

Knowledge Exchange Project

[**Toolkit**] Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Women
and Children Dealing with Violence in their Relationships



BC Society of
Transition Houses



Prepared by:

BC Society of Transition Houses & AMSSA

For:

Provincial Office of Domestic Violence &
Ministry of Children and Family Development, Province of BC

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INTRODUCTION

Immigrant, refugee and non-status women experiencing violence in their relationships face multiple challenges that create unique vulnerabilities and needs for themselves, their children and families. In addition to facing the complex dynamics of relationship violence and abuse, this group of women also faces the multiple stresses that are associated with being an immigrant or refugee such as the lack of English language competency, loss of social networks, isolation, cultural dislocation, economic hardship, changes in family dynamics, and loss of personal autonomy.

Recognizing the unique challenges faced by immigrant and refugee women experiencing relationship violence, the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence (PODV) contracted with the BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH) and AMSSA (Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of BC) to develop the Knowledge Exchange Project. In March 2012, British Columbia established the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence. The office is the permanent lead for the B.C. government in coordinating and strengthening services for children and families affected by domestic violence. The office is accountable for ensuring all provincial policies, programs and services related to domestic violence are effective and delivered in a comprehensive and unified way across government. It is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and regularly reporting progress as well as consultation with stakeholders to support a coordinated, systemic approach to domestic violence. The office is part of the Ministry of Children and Family Development and works in collaboration with other provincial ministries, law enforcement agencies, and community stakeholders to ensure the effective delivery and coordination of domestic violence services in communities across the province. <http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/podv/index.htm>

The resources created under the umbrella of the Knowledge Exchange Project are aimed at increasing the capacity of the immigrant settlement and anti-violence sectors to better respond to the needs of immigrant and refugee women, and their children, who are impacted by relationship violence. The project resources include the 10 tools contained in this toolkit and an additional six webinars, covering a range of topics relevant to both the immigrant settlement and anti-violence sectors.

An advisory committee comprised of representatives from the immigrant settlement and anti-violence sectors helped identify the most needed topics for the tools and webinars, and tested and evaluated the final resources. The tools and webinars provide information that is practical, accurate and relevant for both frontline and management-level staff in the immigrant settlement and anti-violence service sectors. This resource will also be useful to those in other sectors working with women, children and families impacted by domestic violence and others addressing the issue.



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Knowledge Exchange Project

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview of the Knowledge Exchange Toolkit

How to Use the Toolkit

[Tool 1] Overview of Immigration to British Columbia

[Tool 2] Overview of Violence Against Women

[Tool 3] Common Settlement Experiences of New Immigrants and Refugees

[Tool 4] Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth Exposed to Violence

[Tool 5] Safety Considerations: Women, Children and Workers

[Tool 6] Competency Profile of Settlement and Anti-Violence Workers

[Tool 7] Settlement Service Protocols to Support Women Experiencing Violence

[Tool 8] Anti-Violence Service Protocols to Support Immigrant and Refugee Women

[Tool 9] Settlement Service Pathways

[Tool 10] Anti-Violence Service Pathways

[Appendix 1] Description of the Knowledge Exchange Project Webinars

[Appendix 2] Glossary of Commonly Used Terms



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OVERVIEW OF THE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE TOOLKIT

The **Knowledge Exchange Toolkit** includes background information on immigration and the settlement experience of immigrant and refugee women as well as an overview on violence against women. The toolkit provides information on service protocols and safety guidelines from the vantage point of both the settlement service sector and the anti-violence service sector. An inventory on frontline worker competencies provides an overview of the knowledge and skills needed by front line workers to support immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence. Finally, the toolkit provides information on the service scope and service pathways offered by settlement and anti-violence sectors in British Columbia. Throughout the toolkit are guidelines for how these sectors can strengthen their working relationships to benefit immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence.

There are a total of 10 self-contained tools included in this toolkit, as well as an additional 6 accompanying webinars that are available online as part of the Knowledge Exchange Project (please see [Appendix 1](#) for a description of the webinars).

The information provided in this toolkit will:

- Increase agency staff's knowledge and understanding of the impact of relationship violence on immigrant and refugee women, their children and families;
- Increase agency staff's knowledge of settlement and anti-violence services in British Columbia;
- Assist service teams to identify the core competencies needed by frontline staff to best assist immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence;
- Increase the knowledge of managers on the service protocols agencies should have in place to support immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence;
- Increase the capacity of service staff to facilitate effective referrals between the settlement and anti-violence sectors;
- Identify safety considerations to be taken into account by staff when working with immigrant and refugee women who experience relationship violence.

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HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

The information contained in each tool can be reviewed independently or in combination with other tools and webinars created by the Knowledge Exchange Project.

The toolkit can be reviewed by individual frontline staff / service managers or can be used in a team setting for professional development purposes.

Managers can use the toolkit to identify where their agencies' service and safety protocols need to be strengthened.

The toolkit can be used for community service planning purposes. Tips are provided on how service pathways can be developed between the immigrant settlement and anti-violence service sectors to best support immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence.

DESCRIPTION OF TOOLS

1. Overview of Immigration to British Columbia

Created by: AMSSA

This tool is relevant for anti-violence and settlement staff and managers to learn or refresh their knowledge about immigration to British Columbia. The tool provides an overview of common terms and concepts related to immigration, as well as demographic information for BC. The tool is helpful for staff and managers to use as training material for their staff to gain a better understanding of the terms and trends relating to immigration to BC.

2. Overview of Violence Against Women

Created by: BC Society of Transition Houses

This tool is particularly relevant for settlement staff and managers to enhance their knowledge about violence against women. The tool provides an overview of the dynamics and impacts of violence against women, as well as some specific considerations for immigrant and refugee women. The tool is helpful for staff and managers to use as training materials for their staff to gain a better understanding of violence against women and to dismantle some of the common myths held in our society.



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HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

3. Common Settlement Experiences of New Immigrants

Created by: AMSSA

This tool is particularly relevant for anti-violence frontline staff and managers to learn about the common barriers that shape the settlement experiences of immigrant and refugee women. It will allow workers to better understand the unique experiences and assess the needs of immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence.

4. Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth Exposed to Violence

Created by: The Vancouver & Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society and BC Society of Transition Houses

This tool is relevant for settlement and anti-violence staff and managers to learn or refresh their knowledge on how to support immigrant and refugee children and youth exposed to violence against their mothers. The tool provides an overview of how exposure to violence against women can impact children and youth at various stages in their lives. It also provides some key challenges that immigrant and refugee children and youth may struggle with as well as information on the Children Who Witness Abuse program.

5. Safety Considerations: Women, Children and Workers

Created by: BC Society of Transition Houses

This tool is relevant for settlement and anti-violence managers to learn or refresh their knowledge on how to keep women, children and workers safe while they access services. It includes an overview of key risk factors, safety planning, and how to appropriately respond to disclosures of abuse. This tool also recommends some organizational policies and protocols that will ensure the safety of both agency staff and the women and children accessing services.

6. Competency Profile of Settlement and Anti-Violence Workers

Created by: AMSSA

This tool is relevant for both anti-violence and settlement service staff to learn about the professional competencies of both sectors. The tool lists common competencies required in both sectors and then looks at each sector in turn to highlight the key skill sets and knowledge required by staff working with immigrant and refugee women who are experiencing violence.

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HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

7. Settlement Service Protocols to Support Women Experiencing Violence

Created by: AMSSA

This tool is particularly relevant for settlement agency management level staff to learn about suggested agency-wide service protocols to support immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence. The tool suggests what service protocols should include in order to achieve a common service standard in settlement service agencies.

8. Anti-Violence Service Protocols to Support Immigrant and Refugee Women

Created by: BC Society of Transition Houses

This tool is particularly relevant for anti-violence agency management level staff and front line staff to learn about suggested agency-wide service protocols to support immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence. The tool suggests what service protocols should include in order to best meet the unique needs of immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence, including referral protocols.

9. Settlement Service Pathways

Created by: AMSSA

This tool is relevant for anti-violence frontline staff and managers to learn about the services provided by settlement agencies and how to access these services. The tool describes the kind of support and services that settlement workers provide as well as an overview of client eligibility for settlement services.

10. Anti-Violence Service Pathways

Created by: BC Society of Transition Houses

This tool is particularly relevant for settlement frontline staff and managers to learn about the various anti-violence services available in British Columbia and how to access these services. The tool describes the kind of support and services that anti-violence programs can provide as well as eligibility criteria.



OVERVIEW OF IMMIGRATION TO BRITISH COLUMBIA

Over 250,000 immigrants arrive each year to settle permanently in Canada. As Canada's birth rate decreases, the inflow of immigrants is needed to maintain the population and economic stability of Canada.¹ There have been various waves of immigration to Canada in the nation's nearly 150 year history, and today immigration is characterized by a great diversity of newcomers. In 2012, immigrants to Canada arrived from over 200 countries, and spoke over 180 different languages.²

This toolkit provides an overview of common immigration terms and concepts, as well as a brief demographic breakdown of immigration to British Columbia.

IMMIGRATION, MIGRATION AND LEGAL STATUS

The pathways through which immigrants and migrants come to Canada determines their legal status in Canada, their access to services and processes, who may or may not accompany them to Canada, their experiences of living and working in Canada and the extent of their civic participation in Canada.

PERMANENT RESIDENTS

have completed all the necessary government processes and have a similar legal status to Canadian citizens in that they may stay in Canada permanently, and may study and work anywhere they choose. Permanent residents fall into one of three immigration classes: Economic, Family or Humanitarian.

- **Economic immigrants** apply to become permanent residents based on their ability to contribute to Canada's economy. For many, a point system is used that focuses on education

level, knowledge of English/French, work experience, age, arranged occupation in Canada, and expected ability to adapt to life in Canada. In 2012, 61% of immigrants to BC were considered economic immigrants.³

- **Family immigrants** are sponsored close relatives of permanent residents and citizens. In 2012, 33% of immigrants to BC were admitted under the family class.⁴
- **Humanitarian immigrants** are accepted to the country based on Canada's commitment to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need of protection. The majority of humanitarian immigrants fall within the category of refugees, who are often particularly vulnerable and commonly encounter more barriers to settlement than the other immigration classes. In 2012, 4% of immigrants to BC were considered humanitarian immigrants.⁵

TEMPORARY RESIDENTS

are authorized to remain in Canada for a limited amount of time and include: Visitors, Temporary Foreign Workers and International Students.

"NON-STATUS" MIGRANTS

enter or remain in Canada without government permission and have no legal status in Canada. Currently it is estimated that between 20,000 to 500,000 non-status individuals live in Canada.⁶

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF IMMIGRANTS AND MIGRANTS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Over 185,000 permanent residents arrived in British Columbia between 2006 and 2011 according to the latest National Household Survey.⁷ They arrived from over 140 countries, speaking over 85 languages.

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 1]

OVERVIEW OF IMMIGRATION TO BRITISH COLUMBIA

es. BC is the most linguistically diverse province in Canada. Mandarin, Punjabi and Tagalog are the most common first languages spoken after English in BC.⁸

The top three source countries of recent immigrants to BC are China, the Philippines and India. As of 2012, one in four British Columbians was born outside of Canada, and more than a quarter of recent immigrants arrive before the age of 24. Women accounted for 52.1% of recent immigrants.⁹

As of 2008, more temporary residents arrive to BC every year than permanent residents.

Generally, permanent residents qualify for the same social services and have similar legal rights as Canadian citizens, while temporary residents have limited access to legal and social services/processes.

The legal and/or immigration status of a person can profoundly impact their integration experience in Canada. A person's status may influence where they live, their ability to sponsor their family members, the extent to which they can access the Canadian legal system, and their ability to socially, politically and economically participate in life in Canada.¹⁰

'SUPERDIVERSITY' IN BC

This information shows the high level of diversity present in BC's immigrant and migrant community, especially when looking at individual settlement and integration experiences. The concept of 'super-diversity' captures and acknowledges the increase in complexity of diversity of identity and experience in society. Settlement and migration experiences are deeply influenced by many complex and inter-

secting factors, not only by country of origin and English language ability. Variables can include: gender, age of immigration, level of education, socioeconomic status, ethnic and religious affiliations, legal and immigration status, immigration class, health and mental health status, reasons for leaving country of origin, experiences prior to immigration, place of landing in Canada, settlement patterns and access to both ethnic and mainstream communities, and length of time in Canada.¹¹

SOCIAL INCLUSION THEORY

Social Inclusion is an approach to immigration and settlement that holds that successful integration is achieved when immigrants experience full and equal participation in social, economic and political processes. Integration is not the sole responsibility of immigrants, but is achieved through proactive investment to bring about the conditions for inclusion based on the recognition and validation of diversity.

The Government of British Columbia recognizes the important role that immigration plays in helping to build a strong province. WelcomeBC helps ensure new British Columbians are able to settle, gain employment, become active members of their communities, and contribute fully to the social and economic prosperity of BC. More information is available at: <http://www.welcomebc.ca/home.aspx>

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 1]

OVERVIEW OF IMMIGRATION TO BRITISH COLUMBIA

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OVERVIEW OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

WHAT IS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?

*"any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life"*¹

Violence against women in relationships is a power and gender based crime usually by the male partner, directed at the female partner.²

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS ABOUT THE CONTROL AND COERCION OF WOMEN

Violence against women is rooted in the belief that women deserve less social power than men. In Canada and globally, there are many messages that tell us men are more important than women (i.e. on average men earn more than women). This makes it easier for a man to believe he has the right to be in charge and to control a woman, even if it requires violence. This is not only wrong, but it is against the law.³

Because women tend to hold less power in all societies, they can experience violence in many other relationships, for example:

- Abusive parents
- In-laws
- "Friends"
- Boyfriends
- Drug dealers
- Traffickers
- Landlords
- Employers

At the centre of violent relationships is a pattern of power and control. Individual events may not

appear violent or abusive, but added up and experienced over time they result in one person in a relationship holding the power and having a lot of control over the other. Incidents at first may not seem serious, but usually escalate over time, leading to women feeling degraded, isolated and having little control over their lives.⁴

The Numbers:

- **50%** of women in Canada have experienced sexual or physical violence.⁵
- Each year **20,000** women in BC experience relationship violence.⁶

Myth	Reality
Violence against women is a 'women's issue'.	It is a human rights issue that affects everyone.
Violence against women is a 'private matter' or 'family issue'.	It is a systemic problem. Women all over the world have similar experiences of violence.
Each partner is equally responsible for the problem.	Abusers are 100% responsible for the abuse.

Why Talk About Women?

- In Canada, men are accused of **81%** of cases of violent against women and **79%** of violence against males.⁷
- In Canada, the rate of experiencing violence in relationships was nearly four times higher for women than that for men.⁸
- In BC, women are killed at least 3 times more often than men in domestic homicides.⁹

OVERVIEW OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

When women do use violence against their male partners they are usually being abused. Violence is primarily used in such situations as self-defense and to resist the violence being used against them.

Any kind of violence is wrong, be it against men, women or children. The idea is not to paint men as villains, or group ALL men with the group of men who choose to use violence. We recognize that this is a small subsection of males *and many men speak up to end all forms of violence including male violence against women*. We also recognize that violence happens in same sex relationships.

WHO IS MOST VULNERABLE TO ABUSE?

Women are predominantly at risk of violence. It happens in all cultural, religious, ethnic and racial communities, at every age, income group and social class.¹⁰ However, those who experience various oppressions and lack the most options are more vulnerable to ongoing experiences of violence and abuse. For example:

- Women with disabilities;
- Women living in poverty or who are homeless;
- Immigrant and refugee women;
- Aboriginal women;
- Women of colour;
- Senior women and young women;
- Women living in rural or remote settings;
- Pregnant women.

No culture condones violence. Although there may be different religious and cultural interpretations of men's power over women, anyone who claims violence is 'normal' in a particular culture is misrepresenting it.¹¹

Immigrant and refugee women may be more vulnerable to abuse due to:

- financial dependence;
- sponsorship concerns;
- language barriers;
- a lack of knowledge about community resources;
- refraining from reporting abuse due to fear (e.g. further victimization or deportation).¹²

TYPES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence can be committed against women in many forms. All forms of violence can have a serious negative impact on women's health and well-being.

Types of Violence	Examples
Physical	Punching, kicking, choking, mutilation, or murder.
Sexual	Rape, unwanted touching, forced prostitution, forced sex.
Verbal or Psychological	Threats, insults, destroying valuables, isolation, hurting pets.
Stalking	Persistent and unwanted attention, following or spying, monitoring email.
Financial	Taking away a woman's money or income, not allowing a woman to work.

OVERVIEW OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

WHY DOESN'T SHE JUST LEAVE?

There are many reasons and factors that trap women in violent relationships or pull them back into the relationship. Abuse in a relationship is often a gradual process, with the frequency of incidents and seriousness of the violence slowly escalating over time. Abusers often blame women for the abuse, express deep remorse and make convincing promises to change. This can make it difficult for women to accept that there is nothing she can do to end the violence and that he will likely not stop being abusive on his own.

Abusers often threaten women about leaving (i.e. he will kill her, hurt children, commit suicide) resulting in a lot of fear and responsibility for the safety of themselves and others. The long-term experience of being abused also negatively impacts a woman's self-confidence and health, making it more difficult to believe that she deserves better treatment, that she can find the courage to leave, or that she can manage on her own.¹³

Other reasons a woman might stay or go back:

- Family or community pressure
- Lack of support
- Sponsorship concerns
- Religious or moral values
- Financial concerns
- Wants to keep family together
- Love for her partner
- Hope that he will change
- Fear of losing children (removal of children due to child welfare concerns/interventions or fear of losing guardianship of children)
- Social stigma
- Lack of long-term housing
- Isolation

IMPACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Some of the **health and mental health** impacts associated with experiences of violence and abuse include:

- Injury/ disability
- Eating disorders
- Sleeping disorders
- Pregnancy complications
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Drinking/ drug use
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Trauma

Economic impacts can include:

- Inability to work and loss of wages (e.g. health concerns, partner control);
- Lengthy and costly court battles;
- Loss of housing and property;
- Counselling and health care costs.

Some of the social impacts of violence against women include:

- Lack of participation in regular activities;
- Prevented from learning English;
- Not knowing her rights and the services available;
- Trapped in abusive relationships;
- Isolation or alienation
 - family and friends;
 - cultural and/or religious community;
 - services and supports.

Myth	Reality
Some women like the violence, are attracted to abusive men or are addicted to violence.	Abusers usually conceal their abusiveness at first and target vulnerable women.
Violence against women is caused by drugs and/or alcohol.	Sober and intoxicated people use violence. Abusers use substances as an excuse for violence.
The abuser cannot control the abuse or has an "anger management" issue.	Abusers are in control and make choices to use violence and abusive tactics.

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Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 3]

COMMON SETTLEMENT EXPERIENCES OF NEW IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

THE SETTLEMENT EXPERIENCE

This tool provides an overview of the settlement experience of new immigrants and refugees, and highlights common barriers that shape the settlement and integration of immigrants to British Columbia.

THREE PHASES OF SETTLEMENT

The settlement process is a unique experience for individuals and families. The Settlement Process Model suggests there are three phases within the settlement experience: Settlement, Adaptation, and Integration.”¹

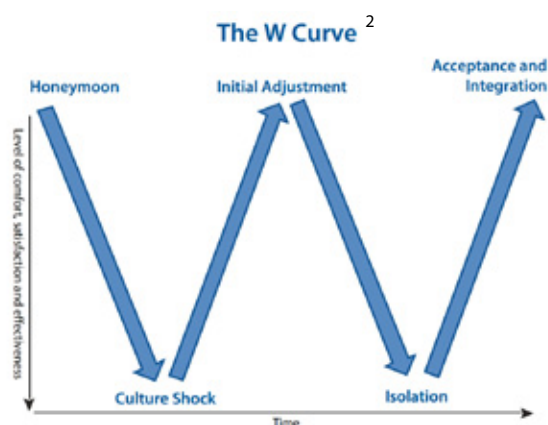
Settlement – Newly arrived immigrants and refugees focus on basic needs such as securing housing, learning to use the local transport system, enrolling their children in school, accessing basic government services such as registering for BC’s Medical Services Plan and securing employment.

Adaptation – Immigrants and refugees better understand Canadian social and cultural norms, are improving their language skills, and building friendships in the community. While some may have secured employment, most immigrants and refugees still face barriers in accessing their preferred occupation.

Integration – Immigrants and refugees feel a sense of “belonging” to their new community, and actively participate socially, economically and politically in their communities.

A commonly used metaphor to describe the emotional journey of the settlement process is that of a letter “W”, which reflects the ups and downs that immigrants and refugees experience in the settlement

process (see graphic). While immigrants and refugees often experience excitement and optimism when adjusting to life in Canada, they may also struggle with culture shock, economic exclusion and isolation throughout their integration process.



COMMONLY ENCOUNTERED BARRIERS

Immigrants, refugees and their families experience settlement and integration into Canadian society differently. However, immigrants frequently encounter a number of common barriers, many of which intersect.

Language Barriers – Language proficiency is an overarching concern that affects all areas of settlement. Language barriers can amplify the challenges faced by recent immigrants, and prevent them from accessing even basic health and social services.

Economic Factors – Challenges in accessing employment is one of the most pressing concerns for new immigrants. The lengthy process of foreign education and credential recognition and the requirement for “Canadian experience” may force

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 3]

COMMON SETTLEMENT EXPERIENCES OF NEW IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

immigrant families to take lower paid 'survival jobs' outside their chosen occupations. English language barriers and work place discrimination can further compound access to the Canadian labour market.³ The impact of not finding meaningful employment and having to do work that the individual may never have done in his/her country of origin can be extremely stressful for both women and men and affect their self-esteem and increase stress.

In addition, access to adequate housing can be extremely challenging for new immigrants who may not yet have Canadian references and credit checks.

Changes in Socio-economic Status – Many immigrants experience a loss of socio-economic status and often a high degree of financial stress. According to 2006 census data, over 1 in 3 immigrants who arrived within the previous two years fell below the poverty line.

Experiences of Isolation – A common experience for immigrants and refugees is to experience isolation as they rebuild social networks and reframe how to access support and assistance. The loss of extended family and social relationships in their country of origin means immigrants need to seek information and support through community and other services. Many immigrants cannot afford to visit or return to their country of origin due to the change in their economic status as a result of immigrating to Canada.

Cultural Factors – Immigrants often experience culture shock as they adapt to differences in the way society is organized in Canada. This includes learning about and adapting to the different values, structures and role expectations that underlie gender, family, social and workplace relationships.⁴

Changes in Gender Relationships – Many immigrant and refugee women report that immigration offers new opportunities for economic self-sufficiency and to expand their independence and self-determination. These factors can significantly impact power relationships within adult intimate relationships. The dual stress of working to support their family whilst navigating new and traditional expectations of their role as a women, wife and mother is extremely stressful for immigrant women.

Family Dynamics – Different rates of settlement and language acquisition between the generations can result in disrupted or inverted power relationships within immigrant families. Typically children and youth assume more family and adult responsibilities, and senior immigrants and refugees experience greater dependence on their adult children.

Legal Factors – Immigrants and refugees often experience a lack of knowledge of Canadian law and their rights and responsibilities under Canadian law. Depending on their previous experiences, immigrants and refugees may not trust Canadian policing and legal processes.⁵

Health Factors – Studies consistently show that immigrants and immigrant women in particular experience a decline in their overall health status over time. This is attributed to a number of factors such as high levels of stress associated with the settlement process, social isolation, a decline in socio-economic status and changes in diet.⁶

STRENGTHS AND RESILIENCY

Building resiliency is an important step in the settlement process. This can be achieved in a number

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 3]

COMMON SETTLEMENT EXPERIENCES OF NEW IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

of ways including: the development of new support networks, accessing language and settlement services, learning to navigate between cultures, “bi-cultural” skills, and developing connections within their cultural group and with the mainstream community.

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Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 4]

SUPPORTING IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE

This tool provides an overview of how exposure to violence against women can impact children and youth at various developmental stages in their lives.

WHAT IS EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?

Exposure to domestic violence means seeing, hearing, being told about, or seeing the aftermath of abuse and coercive control used against a parent. Specifically, children and youth are exposed to violence against their mothers when they:

- are used by an abusive parent as part of the abuse;
- hear loud conflict and violence;
- learn about what happened to their mother;
- see their father abuse his new partner when they visit him on weekends;
- are denied what is owed them for child support;
- see their mother assaulted or demeaned;
- or see the aftermath (eg. injuries).¹

IMPACTS OF ABUSE ON CHILDREN & YOUTH

It is important to note that not all children and youth experience their exposure to violence in the same way. Some children and youth are negatively impacted by being exposed to the violence against their mothers while others show very few concerns. Some of the impacts or behaviours discussed below could also result from other situations or circumstances. They should not be used as indicators to automatically assume a child is/was exposed to violence. Examples of some of the long- and short-term effects on children who have been exposed to violence in the home are:

- Children who come from homes where they are exposed to violence show between 10 and

17 times higher rates of serious emotional and behavioural problems than children from non-violent homes.²

- Many children experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including fear, anxiety, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and intrusive memories of the abuse, anger outbursts and hyper-arousal.³
- Children who are exposed to the abuse of a woman show higher rates of aggression against their mothers, their teachers and their friends. This is particularly true among boys but is also true for girls.⁴
- It is common to see emotional problems, such as depression, worry, school refusal, withdrawal from social interactions, and difficulty separating from their mother.⁵
- Many children suffer physical complaints such as body aches and pains, and illnesses with no known medical causes.⁶
- School achievement and social development are frequently compromised, as is the development of social competence.⁷
- Often there are more subtle symptoms such as inappropriate attitudes about the use of violence in resolving conflicts, inappropriate attitudes about violence against women, or condoning violence in intimate and dating relationships. Other symptoms are hypersensitivity about problems at home and a sense that they are to blame for the violence.⁸

Symptoms vary depending on factors such as whether the abuse has stopped, how safe the children and their mother feel, the duration and intensity of the abuse witnessed, and the child's coping style and other strengths or vulnerabilities.⁹

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 4]

SUPPORTING IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE

Women in abusive relationships typically work hard to shield their children from the abuse and to keep them safe. Service providers must be mindful of this and meet children and youth where they are at in terms of the support they need. The impact of abuse on children and youth will be different depending on their age, gender and developmental stage.

Dr. Peter Jaffe describes six lessons that children who are exposed to violence can learn:¹⁰

1. Violence is an appropriate form of conflict resolution.
2. Violence has a place within our family interaction.
3. If violence is reported to others in the community, including mental health and criminal justice professionals, there are few, if any consequences.
4. Sexism, as defined by an inequality of power, decision making ability, and roles within the family, is to be encouraged.
5. Violence is an appropriate means of stress management.
6. Victims of violence are to tolerate this behavior or to assume that they are responsible for the violence.

IMPACTS OF ABUSE ON ATTACHMENT

Attachment Theory is one way of explaining relationship and behavior. Attachment is a bond between infants and caregivers. When an infant is alarmed or stressed, by things like hunger or pain, he/she looks for physical contact and comfort with their primary caregiver. Because they are dependent on their parents, young children are vulnerable to threats aimed at their mother, especially when the source of those threats is another caregiver such as their father or their mother's boyfriend.¹¹ Attachment seeking behaviours include crying, grasping, clinging, approaching, following, smiling, reaching, and vocalizing. In most families, these needs are met quickly and consistently by a caregiver. Caregivers provide the infant with feelings of safety and security by meeting their needs. These infants feel safe to explore the world and know that if they feel distressed or scared, they will be safe when returning to their caregiver.

Children who have developed healthy attachments are more likely to build and sustain relationships, to be independent, develop conscience and self-discipline. Children with positive attachment to caregivers can also extend this to other relationships such as peers and other adults.

Research suggests that exposure to violence against a mother can have a negative effect on the development of secure attachment.¹² When fathers are physically violent with mothers, infants are more likely to be insecurely attached to their mothers. The behaviour of the abusive partner clearly disrupts the child's and mother's sense of safety and creates fright in addition to injury.¹³

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 4]

SUPPORTING IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE

IMPACT OF ABUSE ON THE DEVELOPING BRAIN

When we look at the impact of abuse on a child's developing brain, we consider environmental factors. Research has discovered that the physical brain develops in response to early environment factors. Human beings become a reflection of the world in which they develop.¹⁴ If the world is safe and predictable, the child is more likely to grow up to be a self-regulating, thoughtful and productive member of family, community and society. If the developing child's world is chaotic and threatening, then the child may become impulsive, aggressive and inattentive, and may have difficulties with relationships.

When a person becomes stressed, the hormone cortisol and other hormones are released into the brain. Cortisol is also known as the "stress hormone" because it helps the body respond to stress by, for example, raising blood pressure and blood sugar.¹⁵ The release of cortisol is excellent in a crisis because it allows the person to rapidly prepare for a perceived threat. Your hormones initiate several processes that best allow you to cope with sudden danger.¹⁶ However, cortisol can be harmful if the body does not have the opportunity to relax and return to normal after the crisis episode. Research shows that the cortisol-flooded brain of a young child is changed in significant ways. This can be seen in adulthood, when these children mature.¹⁷

The brain may either overproduce stress hormones, making he/she hyper-alert, or under produce them making them emotionally flat. If the brain produces too much cortisol in early life, as happens when an infant is frequently terrified, brain development is affected and the brain may not produce normal stress responses.

The brain can be healed through exposing the child repeatedly to developmentally appropriate experiences.¹⁸

INTERGENERATIONAL ABUSE

Research suggests about one-third of all individuals who were abused or neglected as children will subject their children to maltreatment.¹⁹ Intergenerational abuse can occur when children who either experienced maltreatment or were exposed to violence between their parents or caregivers learn to use physical punishment as a means of parenting their own children or in their relationships. It is vital that children get the support they need after being exposed to violence against their mother.

PROTECTIVE AND RISK FACTORS

There are certain protective and risk factors that influence how children respond to being exposed to their mother's abuse. Risk factors are negative influences in the life of an individual or community that may make it more difficult for children to accept or benefit from supportive services after a traumatic experience (i.e. witnessing abuse of their mother). Protective factors are those positive influences that support a child's healing and resiliency after a traumatic experience (i.e. exposure to violence). Risk and protective factors can be linked to individual characteristics, family, school, community pressures, peer groups, beliefs and values.

Examples of some internal risk factors include:

- cognitive barriers (e.g. under developed communication, brain injuries, dyslexia)
- emotional delays (e.g. fear of separation, inability to express feelings, aggression)
- mental health concerns (e.g. anxiety, depression)

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 4]

SUPPORTING IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE

Examples of some external risk factors include:

- poverty;
- unstable housing;
- community pressures;
- parental substance abuse;
- lack of understanding by teachers or other professionals.

ABUSIVE FATHER'S INFLUENCE ON CHILDREN & YOUTH

Children often feel caught in the middle between their parents when there is abuse in the relationship, and find it difficult to talk to either parent. Abusive fathers often show no level of respect to mothers, modeling and encouraging this behaviour towards her from children as well. Abusive fathers also often overrule a mother's decisions, ridicule her in the front of the children, and establish that he is the only one with parenting authority in the household. Men's behaviour towards their partners shows children that it is acceptable to insult, control and abuse women.

An abusive father often manipulates children into believing what he wants them to believe. He can place blame on their mothers for the failed relationship. Immigrant and refugee children and youth may be further confused along the intersections of religion, culture, family values, and gender roles. Abusive fathers may be using family values as a way to further diminish the relationship between children and their mother.²⁰

INFLUENCE OF CULTURE AND RELIGION

Specifically looking at culture and religion of family – some factors may contribute to the struggle that

immigrant and refugee children and youth have in today's society. Some immigrant or refugee women may have strong values regarding the importance of family, regardless of the violence in the home. These women may fear losing the support of their community, family and friends if they leave their abusers. Women may also be concerned about bringing shame to themselves and their families if they speak out. These family circumstances will play a role in the child's experience of violence against women. Children and youth may find themselves caught between the culture, beliefs and expectations of the family and their own beliefs and values. In addition, some families arrive in Canada fleeing countries where regimes have legitimized the use of force for social control. These experiences will have had an influence on how both the women and the men view violence within the family.²¹

HELPING IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE

Service providers should get information about what programs are available- both in government and community- to support immigrant and refugee children and youth. Work with these programs to ensure that interpretation and cultural/religious accommodations can be provided, if needed. Some supports include: Children Who Witness Abuse Programs, Child and Youth Mental Health Services, Sexual Abuse Intervention Programs, Victim Services and counselling services.

Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA) programs

The CWWA program uses individual and group interventions, aimed at helping youth and children (3-18 years) to understand and cope with violence against their mother and the effects of this violence on themselves. The goals of the CWWA program

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 4]

SUPPORTING IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE

are to: break the generational impact of violence; support children and youth exposed to abuse with developing self-esteem and awareness of safety concerns; and help them understand their own emotions and to understand the dynamics of violence against women in relationships. CWWA counsellors also provide support and information to mothers and non-offending caregivers <http://www.bcsth.ca/content/cwwa>

Children and Youth Mental Health (CYMH)

Provided by BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, CYMH's offices provide direct and contracted community-based mental health services to children, youth under the age of 19 and their families on a voluntary basis. This is most often accomplished through partnership with families and community partners. CYMH staff typically includes psychologists, social workers, counsellors with masters degrees, and nurses. Staff members provide services for the client such as assessment and planning, treatment, management of community issues, and consultation with individuals involved with the client. http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/what_we_do.htm

Sexual Abuse Intervention Program (SAIP)

This service is provided under the mandate of the BC Ministry for Children and Family Development. It may be delivered by contracted agencies operating independently of the Ministry within communities, or by Ministry staff. The overall goal SAIP is to provide a range of appropriate, timely and accessible assessment, treatment and/or support services to children and youth who have been sexually abused, and to children under the age of 12 with sexual behaviour problems. <http://www.saipbc.ca/index.php>

BC Children's Child and Youth Mental Health Program

A provincial resource providing psychiatric assessment, short term treatment (including individual, family and group), and medication review for BC and Yukon children, youth, and their families. Support available for: eating disorders, mental health and substance use, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders, mood and anxiety disorders, and more. Referrals for children and youth 18 years of age and younger are accepted. <http://www.bcchildrens.ca/Services/ChildYouthMentalHlth/default.htm>

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Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 4]

SUPPORTING IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE

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Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 5]

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: WOMEN, CHILDREN AND WORKERS

WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN'S SAFETY

Women are the experts in their own lives and situations, and should be the ones that make ALL decisions that pertain to their (and their children's) safety. Women should never be pressured to take any actions against their will, including leaving a partner or calling the police.

To serve women best, settlement workers are encouraged to build relationships with the anti-violence services in their community. Anti-violence workers are trained and experienced in assessing safety risks and developing safety plans with women. Anti-violence colleagues can be called upon to help settlement workers support women living with abuse or to provide advice on how to handle situations. For an overview of scope of services, roles and referral protocols for both sectors, please see [Tool 7: Settlement Service Protocols](#) and [Tool 8: Anti-Violence Service Protocols](#).

With a woman's consent, an anti-violence worker can be brought in to help support her, and/or a referral can be given to an appropriate anti-violence service (see [Tool 10: Anti-Violence Service Pathways](#)). If she does not want to talk to anyone else or take any action at this time, respect this.

If a woman does not want to speak to anyone, settlement workers should still connect with their anti-violence colleagues to get guidance on how to appropriately support the woman, ensuring privacy and confidentiality is maintained (no personal or identifying information is disclosed that could potentially reveal the identity of the woman or her family).

WHEN ARE WOMEN IN GREATER DANGER?¹

It is impossible to predict whether someone will be violent or when they will escalate their violence. It is important to always listen carefully to a woman's assessment of her own situation and encourage her to listen to her instincts.

Women may be in increased danger at the following times:

- Immediately following disclosure of the abuse to someone outside her family.
- Immediately after she has told him she is going to leave.
- Immediately after she has left him.
- When the accused is released by police.
- During charging process or plea discussion.
- If stay of proceedings is entered.
- Upon application for peace bond or other protection order.
- When she initiates legal actions such as divorce, issues related to children or property settlement.
- When any papers are served such as protection orders, notification of divorce or separation proceedings.
- When she enters another relationship.

*This list of risk factors should not be used as a checklist to be reviewed with a woman who discloses abuse.

For More Information on Risk Assessment for Violent Relationships see:

- Ministry of Children and Family Development (2010). Best Practice Approaches: Child Protection and Violence Against Women: http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_protection/pdf/best_practice_approaches_nov2010.pdf

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 5]

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: WOMEN, CHILDREN AND WORKERS

- Ending Violence Association of BC (2013). Safety Planning Across Culture & Community: A Guide for Front Line Violence Against Women Responders: <http://www.endingviolence.org/node/1594>

DUTY TO REPORT

There are certain situations, when children are involved, that we are obligated to report safety concerns to authorities. The Child, Family and Community Service Act requires that anyone who has reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected, and that the parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child, must report the suspected abuse or neglect to a child welfare worker.

If this happens, all efforts should be made to inform the woman ahead of time and include her in the process, so that she is prepared and can make a plan. Providing genuine support in a non-judgmental way, in such cases, is very important.

To learn more about when there is a duty to report: BC's Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect: http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_protection/pdf/handbook_action_child_abuse.pdf

If a Woman Discloses Experiencing Violence in Her Relationship:

- Settlement workers should find a safe and private place to discuss the situation and ask her how they can help support her safety. Give her options such as anti-violence services, police or legal services.
- Build trust by listening and supporting her in a non-judgemental manner. Validate her experiences, feelings and fears.

- Acknowledge the potential danger of her situation and the complexity of her situation. This will help build trust.
- Give her time to make her own decisions. Settlement workers should not tell her what to do (e.g. she should leave or she should go back and try a little harder). Don not try to rescue her by trying to find quick solutions.
- Respect her confidentiality - keep things private.
- Provide resources for practical assistance: child care, transportation, financial assistance.
- Respect her autonomy. Workers are not responsible for the abuse or for her decision to stay or leave.

If a woman is considering leaving, even just for a short time (i.e. going to a Transition House or a relative's house), there are some important items for her to take with her. Encourage her to collect these items or make copies ahead of time and keep them in a safe place in case she needs to leave urgently:

- Driver's license, social insurance card (SIN), birth certificates (hers and her children's).
- Carecard, medications, medical records (hers and her children's).
- Marriage license, custody and access papers, divorce papers, protection orders, peace bonds or restraining orders.
- Passport, permanent residence status card, immigration or refugee papers.

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 5]

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: WOMEN, CHILDREN AND WORKERS

- Money, cheque book, debit and/or credit cards, bank book or bank statement.
- Lease, rental agreement, house deed.
- House keys, car keys.
- Address book, phone numbers.²

For more information:

Are You Experiencing Abuse? Pamphlet for Women (Government of BC): <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/publications/docs/helphopehealing-are-you-experiencing-abuse.pdf>

LEGAL SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

Many women experiencing relationship abuse are unsure of their legal rights when it comes to Family Law (divorce, child custody and access) or immigration and sponsorship status. This can keep women trapped in abusive relationships and fearful of reaching out for help. Whenever possible, connect immigrant and refugee women experiencing abuse with legal services or advocates. Providing women with information about their legal rights will improve women's ability to make choices to keep themselves and their children safe.

For more Information:

- Legal Services Society- Abuse and Family Violence Resources (information available in multiple languages): <http://lss.bc.ca/publications/subject.php?sub=4>
- Legal Services Society- Immigrants and Refugees (available in multiple languages): <http://lss.bc.ca/publications/subject.php?sub=10>

- Legal Services Society- Guide to the New Family Law Act (available in multiple languages): <http://lss.bc.ca/publications/pub.php?pub=432>
- BC Society of Transition Houses- New Family Law Act (Webinar) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIQCdEQOsDQ&feature=c4-overview&list=UU-p3tgibvzUmB933q3RcRKQ>

HOW CAN SETTLEMENT WORKERS HELP ENSURE WOMEN'S SAFETY IN SERVICE?

- Never recommend joint family or couple counselling if there is emotional or physical abuse. It is dangerous for a woman. If the couple wants counselling, separate counselling can be helpful.
- Do not work with both partners together when there is violence in the relationship. Ensure they have separate service plans.
- If a settlement worker is working with the abusive partner and he asks for interpretation or explanation of any legal documents pertaining to the abusive relationship (e.g. protection orders or divorce papers) ensure this is done in private and in the absence of the woman.
- Do not share any information with her partner or his family- including knowledge of the abuse, referrals made, when she last came in for service, or future scheduled appointments.

How Can Settlement Workers Help Support Children and Youth Exposed to Violence?

- Make a referral to a Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA) program in your community (See [Tool 10: Anti-Violence Service Pathways](#)):
 - CWWA programs take self-referrals and referrals from family or friends, schools, transition housing programs, community agencies,

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 5]

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: WOMEN, CHILDREN AND WORKERS

police, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, law enforcement, physicians and more.

- The program works with children and youth ages 3-18.
- For safety reasons, the child should not be living with the abuser.
- When it is safe to do so (usually without the abusive father present), talk to the children and youth about their experiences, listen to them, and reassure them that:
 - the violence is not their fault;
 - she does not cause the abuse;
 - her partner is responsible for his behaviour and for the abuse;
 - that violence is not okay;
 - violence against women is against the law;
 - there are safe people who can help.
- Explain confidentiality, and the limits of confidentiality in language that the child and mother will understand. Children need to understand what information will be shared with others, even their mothers. It can be devastating for a child to find out after the fact that something they thought was shared privately has been reported to someone else.³
- When forming a relationship with children, ensure that you are meeting in a safe space using developmentally appropriate language⁴ and inform the child about the purpose and limits of your relationship. Let them know that you are not a counsellor but you can support them in accessing services.
- Connect them with CWWA worker or anti-violence worker to assist them in developing a safety plan.

- Talk to them about 911, emergency contacts they can contact, and safe adults they can trust and rely on in crisis.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

There are certain measures that can be put into place to ensure worker safety. We must recognize that it is not only the women entering service who may have experiences of abuse, but that agency staff and co-workers may have past or present safety concerns as well.

Less than 50% of Canadian workplaces have policies around violence against women and safety in place (ACWS 2008).⁵ In Canada, almost 20 per cent of all incidents of violent victimization, including physical assaults, sexual assault and robbery, occurred while the victim was at work.⁶

Some Suggested Measures Include:

- All service agencies should have a clearly stated policy on violence against women. Work with your anti-violence colleagues to develop policies and protocols.
- Agreements should be put in place around information sharing between agencies. This should include a clear understanding of each agency's privacy and confidentiality policies. This will help staff assess the implications of sharing information with a certain agency and to relay that information to a woman so she can make an informed decision. Explicit consent should always be obtained from the woman before any information is shared.
- Relationships and protocols should be established between agencies in order to support women's safety. For programs that are single

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 5]

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: WOMEN, CHILDREN AND WORKERS

staffed or agencies located in rural and remote areas, protocols around connecting with anti-violence agencies via phone or video conference (i.e. Skype) should be established.

- Public education materials about help available to victims and abusers should be available and displayed in accessible areas such as assessment rooms, lunch rooms, washrooms, and company websites.
- Regular training and education about violence against women in relationships for all levels of the organization is recommended.
- Service agencies should have policies in place regarding paid time off, extended leaves of absence and workplace relocation for staff experiencing violence.
- Procedures should be in place for handling an incident/potential incident and disclosing information on a “need to know” basis to protect confidentiality while ensuring worker safety.⁷

For more information:

Worksafe BC- Domestic Violence in the Workplace
<http://www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/Violence/Resources-DomesticViolence.asp>

Keeping Workers Safe

While it is important to provide support to women experiencing violence, it is also important to keep ourselves safe. Settlement workers, and anti-violence workers, should read and follow the safety procedures and protocols for their organization.

Here are some things to consider when supporting a woman experiencing abuse:

- Staff should not put themselves or the woman in danger by confronting the abuser.

- Staff should not share their personal contact information or invite clients to their home.
- Staff should be familiar with their agency's protocols for visiting a client's home or transporting a client in a staff car.
- Staff should not visit the home of a woman in an abusive relationship unless they have her explicit consent. She will not invite someone over if there are immediate safety concerns. Workers should follow their agency's policies regarding home visits.
- If an abusive partner is threatening staff or a co-worker, call security or the police immediately. Do not try to de-escalate the situation yourself.
- If possible, keep work schedules confidential from clients. Staff should inform co-workers of any offsite visits and when to expect them in the office.

1. Section adapted from: Ending Violence Association of BC (2013). Safety Planning Across Culture & Community: A Guide for Front Line Violence Against Women Responders. Retrieved from <http://www.endingviolence.org/node/1594>.
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Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 6]

COMPETENCY PROFILE OF SETTLEMENT AND ANTI-VIOLENCE WORKERS

DEFINITION OF COMPETENCIES

Competencies refer to the skills and knowledge a service worker needs to have in order to deliver service to clients. Dictionaries of staff competencies can be used by agencies to identify and formulate staff training plans.

This tool provides suggested competencies for settlement and anti-violence workers who assist women who experience violence in their personal relationships.

COMMON COMPETENCIES FOR SETTLEMENT WORKERS AND ANTI -VIOLENCE WORKERS

- Understand and practice organization policies and guidelines related to the setting and maintaining of professional boundaries.
- Understand and practice organizational policies and guidelines related to client self-determination and duty to report
- Demonstrate an understanding of privacy dynamics and considerations within minority communities.
- Understand the impact of personal values, beliefs and experiences around immigration, migration, racialization, family violence, and violence in relationships.
- Practice health and wellness principles such as stress management and achieving work – home balance.
- Demonstrate an understanding of and utilize a violence and trauma informed approach in practice.

SETTLEMENT WORKER COMPETENCIES

- Understand the definitions, dynamics and the types of violence that women experience in personal relationships and the impact this has on their children.
- Demonstrate an understanding of Anti-violence services and legal programming for women experiencing violence, and for children and youth who have witnessed violence.
- Understand and be able to implement agency protocols for supporting women disclosing relationship violence.
- Understand issues relating to safety for both women and workers.
- Assess and differentiate clients' need for settlement and for violence against women and legal services.
- Demonstrate specialized knowledge of referral practices to violence against women and legal services.
- Understand the Canadian laws and legal system as it pertains to violence against women, including the intersections of criminal, family and immigration law.

ANTI-VIOLENCE WORKER COMPETENCIES

- Understand definitions and demographic trends and theories related to immigration and settlement.
- Understand the impacts of immigration on women, children and families.
- Understand the barriers that prevent the economic, political and social inclusion of immigrants and refugees.
- Understand the concept of culture shock and overwhelm.

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 6]

COMPETENCY PROFILE OF SETTLEMENT AND ANTI-VIOLENCE WORKERS

- Understand theories of diversity and cultural change. Demonstrate an ability to support clients to develop bi-cultural skills.
- Understand the experience of exclusion, racism and discrimination. Demonstrate an ability to work with individuals and families who experience exclusion and discrimination.
- Understand how to promote, support and celebrate the inclusion of diverse groups of clients into service environments.
- Understand and practice cross-cultural communication and support.
- Demonstrate an ability to ensure that service environments offer information and services in multiple languages.
- Understand the distinction between providing linguistic and cultural interpretation. Understand when cultural interpretation is required.
- Understand that approaches to confidentiality can operate differently across cultures and service environments.
- Assess and differentiate between a client's need for settlement and for violence against women services.
- Demonstrate an understanding of settlement programming for immigrants and refugees, for immigrant and refugee women and for children and youth.
- Demonstrate specialized knowledge of referral practices to settlement services.
- Understand and be able to implement agency policies, service standards and protocols to support immigrant and refugees women experiencing violence and their children.

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 7]

SETTLEMENT SERVICE PROTOCOLS TO SUPPORT WOMEN EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE

WORKING TOGETHER

Immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence have unique needs and experiences. In order to best serve these women, both the anti-violence sector and the settlement sector in BC need to have a clear understanding of each other's service mandates and areas of expertise. Also, the settlement and anti-violence sector should strengthen their relationships in order to provide safe and supportive environments for immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence and establish effective, client centered referral protocols between the sectors.

Anti-violence workers are best able to support women by creating safety plans, managing risk, providing support and a greater understanding around the context of the violence women have experienced. Anti-violence workers can also offer support to women about how they can support their children who have been exposed to violence.

Settlement service workers are best able to assist immigrants and refugees to become oriented and connected to their new communities, the labour market, the public education system and other social and community services. Settlement services can also assist with matters related to immigration such as renewing permanent residence, applying for Canadian citizenship and becoming connected to immigration legal services.

DEFINITION OF SERVICE PROTOCOLS

Service protocols ensure that clients experience similar service approaches and levels of service. Service protocols often have underlying principles and goals.

Suggested Settlement Service Agency Protocols:

Every service agency has to develop its own service protocols. It is important that service protocols include a description of the purpose and scope of the protocol as well as a definition of what constitutes violence against women and their children. The key principle that guides service support for women experiencing violence is to provide environments and experiences that enhance women's safety and self-determination. The primary goal of service protocols is to ensure that women experiencing violence receive accurate information and appropriate services and referrals through a safe and supportive process.

Two types of protocols are discussed in this tool - agency-wide protocols and protocols for workers to provide services. It is recommended that agencies ensure that staff is trained on protocols to ensure consistency of service and to mitigate risks to women who disclose their experience of violence in their personal relationships.

Ensure a Service Environment that Supports the Informed and Voluntary Disclosure of Violence:

- Assess and ensure that information about violence against women is available and provided to all clients, in appropriate languages and formats (i.e. topic on violence against women can be included in settlement orientation workshops, English language and parenting classes). Brochures can be placed in waiting rooms and given to all newcomers at first appointments.
- Understand that the service goal is not to 'screen' for violence but to create a safe space so that a woman experiencing violence would feel com-

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 7]

SETTLEMENT SERVICE PROTOCOLS TO SUPPORT WOMEN EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE

fortable to disclose her experience if she chose to. In case where settlement workers suspect violence, they should focus on building a relationship and trust with the women and create opportunities for the woman to meet with the settlement worker separately from her partner.

- Ensure that all settlement staff members are trained on the duty to report legislation and understand what constitutes high risk situations.
- Ensure that each client received an explanation of how service privacy protocols work and how disclosed information will or will not be shared. As the understanding of confidentiality can vary between cultures and service sectors ensure that a detailed explanation is provided.
- Interview spaces should be private and confidential.
- Once a woman has disclosed violence it is important to ensure that a plan is made to guarantee the protection of the disclosure and women's safety throughout the service. For example, as the abusive partner and other members of the family may be eligible for settlement services, a woman should have a separate worker.
- According to the Family Law Act in cases where the woman leaves her partner, he is entitled to any information on the children and if this is kept with her information then he can access her personal information which could be a safety issue. Separate files should be kept for men, women and children (in addition, children's files have to be kept longer) if abuse is disclosed. If several children are involved a separate file should be kept for each of them.
- It is essential for the protection of both the women experiencing violence and her children that clear standards and procedures for reporting on child safety are established and followed.

Agencies should work with child protection services and anti-violence advocates to develop standards and procedures.

Effective Responses to Disclosures of Violence:

- The most important and helpful way to support a women in an abusive relationship is through a non-judgmental and supportive relationship.
- Women should always be believed when they report abuse or feeling unsafe. However, women should never feel pressured to disclose abuse.
- No calls or referrals should be made without her explicit consent except when there is a duty to report according to the law (CFCSA). See [Safety Considerations](#) Tool for more information about Duty to Report. If she does not want to talk to anyone or take any action at this time, respect this.
- Carefully listen to the unique situation and concerns of the woman disclosing violence. Listen and reflect back her strengths as you establish trust.
- Ensure that your responses to disclosures of violence match the unique needs of the woman and enhance safety and self-determination. Examples of helpful messages include:
 - Violence is never okay. There is never a good reason for it.
 - Her safety and her children's safety are most important.
 - She does not cause the abuse. Her partner is responsible for the abuse.
 - She cannot change her partner's behaviour.
 - She is not alone. She is not crazy. It is not her fault.
 - It is a crime to assault a partner.

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 7]

SETTLEMENT SERVICE PROTOCOLS TO SUPPORT WOMEN EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE

- Help your client to assess her greatest risks and concerns. Ensure immediate risks or threats are appropriately responded to. Agency safety procedures and protocols should be followed (see Safety Considerations: Women, Children and Workers for more information).
- If she is interested, provide information about specialized anti-violence and legal services, including eligibility and referral processes. Provide information about violence experienced by women in personal relationships and provide an overview of legal perspectives, processes and laws in Canada.
- If she is interested, facilitate a meeting with an anti-violence worker to develop a safety plan.
- Provide settlement information and help as needed by the client, such as:
 - referral to English language lessons;
 - linking to legal advocacy;
 - accessing health care or child care.
- Ensure a plan is in place to facilitate language challenges.
- Provide information that is needed for the woman to access the service, including information on eligibility requirements, language or interpretation options, contact information and the name of the service worker.
- If agreed upon, the settlement workers can accompany the client on the first visit to provide a cultural orientation to the service. If possible, see if your agency and the anti-violence agency can establish protocols on how to effectively refer to each other. For example, if you are referring a woman, will the anti-violence agency send a worker to your services so that they can meet the woman where she is comfortable? Can you send a worker to an anti-violence agency if they have a woman who has settlement needs?
- For the client to feel confident and empowered, ensure that she understands how the service can help and how service safety and confidentiality protocols work. Also highlight the cost or any hidden costs associated with the service. Allow her time to ask questions.
- Remind her to contact her settlement worker if the referral was unsuccessful or if she needs more assistance.

Effective Referral Protocols to Anti-Violence Services:

- Ensure your settlement agency has up-to-date information about the anti-violence services in your community. Ensure that this information contains service scope of anti-violence and legal services including information on the languages in which services are offered, eligibility and referral protocols. Regularly renew service brochures, flyers and online links to these services.
- Establish service planning relationships between your agency and the management and staff of anti-violence and legal advocacy services.
- Ensure the needs of the woman match the resources on offer by the service you are referring to.

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 7]

SETTLEMENT SERVICE PROTOCOLS TO SUPPORT WOMEN EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE

Multi-Lingual Guide to the Family Law Act

On Nov. 23, 2011, a new family law bill was passed in the B.C. legislature. The [Family Law Act](#) came fully into force on March 18, 2013, and replaced the Family Relations Act. The new act places the safety and best interests of the child first when families are going through separation and divorce. It also clarifies parental responsibilities and the division of assets if relationships break down, addresses family violence and encourages families to resolve their disputes out of court. For more information: <http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/legislation/family-law/>

The Legal Services Society of BC has created a guide to navigate the new Law, available in English, French, Punjabi, Spanish and Simplified and Traditional Chinese. The guide includes information regarding:

- family law language changes;
- making agreements to stay out of court;
- dispute resolution;
- parenting arrangements;
- child and spousal support;
- dividing property and debt;
- family law protection orders;
- moving with children.

The Family Law Act guide is available online:

<http://lss.bc.ca/publications/pub.php?pub=432>.

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 8]

ANTI-VIOLENCE SERVICE PROTOCOLS TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN

WORKING TOGETHER

Immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence have unique needs and experiences. In order to best serve these women, both the anti-violence sector and the settlement sector in BC need to acknowledge each other's areas of expertise and work closely together to provide a safe and supportive environment.

Anti-violence workers are best able to support women by creating safety plans, managing risk, providing support and greater understanding around the context of the violence they have experienced and how women can support their children who have been exposed to violence.

In turn, settlement services focus on assisting immigrants and refugees to become oriented and connected to their new communities, the labour market, the public education system and other social and community services. Feeling connected to their community and participating in the economic, social and cultural life enhances immigrants' capacity for resilience.

In order to provide the best possible support to immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence, it is important to have agencies in both sectors build relationships with each other to allow for effective referrals and to ensure that workers have colleagues in other sectors to provide guidance and support. The service protocols suggested in this tool speak to developing those relationships both agency to agency and worker to worker. There will be two types of protocols discussed, agency-wide protocols and protocols for workers to provide services. It is recommended that agencies ensure that staff members are trained on protocols to en-

sure consistency of service and to mitigate risks to women who disclose their experience of violence in their personal relationships.

DEFINITION OF SERVICE PROTOCOLS

Service protocols ensure that women experience similar service approaches and levels of service. Service protocols often have underlying principles and goals. Typically, service staff receives training on service protocols and use these protocols to guide service delivery.

SUGGESTED ANTI-VIOLENCE SERVICE PROTOCOLS TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN

Every anti-violence agency should develop its own policies and protocols on supporting immigrant and refugee women, ensuring that policies incorporate diversity and anti-oppressive practices. The key principle that guides service support for immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence is to provide culturally sensitive environments and experiences that enhance safety and autonomy. The primary goal is to be responsive to the needs of immigrant and refugee women and ensure that they receive accurate information and have access to language interpretation services if they require them. Anti-violence services will have varying abilities to meet this goal dependent on available resources and their geographical location.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROTOCOLS TO ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND RESPONSIVE SERVICES FOR IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN

Orientation to Services

- Services to immigrants and refugee women should include orientation information on ser-

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 8]

ANTI-VIOLENCE SERVICE PROTOCOLS TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN

vice and legal systems. Orientation information should include the mandate of the service and its service philosophy, how to access the service and what to expect at the first meeting or contact with the service.

- It is critical to provide information on confidentiality and how protocols around confidentiality guide the referral process.
- It is also crucial to inform a woman of the level of language assistance she can expect to receive and, if possible, to provide her with alternative services that might provide her with higher levels of language support should she need it.

Inclusive and Culturally Sensitive Services

- Hiring practices should ensure staff reflect the community's diversity, wherever possible, to help inform programming, accommodate diverse needs and reduce language barriers to services.
- Regularly review policies and programs to ensure they are inclusive and accommodate language, cultural and religious differences and needs.
- Assess and ensure that information- print and media- is 'user-friendly' and available to women in appropriate languages and formats (e.g. dynamics and impacts of abuse, anti-violence services, settlement services, English language classes and legal rights).
- Develop a language-access protocol, including offering interpretation services and standardizing translation of key documents (e.g. intake forms, assessment materials, rights and responsibilities, and complaint procedures).¹ If possible, these protocols should be developed in collaboration with a settlement agency.

- Consider the complexities of immigration as well as women's cultural identities, customs, beliefs, communication norms and family structures when designing services and policies.²
- Actively promote services to ethno-cultural communities, particularly immigrant and refugee women.
- Establish relationships or improve communications with Settlement Agencies and community organizations serving immigrant and refugee women, including information sharing and referral protocols.
- Ensure intake processes include asking women about cultural or religious accommodations, including dietary restrictions.

Staff Training and Awareness

- Ensure that staff members have an understanding of the settlement patterns in the communities they serve.
- Staff should also develop an understanding of the experiences of immigrants and refugees, including their needs and common integration and settlement barriers. This will allow staff to learn strategies on how to address these barriers.
- Develop culturally-relevant understanding and responses by providing ongoing education and training to staff and volunteers, including:
 - Awareness of the cultural groups in the community served by the agency or program;
 - Understanding and respecting individual perspectives and different attitudes;
 - Understanding of immigration and settlement issues, including policies, experiences, and legal issues.
 - Self-awareness of personal biases and foster

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 8]

ANTI-VIOLENCE SERVICE PROTOCOLS TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN

skills to intentionally suspend generalizations in order to improve understanding of women's unique needs.

- Risk assessment and safety planning approaches which are tailored to acknowledge the specific circumstances (e.g. single vs. multiple perpetrators) and resources available that may affect a woman's options and decisions in protecting herself from future violence.³
- Interagency training with settlement services and other organizations working with immigrant and refugee populations is highly recommended.
- Work collaboratively with different communities in order to:
 - Better understand the diverse perspectives of specific cultural groups;
 - Address cultural justifications for violence;
 - Examine generalizations perpetuated about specific groups within the community and among service providers.⁴

Protocols Around Interpretation and English as a Second Language:

- Ideally, interpretation should be available at all points of contact. It is important to keep in mind that if under stress, support and translation over the phone may be more difficult for a woman seeking services.⁵ Seek to have interpreters for as many languages as possible, especially those most predominant in the community. Internal staff is recommended should they have the language skills.
- Agencies are encouraged to find out what other services offer language interpretation in person or by phone- locally and provincially-and work

to build partnerships or agreements with them. Some suggestions include:

- Settlement agencies <http://www.amssa.org>
- VictimLink BC <http://www.victimlinkbc.ca/>
- HealthLink BC <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/>
- Provincial Language Services <http://pls.phsa.ca/>
- Vancouver Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Service <http://www.vlmfss.ca/>
- Agencies should establish relationships and agreements with interpreters, including billing agreements, to ensure prompt and smooth processes when interpretation is needed.
- Interpreters should be unbiased and unfamiliar with the woman, her family or her situation. Family members, partners, or highly prominent people in the community should never be used as interpreters.
- Connect with other agencies to understand in what languages their staff may be able to assist you in supporting women, either in person or over the phone.
- Monitor interpreter interactions to assess the implications of non-verbal communication and cultural competency. It is not just about matching language-to-language, but also about cultural and political associations. This may include taping a conversation and having it verified for accuracy in interpretation and context.
- Verify interpreters understanding of dynamics and impacts of abuse. Training should be made available to all interpreters.
- Establish a process to ensure that if a staff member speaks the language of a woman requiring interpretation, the work schedule will be adjusted to have that staff member available to the

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 8]

ANTI-VIOLENCE SERVICE PROTOCOLS TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN

woman as much as possible. This includes bringing casual staff in for more hours.

Supporting and Accommodating Immigrant and Refugee Women's Unique Needs

- Consideration needs to be made for the cultural context that affects women's experiences.
- Explain to all women how service privacy protocols work and when (and how) disclosed information may be shared. As the understanding of confidentiality can vary between cultures and service sectors ensure that a detailed explanation is provided.⁶
- Provide information about and referrals to:
 - Settlement Agencies (See [Tool 9: Settlement Service Pathways](#)).
 - English language lessons.
 - Legal advocacy, including information about the New Family Law Act.
 - For more information:
 - Community Coordination for Women's Safety- New Family Law Act Implications for Anti-Violence Workers http://www.endingviolence.org/files/uploads/FLA_Info_Bulletin_june_20_final.pdf
 - See [Tool 5: Safety Considerations: Women, Children and Workers](#)
- Acknowledge that information will be perceived differently by people from different cultures and create dialogue to improve understanding of the woman's experience, beliefs, values and traditions.
- Recognize the potential for miscommunication and unintentionally sending messages which are perceived as offensive; it is important to take note and apologize to the woman if this happens.
- For housing services or programming where meals are offered, ensure dietary restrictions and food preparation needs can be accommodated (e.g. pots or other cooking vessels, spices, and vegetarian, Halal or Kosher products).
- Accommodate cultural or religious rituals (e.g. prayer mats, allowing women to eat at different times).

Effective Referral Protocols to Settlement Services

- Ensure the agency has up-to-date information about the settlement services in the community. Ensure that this information contains service scope including languages in which services are offered, eligibility and referral protocols. Regularly renew service brochures, flyers and online links to these services.
- Establish service planning relationships between anti-violence agencies and the management and staff of settlement services.
- Workers should verify that the needs of the woman match the resources on offer by the service they are referring her to.
- Ensure a plan is in place to facilitate language challenges.
- Provide information that is needed for the woman to access the service, including information on eligibility requirements, language or interpretation options, contact information and the name of the service worker.
- If possible anti-violence workers can accompany the woman on the first visit for support and to help facilitate relationship building.
- Work with the settlement agency to establish protocols on how to effectively refer to each

other. For example, if referring a woman to a settlement agency, will the settlement agency send a worker to the anti-violence service so that they can meet the woman where she is comfortable? Is it possible to send a worker to a settlement agency if they have a woman who has safety concerns?

- For the client to feel confident and empowered, ensure that she understands how the service can help and how service safety and confidentiality protocols work, the cost or any hidden costs associated with the service. Allow her time to ask questions.
- Workers should reassure her that they will continue to support her, even if she accesses another service. Encouraging her to contact them if the referral was unsuccessful or if she needs more assistance.

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1. UN Women. Women from diverse cultures. Retrieved from <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1394-women-from-diverse-cultures.html>.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ending Violence Association of BC. Immigrant Women's Project: Safety of Immigrant, Refugee, and Non-Status Women. Retrieved from http://www.endingviolence.org/files/uploads/IWP_Resource_Guide_FINAL.pdf.
 6. Ibid.

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 9]

SETTLEMENT SERVICE PATHWAYS

IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Settlement services assist immigrants and refugees to become oriented and connected to their new communities, the labour market, the public education system, and other social and community services.

Settlement services are primarily funded by the Canadian government. Specialized settlement agencies offer a full range of settlement services. In addition, some settlement services are delivered in multiservice agencies, school districts, and neighbourhood houses, and libraries.

SETTLEMENT SERVICES OFFERED

Settlement services can include:

- One- to-one orientation information and support services with a settlement worker.
- Group orientation sessions on specific topics related to immigration.
- English language classes.
- Employment support and mentoring programs.
- Specialized programs for immigrant children, youth, and seniors and parents.
- Community connections programs which link immigrants to local services and community life.
- Case management programs for vulnerable immigrants.
- Specialized programming and support for refugees.

One-to-one orientation information services with a settlement worker offer immigrants and refugees and immigrant and refugee families the opportunity to develop personalized settlement plans. An appointment with a Settlement Workers is the start-

ing point for newcomers to access other settlement services.

Settlement workers can provide:

- A comprehensive assessment of settlement needs.
- Information and orientation to government systems including the medical, legal, and education systems.
- Orientation and referral to English language assessment and language training programs.
- Orientation to employment services and referral to credentials and education assessments as needed.
- Overview and connection to local municipal and community services such as libraries, community centres, recreation program and social service programs.
- Assistance with issues related to immigration.
- Help with completing forms (e.g. applications to renew Permanent Resident Status, Family Sponsorship, Medical Service Plan).

SWIS (Settlement Workers in Schools) in BC usually provide the following services:

- Information and orientation on BC's education system, particularly regarding school policies and expectations.
- The facilitation of culturally sensitive communication amongst school staff, students, and families to foster cross-cultural understanding.
- The provision of expertise to school-based staff on settlement issues.
- Orientation and referrals to community services and resources (e.g. Family Counselling, Parent's Support Groups).

ACCESS TO SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Service Eligibility:

Permanent residents, protected persons as defined under Section 95 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), and persons whose applications for permanent resident status are being processed in Canada are eligible to receive settlement services in BC.

Services are free and confidential and can be accessed directly by the eligible newcomer or by referral from community service providers.

Most of immigrant settlement programs are provided in multiple languages.

AMSSA is the provincial umbrella for community-based immigrant serving agencies in BC. Visit www.amssa.org for more information.

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 10]

ANTI-VIOLENCE SERVICE PATHWAYS

WHERE CAN IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN EXPERIENCING ABUSE GET HELP?

Service providers working with immigrant and refugee women should get to know what anti-violence services are available in their community and build relationships with those services. Ensure that all referrals are done respectfully and free of coercion. Women should always lead the process, as she knows best what is safe for her. Clearly explain what the anti-violence service can offer and what to expect. Reassure her that your relationship with her will not be affected, regardless of her following through on the referral or not.

Handing a woman a referral is not enough, as many women report being turned away from services (e.g. do not fit mandate, waitlists). They also report being given inaccurate information about what services offer.

Whenever possible, make a facilitated referral:

- Ensure the needs of the woman match the services offered by the other service.
- Offer to make a call to the anti-violence services to set up an appointment and ensure the woman can be seen in a timely manner..
- Explain to her what the intake process entails and arrange interpretation if necessary.
- Give her information about the service and what she can expect.
- Accompany her to the new service.
- Provide the name of a worker you have a relationship with that she can ask for.

These simple steps will ensure women do not fall through the cracks.

Safe Housing

Transition Houses/ Women's Shelters

Safe spaces for women and their children when they are experiencing or are at risk of abuse. Transition Houses are often in confidential locations to maximize safety. Staff is available on site 24/7 for information, emotional support, crisis intervention and safety planning as well as assistance in accessing other support services such as housing, financial, health or legal. Basic needs such as food and toiletries are also provided. Typical length of stay is 30 days.

Safe Homes

Community-based networks of homes that shelter women and their children when they are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse. The length of stay is typically short (5-10 days). Safe Homes usually have staff available on-call. They may offer outreach services, particularly in small rural communities, to connect with other services.

Second and Third Stage Housing

Second Stage housing provides short-term, safe, affordable and independent housing and some services similar to those provided in transition houses (typical length of stay 6-12 months). Third stage housing similar services to Second Stage housing with a focus on longer term housing (2-4 years).

For information on the above housing services go to: BC Society of Transition Houses website: <http://www.bcsth.ca/sites/default/files/Compendium.pdf> or call VictimLink at 1-800-563-0808.

Knowledge Exchange Project [Tool 10]

ANTI-VIOLENCE SERVICE PATHWAYS

Emergency Shelters

Provides the basic needs of shelter, food and hygiene, and other types of support. They are most often co-ed facilities, and are not always a place where women and children feel safe. They are usually staffed 24/7 and may only be open in the colder months of the year. Go to: http://www.bchousing.org/Options/Emergency_Housing/ESP or call VictimLink at 1-800-563-0808.

COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Stopping the Violence Counselling

Provides free, confidential counselling services to women who have experienced sexual assault, relationship violence or childhood abuse. The range of individual and group counselling services are based on the needs of individual women and delivered in an accessible, safe and supportive environment. To find a program go to Ending Violence Association website: http://www.endingviolence.org/about/programs_we_serve

Outreach Services

These programs deliver services which include supportive counselling for women, referrals to appropriate community services, local transportation, accompaniment and advocacy. For a list of services: <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/directory/docs/outreach-services.pdf>

Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA) Programs

The CWWA program uses individual and group interventions, aimed at helping youth and children (3-18 years) to understand and cope with violence against their mother and the effects of this violence on themselves. CWWA counsellors also provide support and information to mothers and non-offending

caregivers. Program list: <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/directory/docs/children-who-witness-abuse-counselling.pdf>

Women's Centres

Welcoming and safe women-only spaces for free, confidential support and assistance. Supports available, may include crisis support; children who witness abuse programs; resource centres; and multicultural services.

Community Services Societies

Offering a wide range of services, which may include counselling, employment services, housing assistance, childcare programs, and a variety of children's and parenting services.

Multicultural Support Services

May be a separate organization, or a program may be embedded in other organizations in your community. They offer a wide range of services which may include counselling; language and ESL courses; employee assistance programs; women's and children's programs; and settlement services. For a list of services: <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/directory/docs/outreach-services-multicultural.pdf>

CRISIS AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

VictimLink

A confidential, multilingual telephone service available across BC and the Yukon, 24/7. It provides information and referral services to all victims of crime, and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence. Call, toll free, 1-800-563-0808.

Community-Based Victims Assistance

Provides crisis and emotional support, information, referrals, safety planning, justice system support (including accompaniment to court), and liaison services for survivors of sexual assault and violence in relationships. Women do not need to report the violence to police to access these services. Go online: http://www.endingviolence.org/find_a_service

Police-Based Victim Services

Police usually refer women to this service following first contact with the police. Police may refer women to victim services or have victim services make contact with her. Police-based victim services may provide information, support, assistance, referral, and court orientation to women who report the violence to police. Where police-based and community-based services exist, women dealing with violence in their relationship or sexualized violence should always be referred to community-based victim services.

nities to develop new models or improve existing models of cross-sector coordination on violence against women. For more information: <http://endingviolence.org/ccws>

Resources for All Victims of Crime

The following link is for all victims of crime, all genders, and information for victims and witnesses of all crime types. Programs and services included can provide information on how violence or crime may affect someone, and where to get help. A Directory of Victim Service and Violence Against Women Programs can be accessed at <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/>

OTHER RESOURCES

Coordinating Committees

Many communities have Coordinating Committees that bring together workers from various agencies to improve service responses and attend to women's safety concerns. To find out what committees might exist, such as Violence Against Women in Relationship (VAWIR) Committee, or Integrated Case Assessment Teams (I-CAT), connect with an Anti-violence agency in the community. Whenever possible, Settlement workers should be included in these committees.

The Community Coordination for Women's Safety (CCWS) Program provides assistance to BC commu-

1. Overview of Violence Against Women

Created by: BC Society of Transition Houses

This webinar is particularly relevant for settlement staff and managers to enhance their understanding of violence against women. The webinar provides an overview of the prevalence and dynamics of violence against women. It also reviews the health, social and economic impacts of violence against women as well as dismantles some of the common myths held in our society.

2. Overview of Immigration to British Columbia

Created by: AMSSA

This webinar is relevant for anti-violence and settlement staff and managers to learn or refresh their knowledge about immigration to British Columbia. The webinar reviews the various legal statuses, immigration statuses and immigration classes of immigrants to BC. The webinar also provides a detailed demographic breakdown of immigrants to BC by looking at age breakdown, gender, education levels, intended occupation, English language ability and settlement patterns.

3. The Settlement Experience: Phases of Settlement and Common Barriers

Created by: AMSSA

This webinar is particularly relevant for anti-violence staff and managers to learn about the common settlement experiences of recent immigrants and their families. The webinar reviews the theoretical models of settlement, as well the common barriers frequently encountered by immigrants to BC in their settlement process.

4. Intersections of Violence Against Women, Immigration and Service Implications

Created by: Prince George Elizabeth Fry Society

This webinar is particularly relevant for anti-violence and settlement managers to learn about the unique experiences and vulnerabilities faced by immigrant and refugee women experiencing relationship violence. The webinar explores the intersecting factors that shape immigrant and refugee women's experiences and suggests implications for service delivery in order to enhance the support offered to immigrant and refugee women experiencing relationship violence.

Knowledge Exchange Project [Appendix 1]

DESCRIPTION OF THE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE PROJECT WEBINARS

5. Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Women with Experiences of Abuse

Created by: BC Society of Transition Houses

This webinar is particularly relevant for settlement staff and managers to learn about supporting immigrant and refugee women with experiences of abuse. The webinar reviews guiding principles and safety considerations for working with women in abusive relationships. The webinar also briefly reviews legal resources to help workers appropriately support immigrant and refugee women experiencing abuse.

6. Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth Exposed to Violence

Created by: The Vancouver & Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society and BC Society of Transition Houses

This webinar is relevant for settlement and anti-violence staff and managers to learn or refresh their knowledge on how exposure to violence against women may impact children and youth at various stages in their lives. It also provides suggestions for supporting immigrant and refugee children and youth as well as some key challenges that immigrant and refugee children and youth may struggle with. It further provides an overview of the Children Who Witness Abuse program, including information on eligibility and referrals.

Knowledge Exchange Project [Appendix 2]

GLOSSARY OF COMMONLY USED TERMS

- **Abuse** - A pattern of intentionally controlling, coercive and/or violent behaviour toward an individual with whom there is or has been a relationship. Can include physical, sexual or psychological abuse, social isolation, and economic control.
- **Anti-Violence Services** - Includes a range of services and supports for women and their children experiencing or fleeing violence. Anti-violence services may support women and children by creating safety plans, managing risk, providing advocacy and counseling, providing safe housing and outreach. They also work to create a greater understanding of the dynamics of violence against women and prevention strategies for the general public.
- **Competency Profile** - The skills and knowledge a service worker needs to have in order to deliver specific services to women.
- **Confidentiality** - The principle that an agency or worker should not reveal information about their clients to a third party without the informed, written and time-limited consent of the client or without a clear legal reason.
- **Exposure to Violence** - Children or youth seeing, hearing, being told about, or seeing the aftermath of violence and coercive control used against a parent.
- **Im/migrant** - The word im/migrant incorporates two terms: 'immigrant' and 'migrant'. The term 'immigrant' describes a person who arrives in Canada with a legal and permanent status. The term 'migrant' includes those who have been granted temporary status in Canada or who have no legal status in Canada. The term 'im/migrant' refers to everyone who comes to Canada from another country who intends to remain in Canada temporarily or permanently.
- **Non-Status** - Non-status migrants are people who do not have the legal documents that allow them to remain temporarily or permanently in Canada. People can become "non-status" if their student visa, visitor's visa, or work permit has expired or if they don't have official identity documents.
- **Protective and Risk Factors** - The aspects of a person (or group) and environment or personal experience that make it more likely (risk factors) or less likely (protective factors) that someone will experience a given problem, be negatively affected by an experience or benefit from an intervention.
- **Refugee** - This term describes a person who meets the refugee definition in the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (also called Convention Refugee). There are three types of refugees in Canada.
 - **Government-Assisted Refugees** (GAR) are Convention Refugees selected from abroad by the government of Canada for resettlement. GARs hold permanent resident (PR) status upon arrival and receive financial and other support from the Government of Canada for up to one year.
 - **Privately Sponsored Refugees** (PSR) are Convention Refugees selected from abroad by a private

sponsor who agrees to provide financial and other support for one year. PSRs hold PR status upon arrival.

- **Refugee Claimants / Asylum Claimants** - Those are foreign nationals who apply for refugee protection from within Canada, or at a port of entry. Once their asylum claims are heard and approved by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) they can apply for PR status.
- **Resiliency** - The ability to overcome life challenges, adapt to change and build the necessary skills to cope with future challenges.
- **Service Eligibility** - The criteria a client needs to meet to qualify for a particular service.
- **Service Pathways** - The routes through which clients access various services.
- **Service Protocols** - Service protocols provide guidance to the service approach an agency utilizes to ensure that all necessary considerations are taken into account when providing services to clients or to a specific client group. Service protocols ensure that all clients can expect and experience similar service levels and service quality. Service agencies develop protocols and staff typically receives training on service protocols to guide consistent service delivery.
- **Settlement Services** - Settlement services are specialized services that assist immigrants and refugees to become oriented and connected to their new communities, the labour market, the local education system, and other public and community services. Settlement service can include one-to-one assistance from a settlement worker, free English language lessons, immigrant related employment services, and family services for parents, seniors, children and youth.
- **Settlement Barriers** - Common economic, social, cultural, legal and health obstacles that immigrants and refugees experience after arrival to Canada. These may include challenges with language, foreign credential recognition, securing employment or accessing services.
- **Violence Against Women** - Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.
- **Violence** - see 'Abuse' definition.