____________________

\Fs1\company\KATHY/VICTSTMR.WPD
WOMAN ABUSE COUNCIL OF TORONTO

SAFETY PLANNING KIT

| DATE:                  | ____________________________ |
| WOMAN'S NAME:         | ____________________________ |
| CONTACT NUMBER:       | ____________________________ |
| AGENCY NAME:          | ____________________________ |
| CASE MANAGER:         | ____________________________ |
| SUPERVISOR/MANAGER:   | ____________________________ |

1. **Needs / Desired Outcome (As defined by victim)**
   (In the woman’s own words, what needs to be done to protect her / her children’s safety and to constrain the abuser)

2. **Background (to be completed by practitioners)**
   - Essential background information:
   - Key High Risk Indicators/Factors:
     - High Risk Assessment Tool completed?  _____ Yes  _____ No
     - Practitioners desired outcomes:
3. **Who needs to be involved in the Safety Planning Process:**

(List people/agencies involved with the woman, children, abuser who are key to an effective safety plan i.e. police, family friends, DVERS, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENCY</th>
<th>AME</th>
<th>DNTACT NUMBER</th>
<th>OW ARE THEY INVOLVED?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. **Safety Planning Request / Consent (optional):**

- I believe that I am at high risk of being seriously injured by my abuser. I request that a Safety Planning Process be carried out to increase my safety.
- I will / will not (please circle) participate in a Safety Planning meeting held on my behalf.

Woman’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________________

5. **Safety Planning Process (to be done at the case management meeting):**

Meeting Planned:
Date: ___________ Time: ___________ Place: ___________

People involved in meeting:
People required for consultation:

6. **Safety Action Plan:**

Actions required:
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Who will lead the process?
- 

Who will need to be involved?
- 
- 
- 

When will it be done?

7. **Follow Up Activities:**

- Safety Action Plan distributed to all parties
- Follow up meeting planned?

Date: ______ Time: ______ Place: ______

8. **Follow Up notes:**
(please provide detailed notes)
Appendix 2

Safety Planning in Situations of Woman Abuse

Prepared by Woman Abuse Council of Toronto


Safety during an Explosive Incident

- If an argument seems unavoidable, try to have it in a room or area that has access to an exit. Avoid the bathroom, kitchen or anywhere near weapons
- Practice how to get out of your home safely. Identify which doors, windows, elevator, or stairs would be safe and easily accessible
- Have a packed bag ready. Keep it in a secret but accessible place in order to leave quickly
- Identify a neighbor you can tell about the violence and ask that they call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home
- Make up a code word to use with your children, family, friends, and neighbors when you need the police
- Decide and plan for where you will go if you have to leave home (even if you don't think you will need to)

If the situation is very dangerous, use your own instinct and judgment to keep yourself safe. Call the police as soon as it is safe to do so. You can obtain a restraining order.

Safety When Preparing to Leave

- Identify who would let you stay with them or lend you some money
- Always try to take your children with you or make arrangements to leave them with someone safe
- Leave money, an extra set of keys, copies of important documents, and extra clothes with someone you trust
- Open a savings account in your own name to start, establish, or increase your independence. Think of other ways to increase your independence
- Keep the shelter numbers close at hand and keep change or a calling card with you at all times
- Review your safety plan with a friend or counselor in order to plan the safest way to leave your batterer
- To avoid being reported as missing, leave a brief note indicating your departure. If you are taking your children with you, indicate this in the note.
Safety in Your Home

- Inform neighbors and landlord that your partner no longer lives with you and that they should call the police if they see your abuser near your home.
- Rehearse a safety plan with your children for when you are not with them.
- Inform your children's school or day care about who has permission to pick up your children. (Give them a copy of your restraining order).
- Change/Add locks on your doors and windows as soon as possible. Add a peephole and increase outdoor lighting if possible. Try to borrow a portable or cellular phone.
- Change your telephone number, and make sure it is unlisted. Don't give it to anyone you don't trust.

Safety with a Restraining Order

- Keep your restraining order with you at all times. Leave extra copies at work, with a friend, in your car, etc.
- Call the police if your partner breaks the court order.
- Think of alternative ways to keep safe if the police do not respond right away.
- Inform family, friends and neighbors that you have a restraining order in effect.
- Try to avoid places in the community your batterer may frequent.

Your Safety & Emotional Health

- If you are thinking of returning to a potentially abusive situation, discuss an alternative plan with someone you trust.
- If you have to communicate with your partner, determine the safest way to do so.
- Have positive thoughts about yourself and be assertive with others about your needs.
- Plan to attend a support group to gain support from others and learn about the law and your rights.
- Decide who you can call freely and openly to give you the support you need.
- Read books, articles and poetry to help you feel stronger.
- Collect resources and pamphlets concerning Woman Abuse.

Safety on the Job and in Public

- Decide who at work you will inform of your situation. This should include office or building security (provide a picture of your batterer if possible).
- Arrange to have someone screen your telephone calls if possible.
- Identify a safety plan for when you leave work. Have someone escort you to your car, bus or train. Use a variety of routes to go home if possible. Think about what you would do if something happened while going home.

If you are a teen in a violent dating relationship

- If things in your relationship don't feel right to you, talk about it with someone you trust.
- Decide which friend, teacher, or relative, you can go to in an emergency.
- Contact the police to learn how to obtain a restraining order and make a safety plan.
Checklist - What You Want to Take When You Leave

For more information about services available to you call:

Assaulted Women's Help line: Telephone: 416-863-0511

FemAide – Ligne d'aide et de soutien pour femmes violentées
Sans Frais Téléphone: 1-877-femaide (336-2433)
ATS: 1-866-860-7082

Prepared by Woman Abuse Council of Toronto: "Safety Planning in Situations of Woman Abuse"
There are numerous myths on, among others, customs, traditions and even practices that relate to domestic violence. It is important for us to review some of them because when we are able to correct the misinformation. Some myths, taken from Family of Woodstock Inc., are listed below. A factual statement is given to dispel each of the myths.

**Myth 1: Woman abuse is a new social problem.**

**Fact:** Woman abuse is not new. It has been condoned throughout history. For example, the widely used term “rule of thumb” comes from a 1767 English common law that permitted a husband to “chastise his wife with a whip or rattan no wider than his thumb”.

**Myth 2: Woman abuse occurs more often among certain groups of people.**

**Fact:** Woman abuse occurs in all ethnic, racial, economic, religious and age groups. However, violence in more affluent groups is often hidden because these women use shelters, legal clinics and other social services less often.

**Myth 3: Women remain in abusive relationships because they want to stay.**

**Fact:** A woman may feel she cannot leave an abusive relationship for many reasons. For example, she may:

- hope the relationship will get better
- not want to break up the family
- find her partner’s abuse has isolated her from friends and family
- be afraid that her family and community will blame her for the abuse or encourage her to stay
- feel ashamed and blame herself for the abuse
- fear for her own and her children’s safety
- depend upon her partner’s income
- suffer from low self-esteem because of her partner’s abuse
- have nowhere else to go
- have a partner who has threatened to harm her if she leaves
Myth 4: Alcohol causes men to assault their partners.

Fact: Research shows that the use of alcohol tends to be associated more with violence in cultures where alcohol is used as “an excuse” for socially unacceptable behavior. Many abusers claim that they are “unconscious” when they are drunk or high, and that they have no control over their actions. However, a truly “unconscious” person would not be able to engage in behavior that they have not performed in the past, and they will not be able to enact new or unlearned behavior unless they are conscious of their actions. The real cause of wife assault is the batterer’s desire for power and control over his partner. Batterers often use alcohol as an excuse to avoid taking responsibility for abusive behavior.

Myth 5: Men who assault their partners are mentally ill.

Fact: The psychological characteristics of batterers are extremely diverse, so much that no single pathology can be linked to battering. Research shows that no personality traits or clinical factors set abusive men apart from the general population. This is supported by a recent study in which one in five Canadian men living with a woman admitted to using violence against his partner.

Myth 6: Women often provoke assaults and deserve what they get.

Fact: Violence is a tool used by male abusers to control and overpower women. Abusive men know that their wives or girlfriends are frightened of them and use violence as a method of control. When a man is inclined to be violent, there is no behavior or response a woman can use to prevent or stop his abuse. She can yell at him, she can hit back, she can run away or even withdraw, and he will still be violent.

Some men expect their wives to know what they want without telling them. These men then blame the wife when she does not do what he expects her to do. In this way, men create “provocation” in their own minds through their own expectations. For example, assaulted women report that their husband or boyfriend abused them because: “I fried his eggs the wrong way”, “I didn't turn down the radio enough”, or “I went out with friends without asking his permission”. Men then attempt to justify the abuse of their wives by asserting that “she deserved it”. To avoid taking responsibility for his own behavior and his controlling behaviour with his partner, a man who abuses often claims his partner provoked the assault. No woman, no child, no person, ever deserves to be beaten or emotionally or psychologically abused.

Myth 7: Men are abused by their partners as often as women.

Fact: Research in Scotland has found that wife assault constitutes the largest proportion of family violence, almost 76%, as opposed to 1.1% for husband assault. Furthermore, more than 93% of charges related to spousal assault in Ontario are laid against men. Most charges laid against women are counter-charges laid by an assaulting partner or stem from acts of self-defense.
**Myth 8: Most sexual assault happens between people who do not know each other.**

**Fact:** Between 70-85% of women who are sexually assaulted are assaulted by men they know. Six of every ten sexual assaults take place in a private home, and four of every ten take place in a woman’s home.

**Myth 9: Pregnant women are free from the violent attacks of the men they live with.**

**Fact:** Of the one quarter of all women in Canada who have experienced violence at the hands of a current or past marital partner, 21% were assaulted during pregnancy. Forty percent of these women reported that the abuse began during pregnancy. Some reasons why men abuse during pregnancy include:

- Added financial stress
- The fetus becomes the center of attention, triggering the abusive man’s jealousy and fears of abandonment, which he deals with through violence
- Abusive men may view the fetus as an intruder and the pregnancy as something out of their control, which they try then to have power over

**Myth 10: Children who grow up in violent homes become violent when they are adults.**

**Fact:** Children who have seen family violence can become abusers themselves because violence is the behavioral model they grew up with. But children are also very open to learning other ways of behaving and can come to understand that being violent does not promote a positive sense of self. For example, in a shelter for battered women, one of four children believed it is acceptable for a man to hit a woman if the house is messy. After group counselling, none of the children believed this. Available at: [http://www.familydomesticviolence.org/myths.html](http://www.familydomesticviolence.org/myths.html)

**Domestic Abuse Intervention Project. Hotpeachpages**

Power and Control Wheel.

Available at: [http://www.hotpeachpages.net/images/immigrantpower.html](http://www.hotpeachpages.net/images/immigrantpower.html)
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Contact Us

This training is developed by Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

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