Addressing Domestic Violence in Canadian Muslim Communities

A Training Manual for Muslim Communities and Ontario Service Providers

Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and
Integration (MRCSSI)

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Executive Summary

The point is not to integrate systems, values, and culture with other systems, values and cultures, but to determine – in human terms – spaces of intersection where we can meet on equal terms. The intersection of what we have in common, rather than the integration of differences.

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Tariq Ramadan, The Quest for Meaning (24)

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The Muslim Family Safety Project (MFSP) was launched in 2003 to address domestic violence within Muslim communities in London Ontario. The project has made important strides in building relationships between the Muslim community and mainstream / Ontario service providers to better support families. As in other Canadian communities, women and children are most often the victims of domestic violence.

Additional steps are needed to address the ongoing barrier of isolation that abused Muslim women face. Many women who experience violence in their homes are hesitant to access "mainstream"/Canadian resources for reasons that are shared across all cultures but also for reasons that are unique to the Muslim community. Domestic violence is a new and distinctly Canadian concept for many Muslim families. Muslim community leaders have started to publicly address the issue, however there is little capacity in the Muslim community to recognize warning signs of domestic violence or to provide victims or perpetrators with the culturally sensitive and appropriate support they need.

This manual has been created to support the work of the Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration (MRCSSI) by addressing two discrete training needs through an integrated approach. First, training is needed by the Muslim community to understand domestic violence from a Canadian perspective. Second, mainstream / Canadian service providers need training to understand the cultural differences and barriers so that their services and resources can be more accessible to Muslim families. The authors believe that Muslims and non-Muslims must come together as mutual learners to exchange ideas and information that can combine to form a single outcome of increased support and service for Muslim women and their families.

With a view toward developing integrated training forums, the manual has been developed in two parts. Part I provides essential information for both Muslims and mainstream service providers. Part II provides a workshop framework for increasing collaboration through dialogue and deliberation.

The manual will expose mainstream service providers to different strategies for responding to domestic violence with increased cultural sensitivity and awareness in the Muslim community. Stakeholders from the Muslim community will find information that will allow them to gain a better understanding of the Canadian justice system response to domestic violence and an awareness of the available services available for victims and perpetrators. Muslim mentors will thus be able to provide information about Canadian concepts and laws and to make appropriate

referrals. Developing an integrated approach will ultimately translate into better support for Muslim women who experience domestic violence. The common goal to achieve safety for everyone involved is the place where all differences can meet.

The manual is intended to:

1. Provide a Canadian context of domestic violence
2. Explain the seriousness of domestic violence and its impact on all members of the family
3. Promote the safety of women and children who face domestic violence
4. Set out a cultural context that points to fundamental differences between societies based on individualism and collectivism
5. Enhance the confidence of mainstream service providers in working with Muslim families affected by domestic violence by providing a Muslim perspective
6. Engage Muslim community leaders in preventing domestic violence

Part I of the manual is comprised of eight sections:

- Section One provides a definition of domestic violence and links the issue to women's equality. A brief overview of the evolution of women's rights in Canada is included as well as discussion about the changing public view with respect to domestic violence.

- Section Two sets out the Canadian legal response to domestic violence including recent changes to the criminal code. Statistical information is also included.

- Section Three discusses Islamic perspectives and cultural practices regarding domestic violence.

- Section Four explores the concept and characteristics of honour related violence.

- Section Five sets out a number of challenges facing immigrant and refugee women that may inhibit their ability or interest in seeking services. The specific struggle of Muslim abused women in situations of domestic violence is also explored.

- Section Six delves more deeply into difference as a concept that requires respect on its own merit. There are differences between individualist and collectivist cultures that will never be 'understood' simply because they are not lived experience.

- Section Seven revisits the central concerns of Muslim families who fear losing their culture and tradition as they integrate into Canadian society. A prevention model is proposed that begins by recognizing and acknowledging those concerns in such a way that the family can build trust and move toward family safety. The intervention emphasis in this section is on working with Muslim men who are abusive.

- Section Eight reviews the Muslim Family Safety Project as a best practice approach for encouraging collaboration and creativity between main stream services and the Muslim

community. The Ontario public education campaign Neighbours, Friends and Families is introduced as a resource that will be adapted and used by the Muslim Resource Centre for Support and Integration in partnership with the Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children to teach the warning signs of domestic violence and to prepare members of the Muslim community to respond safely and effectively.

Part II of the manual has been developed as a workshop opportunity for dialogue and reflections about the different perspectives of understanding and responding to domestic violence through discussions of statements as well as discussion of case scenarios that reflects the complexity of domestic violence realities within Muslim communities living in the west.

The project was conceived with a recognition that information about Muslim communities is missing from many mainstream agencies that strive to support women who face domestic violence. This manual provides content to correct and address the misunderstandings that grow out of stereotypes that too often go unexamined for both Canadian Muslims and mainstream service providers.

The challenge and also the opportunity here is to open the way for thoughtful dialogue and reflection in exploring two worldviews that have historically been opposed: individualism and collectivism. In bringing these two different perspectives together there is a pervasive and challenging question that arises for all stakeholders. As members of the human family, are we ready and willing to move from a notion that there can be a single 'right' worldview? This is a deeply personal question that can really only be answered in relation with others as we listen to ideas that are 'foreign' and not our own. It is our hope that with this work we can begin to build the bridges that allow for the exchange of ideas, respect for things that will always be 'different' to ourselves and ongoing learning. Ultimately we set off on this path to discover new ways of working together that will help the Muslim community reduce violence and promote safe, loving families.

Section One
Canadian Perspectives on Domestic Violence

What is Domestic Violence?

There are many terms that have been used to describe violence in the family; wife battering, spousal violence, intimate partner violence, partner abuse, family violence and woman abuse.

The term 'domestic violence' is used in Canadian law and is therefore the preferred term in this manual. Intimate relationships that experience domestic violence include heterosexual and same sex partners.

American researcher, Michael Johnson, has identified three types of domestic violence:

- *Situational couple violence* is the most common type. It happens in situations when an argument escalates to violence. The violence is random rather than tactical. The Canadian general survey shows that both men and women can be the perpetrator of violence within this type; however women sustain the most serious injuries and are hospitalized more often as a result of the violence.

- *Coercive control* is the second type. This type describes violence that is used as a tactic to control and dominate the partner. Coercive control is not about losing one's temper but rather it is the systematic ongoing control one person exerts over another. The victims of this type of violence are most often women who may live in fear everyday.

- *Violent resistance* is the third type that occurs when the victim of *coercive control* fights back.

All three types of domestic are serious and can be dangerous. Everyone involved in violent relationships of any type need support and/or treatment. The typology developed by Dr. Johnson allows researchers to be more precise in interpreting data and in understanding the causes of violence. Greater understanding for how and why violence happens supports the development of more effective interventions and treatment.

The violence happens in different ways:
- Physical violence such as hitting, kicking, choking, biting, shoving, restraint, throwing objects, making threats

In This Section:

- Research describes three types of domestic violence

- Everyone involved in violent relationships need help

- Women suffer the most serious injuries and are more likely to be killed as a result of domestic violence

- There is an historical context for the "disciplining" of women by men

- Women finally 'won' the same rights and privileges as men in Canada in 1929

- The 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms guaranteed equal rights for all citizens

- A 1980 report shocked Canadians by claiming 1 in 10 women experience violence at the hands of their partner.

- Emotional or Psychological violence such as name-calling, belittling or humiliation
- Sexual violence such as rape, violations of privacy, forced participation in sexual activity
- Economic exploitation / deprivation such as controlling all of the money, even if both partners have an income
- Passive / covert abuse (e.g., neglect) in situations where a family member is dependent, the refusal to provide basic necessities
- Criminal harassment (stalking) such as following a partner, repeated phone calls, showing up at work to check up on a person
- Threats to harm children, other family members, pets, and property

Although the different forms of violence can happen in all three types of domestic violence, coercive control is distinguished by the ongoing pattern of the violence. It is abusive because there is an imbalance in the relationship such that one partner uses violence to hold power and control over the other. It can be very difficult to tell when coercive control is happening. Abusive perpetrators can be charming and intelligent, leaders in their communities. The abuse they commit is ongoing and targeted specifically at their partner and often children. For this reason, concerned neighbours, friends or family members are encouraged to seek professional advice before intervening in any domestic situation. Domestic violence of any type can be dangerous and safety must always be the priority.

Domestic violence may or may not constitute a crime, depending on local statutes, severity and duration of specific acts, and other variables. Alcohol consumption and mental illness can also be present with abuse and may escalate the violence, however in most cases they are factors that are present but not the cause of abusive behaviour (Dutton, 1994; Tjaden,; Thoennes, 2000).

Historical Context

The practice that permits a man to physically 'discipline' his wife dates back into the earliest times of recorded history. During the Roman era, this practice was written into the Laws of Chastisement (Jaffe, Peter et al 1996: 71). These laws permit the husband to beat his wife with a stick that is no thicker than the base of the man's right thumb. The term "rule of thumb" still lingers in the English language as a general concept to denote the way things are commonly done.

The 'right' of men to beat their wives was not without challenge. As early as 202 B.C. women were granted more freedoms and allowed the right to sue husbands for unjustified beatings (Herstory of Domestic Violence). Nevertheless, the Christian church and English Common Law continued to follow the principle of allowing punishment for wives who were in disagreement with their husbands; "Beat her not in rage but out of charity and concern for her soul, so that the beating will redound to your merit and her good." This statement by a 15th century Christian scholar confirmed the church's position that a husband was authorized as the head of the household to punish women and children as he saw fit (ibid: 71).

Women's Rights in Canada

Canada inherited the legal traditions of England. Women within the British Canadian legal tradition were not considered equal (under the law) to men until 1929. Before that, they were thought to be dependents, similar to children and the mentally ill. Similarly, Aboriginal Canadians – Indians, Inuit and Métis are treated as dependents and considered 'wards of the crown'.[1] This inequality continues today as the legal status of Aboriginal Canadians gives them fewer rights to control their own property, finance and governance. Aboriginal women are even further disadvantaged under the Indian Act and continue to push for reforms to improve their status.

> **Charter of Rights Section 15 Equality Rights**
>
> *" Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."*

Domestic violence statistics show that women suffer the most serious injuries and are more likely to be killed by their intimate partner as a result of domestic violence. Over time, the women's movement has challenged the way Canadians understand violence that happens in the home. A direct correlation is made between domestic violence and the inequality of woman.

Women have struggled for equal rights in Canada since the suffrage movement began in 1878. Throughout the 1920s, five Alberta women fought a legal and political battle to have women recognized as persons, with the same rights and privileges as men, under the British North America Act. The Persons Act of 1929 was the landmark decision by the British Privy Council, the highest level for legal appeals in Canada at the time. It was a milestone victory for the rights of women in Canada. In the decades that followed, women's advocates continued to lobby for change. By 1940 all women in Canada had won the right to vote. In 1960, Aboriginal people were finally granted the same right to vote. It wasn't until the 1960s with the Divorce Act and other legislation that women were able to open bank accounts without their husband's permission, or to request an abortion from a doctor.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms was enacted in Canada in 1982. The Charter provides a balance between the historical European tradition of privileging individual rights and the rights of groups to live free from discrimination. The Charter clearly states that women and men are equal and that no one, regardless of their status as part of any group, can be discriminated against. For example, members of a religious community have the right to a religious holiday, even if most Canadians do not share the same religious tradition.

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[1] Metis people are the ethnic community formed from the alliances of French or English immigrants and Aboriginal Canadians over 100 year ago.

Laws have changed so that men who threaten, beat, stalk or rape their partners are charged under the criminal code. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms has been enshrined in the constitution to ensure that all citizens have the right to be safe and free from abuse. Accordingly, women and children are no longer treated by law as the private property of men. Yet while there have been many changes to the law, domestic violence continues to be a serious social issue.

Changing Public Attitudes about Women's Rights

During the 1970s and 1980s women's advocates worked to change the way Canadians think of domestic violence. The problem of violence was examined in different types of families. Advocates and activists began to talk about ending violence and to discuss how to help families recover. There was a growing awareness that the whole community needed to be involved and that all people have an obligation to care about what is happening to their neighbours, friends and family members.

In 1980, Linda MacLeod released the report titled; *Wife Battering in Canada: the Vicious Circle,* for the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The Report represented the first attempt to collect information on "wife battering" in Canada and to calculate the national incident rate.

At the time, the Report estimated that one out of every ten Canadian women were victims of battering by their male partner. The Report further claimed that battering was no respecter of race, religion, class or ethnicity. This was shocking news for Canadians. Following from MacLeod's Report and due to the tireless efforts of women's advocates in communities small and large across the country, emergency shelters were started, often by individuals, to provide crisis housing and support for women and children in their local communities. Government support for shelters and transitional housing followed later in recognition of the problem.

The issue gained national visibility. In the early 1990s the federal government created the Canadian Panel on Violence against Women to look into the problem and report on ways to reduce family violence. Health and Welfare Canada started the National Clearing House on Violence against Women to coordinate research and education across the country.

In spite of the legal and constitutional changes, public attitudes are slow to change and the idea that domestic violence is a private matter is still a widely held belief. Patriarchal values that situate women as second class citizens remain intact although often invisible. Nevertheless, the public is moving toward an understanding that domestic violence is not a private matter between a husband and his wife. Social change initiatives seek to shift the public mind toward the reality that violence of any kind is a shared issue and that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. In this, all communities can find common purpose and support.

Section Two
The Legal Response to Domestic Violence

Changes to the Criminal Code

Important changes to the law came in 1983 when the Criminal Code offence known as rape was replaced with three categories of sexual assault, giving equal protection to men and women under the law, and allowing spouses to charge each other with sexual assault. Then in 1993, the Criminal Code was amended to create the new offence of criminal harassment to address stalking. It was introduced as a specific response to violence against women, particularly to domestic violence against women.

Domestic Violence is a Priority in Ontario

In 2004, the Ontario provincial government identified domestic violence as a priority issue and conducted consultations with victims and experts across the province to develop its Domestic Violence Action Plan (DVAP). The DVAP includes a public education campaign called *Neighbours, Friends and Families* (NFF) that has been developed to raise awareness of the signs of "woman abuse" so that people who are close to women at risk and men who are abusive, can help. Section 8 of this manual includes an introduction to NFF content. The provincial government also funds a range of social services and programs to help families, hold perpetrator's accountable and to protect women and children from abuse.

Statistics

Statistics Canada reports that the most prevalent forms of wife abuse are: pushing, grabbing, and shoving, followed by threats of hitting, slapping, throwing objects, and kicking, biting and hitting with fists. A significant number of women also report being beaten up, sexually assaulted, choked, hit with an object, and having a gun or knife used against them. Rarely is only one type of violence reported (Statistics Canada, 1994, 12).

In 2005, Statistics Canada conducted a telephone survey and asked 24,000 people about their experience of domestic violence in the previous 5 years. The government estimated that 653,000 women and 546,000 men were victims of domestic violence between 1999 and 2004. Although men also suffer from physical abuse they report fewer injuries and a lower level of fear. Women were also much more likely to report that they were the targets of more than ten violent incidents at the hands of their partner (21% versus 11%), and more likely to state that they were injured as

In This Section:

- **The Canadian Criminal Code has been changed to address domestic violence more effectively**

- **Domestic Violence is a priority issue in Ontario**

- **Women are more likely to suffer repeated violence at the hands of their partners**

- **Young women between the ages of 15 and 24 are the most vulnerable victims to domestic homicide**

- **80% of domestic homicides happen in the family home**

- **The police have a mandatory charge policy if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a crime has been committed**

- **There are programs to support victims of domestic violence**

a result of the violence (44% versus18%)" according to the results (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Family Violence in Canada, 2005).

This report goes on to state that:

- Female victims of spousal violence were three times more likely than male victims of spousal violence to fear for their life (34% versus 10%) and three times more likely to take time off from their everyday activities because of the violence

- Women were most likely to report being threatened or hurt by ex-partners. The number of women in current relationships who reported abuse was 4%.

- 27% of victims of spousal violence reported the incident to police.

- About one-third (34%) of victims (47% of female victims and 20% of male victims) indicated that they had turned to a formal help agency because of the violence.

- According to police, in 2003, children and youth under the age of 18 accounted for 21% of victims of physical assault and 61% of victims of sexual assault, while representing 21% of the population.

- Parents represented 7 out of 10 family members accused of physical assault and 40% of those accused of sexual assault against children and youth.

- Girls were the victims in 8 out of 10 family-related sexual assaults committed against children and youth.

- Rates of family-related sexual assault were highest for teenage girls, especially for young teenage girls aged 12-to-14. Among boys, rates of family-related sexual assault were highest for those aged 4-to-6.

(Family Violence in Canada: a statistical profile. Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005)

In 2008, there were 569 shelters across Canada providing residential services to women and children escaping abusive situations. Between 90,000 to 100,000 women and children seek safety in shelters every year in Canada (Family Violence in Canada: a statistical profile. Statistics Canada, 2009).

Domestic Homicide Statistics

Canadian statistics paint a disturbing picture of violence against women; however they provide only a partial view of violence in families since not all violence is reported. Some women feel that they will bring shame to their family or community if they talk about their abuse. Others may think that abuse is a 'normal' part of relationships. Women experiencing emotional abuse may not consider themselves abused because they have not been physically assaulted. People in

general may prefer not to be labelled as a victim. The most compelling and complete information is found in domestic homicide statistics when women are killed by their male partner.

- Since the 2005 study, women continue to be killed by their male partners at a high rate. In 2007, almost 4 times as many women were killed by a current or former spouse as men.

- During the most recent decade, between 1998 and 2007, about 41% of spousal homicides involved common-law partners and more than one-third involved legally married persons.

- Spousal homicide rates were highest for persons in the 15 to 24 year-old age group." (Family Violence in Canada: a statistical profile (Statistics Canada, 2009).

- 142 women were killed by their male partners from 2002 – 2007 in Ontario. Two women killed their husbands during that same time. Eighty per cent of these murders happened in the family home.

- Most of these women were killed when they had already decided to end the relationship or it was recently ended (81%). There was a history of violence in the relationship in 79% of these cases.

- In the majority of cases there were at least seven risk factors already seen in the family (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Family Violence in Canada, 2005).

Police involvement

Police can be called to a home if a complaint is made. Police have a difficult time intervening in cases of domestic violence. Some family members may want them to stop the violence, but others may not want to share information, or may change their mind after the

COMMON CRIMINAL CHARGES

Assault: When someone touches another person, directly or indirectly, without that person's consent it is an assault. It is also an assault when the person attempts or threatens to touch another person. This is a criminal offence, whether or not the victim has any physical injuries.

Assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm: This is assault when the person carries uses or threatens to use a weapon or an imitation of a weapon or causes physical harm that interferes with the health or comfort of the victim.

Aggravated assault: This is assault that involves wounding, maiming, disfiguring or endangering the life of the victim.

Criminal harassment: This is the legal term for stalking. It is illegal for someone to repeatedly follow someone from place to place, repeatedly communicate with that person, spend time outside that person's house or workplace, or make threats against the person, if it causes that other person to fear for her safety.

Forcible confinement: Forcing someone to remain somewhere or interfering with (blocking) the person from leaving a place is forcible confinement.

Sexual assault: Any unwanted touching of sexual nature is a sexual assault. This can range from touching of sexual parts of the body to vaginal or anal penetration. As with other assaults, if weapons are involved or there is serious physical injury, the charge can become either sexual assault with a weapon or aggravated sexual assault.

Uttering threats: It is a criminal offence to utter a threat to kill or seriously harm another person, to destroy another person's property or to injure or kill an animal or bird belonging to another person.

From: "SOME COMMON CRIMINAL CHARGES IN VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN CASES", Pamela Cross, LLB
Springtide Resources Legal Fact Sheet

incident is over. Police are often called to the same home many times and find that there is little they can do to end the abuse.

A variety of strategies have been developed to improve police response to domestic violence in Ontario. Among the most important initiatives are training programs that train police in the dynamics of domestic violence and how best to protect victim safety, identify the primary aggressor and hold offenders accountable.

Mandatory Charging

Ontario has adopted a "mandatory charge" policy that compels police responding to a domestic violence call to lay a charge when there are reasonable grounds to believe that a criminal offence has been committed. This is important because it removes the burden from a woman to lay a charge against her abusive husband. Sometimes a dual charge will result if the police believe that both parties have committed an offence. In this event, police procedures highlight the importance for police to determine the primary aggressor to distinguish assault from defensive self-protection.

No Contact

If a husband is arrested by police and taken to jail, he may have a "no contact" order set during his bail hearing. This means that he is instructed by the judge not to have any contact with his partner while his case is before the courts. This includes all forms of contact such as physical proximity, telephone or email. If he violates the no contact condition, he is in breach of his bail conditions and can be returned to jail.

Restraining Orders

Women who are afraid of being harmed can seek a Restraining Order from a judge or justice of the peace to keep their partner away. If the judge grants the request, the abusive partner can be ordered to keep a specific distance away and not to make any attempt at contact. Similar to breaching no contact bail conditions, the punishment for making contact when a man has a restraining order issued against him can mean going to jail for a short period.

Child Protection

The Child and Family Services Act is legislation in Ontario that was passed to promote the best interest, protection and well being of children. The Act recognizes that everyone has a responsibility for the welfare of children. It clearly states that members of the public, including professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report promptly to a children's aid society if they suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection. Children's aid societies can be found in all court jurisdictions of the province.

A child protection proceeding can begin in two ways:

- A child protection agency may apprehend or remove a child from the family home if they believe there are serious concerns that cannot be addressed while the child remains in the home. This may be the case where the caregiver (parent) is believed to have a drug or alcohol problem or where there are concerns about physical abuse of the child by someone in the home.

- The agency may also apprehend if there are allegations of spousal abuse and the parties cannot reach an agreement for the accused spouse to leave the house and live elsewhere. In that case, the child will be removed from the home and placed in foster care although the agency may also look for an alternate placement with other family members or family friends if they are deemed to be appropriate by the agency. An apprehension may be done without a warrant if the agency feels there is an emergency situation**.** If a child is apprehended, the agency must have the matter in front of a judge within five days of the apprehension.

The agency may also become involved in situations where the family is having difficulties but these difficulties can be addressed without removing the children from the home.

Joint Custody of Children

In cases where the parents have separated, the children may be cared for by both the mother and father with visits between both homes every week. If the father is found to be violent against the mother and a report to police is made, then access to the children can be taken away from the father. The judge in the case decides what is best for the child. Sometimes visits will continue but there may be a decision to supervise the father's visits and/or to stop overnight visits with a father who has been violent in the past.

- More recently child protection agencies have been given the task of making sure that children exposed to family violence are offered support and in some cases removed from their homes to prevent harm, even if they are not physically abused by a parent.

- There is significant risk that a wife may be killed by her husband because of problems related to child support payments and custody. The death reviews of women killed by the father of their children have revealed this to be a high risk factor. (Sixth Annual Coroners Report 2008) Consequently, there is increasing effort to help women become aware of risk factors and to manage the risks.

Funded Programs in the Justice System

The Ministry of the Attorney General funds a number of programs to support victims of domestic violence and to hold abusive partners accountable for their actions. For more information go to: http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/ovss/

Victim / Witness Assistance Program

While families are involved with the Ontario court system, victims of violence are offered support by the Victim / Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP) through the Ontario Victims Secretariat Service. (OVSS) V/WAP staff will provide information, assistance and support to victims and witnesses of crime to increase their understanding of, and participation in, the criminal court process (www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca).

Services are provided on a priority basis to the most vulnerable victims and witnesses of violent crime, such as domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, homicide and hate crime. Families of traffic fatality are also eligible. Services begin once police have laid charges and continue until the court case is resolved.

V/WAP services include:
- Crisis intervention
- Emotional support
- Case specific information (court dates, bail conditions)
- Court preparation and orientation information
- Needs assessment
- Referrals to community agencies.

Partnership Assault Response Program (PAR)

Partner Assault Response (PAR) programs are a component of Ontario's Domestic Violence Court program. They are specialized counselling and educational services offered by community-based agencies to people who have assaulted their partners. Some offenders are ordered to attend the PAR program by the court. PAR programs aim to enhance victim safety and hold offenders accountable for their behaviour.

The 16-week long program gives offenders the opportunity to examine their beliefs and attitudes towards domestic abuse, and to learn non-abusive ways of resolving conflict. While an offender is in the PAR program, staffs offer the victim help with safety planning, referrals to community resources, and information about the offender's progress.

Contact information for V/WAP and PAR offices can be located by calling the *Victim Support Line* toll-free at 1-888-579-2888.

Funded Programs in Social and Community Services

There are service agencies in most communities that can provide support, counselling and referrals to other organizations.

In Ontario, the *Assaulted Women's Helpline* provides information in many languages about services that are available in each community. There are also counsellors who are available to

talk about situations or concerns about violence. Calls to the Helpline can be made anonymously and the conversations are confidential.

Women's Shelters

A shelter is a safe place where women and their children can get emergency housing and food. Shelters also provide counselling, support and referrals. Most shelters have a 24 hour crisis telephone line. Shelter-net is a website that provides information and contacts in several languages about shelters in Canada, including shelters for Aboriginal women. Go to: http://www.shelternet.ca or call the Assaulted Women's Helpline for more information.

Rape Crisis / Sexual Assault Centres

Female victims and survivors of sexual assault who are 16 years of age or older are eligible for a variety of counseling, information and referral services from community-based Sexual Assault / Rape Crisis Centers (SACs). These services include:

- Accompanying a victim to court, a hospital or police station
- Supportive peer counselling services (both one-to-one and group)
- Sexual violence education and training for professionals and members of the public
- Information and referral services

For more information on the SAC program, contact the Ontario Network of Sexual Assault / Domestic Violence Treatment Centres, or the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres

Victim Services

The Victim Crisis Assistance & Referral Services (VCARS) program provides immediate, on-site service to victims of crime 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

With a victim's consent, police will arrange for VCARS staff and/or specially trained volunteers to provide on-site, short-term assistance to victims, and make referrals to community agencies for long-term assistance.

Section 3
Islamic Perspectives on Domestic Violence

Women's Rights in Islam

Islam is founded on the equality of rights and responsibilities for men and women within the family. This is reflected in the marriage contract that requires the consent of both the bride and bridegroom. The two contracting partners have equal rights to continue the relationship, nullify the contract or terminate the contract in divorce. Islam outlines detailed rules concerning both the building and ending of marriage contracts.

Islam endows many rights upon women. These rights include the right to retain her maiden name after marriage and to manage her financial or business income independently. Islam also allows women to keep their nationality; to keep custody of children after divorce; and it obliges the husband to pay alimony (family support). There are several verses in the Qur'an and *Hadith*[2] that stress the rights of women.

Tribal Norms

The status of women and their relationship with men and the family remains controversial in the lives of Muslims. In current practice, the teachings of Islam have been mixed with what has been inherited from various tribal cultures through the centuries.

In This Section:
• **Islamic perspectives of domestic violence and how that is distinguished from cultural practices**
• **The rights of Muslim women are contested**
• **Islam does not condone violence**
• **The Muslim Wheel of Power and Control shows how religion can be distorted to justify abuse**
• **How Muslim men perceive domestic violence**
• **The challenge of migration for Muslim families**

Before the advent of Islam, 1400 years ago, the Arabian Peninsula was home to settled tribes and nomads, who were raising cattle, trading goods and financial services and managing relations with or invading other tribal territories. Men used to carry out most of the work related to relations between and other tribes or nomads. Women carried out responsibilities in the home and family but were perceived by men as being limited to offering sexual pleasure for men and raising children.

There were various roles for women and men in different tribal societies. Women in some areas had more rights in their relations with men. Other groups promoted marriage of one man to many women and this reduced the power and control wives had in the family to negotiate their responsibilities.

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[2] The term applied to the reports of the prophet Muhammad's words and actions

Some tribes in these regions became famous for degrading women in the marriage relationship. This is reflected in the practice of absolute polygamy; the forced marriage of women captured during war to her conqueror; the right of the eldest son to inherit his father's wife, as she was viewed as an asset. There were other traditions attached to marriage that could permit the husband to offer his wife for a short period to a guest; or lend her to a friend during his absence. Although Islam came with progressive ideas that gave more freedom and better status to women, some of the tribal traditions of the people of the Arabian Peninsula were integrated into Islamic heritage.

The Rights of Women in Muslim Societies

Traditionally, boys and girls are brought up differently in Muslim families. Often boys are allowed more freedoms and are able to do things against their parent's wishes without suffering consequences. Girls, however, are given much less freedom to do things that would embarrass their parents, such as being out of the house or sleeping overnight at their friend's house.

The restrictions placed on girls by their parents are also mirrored in the laws that control women and limit their ability to act independently in the world outside the home. The idea that women are not as important as men is also reflected in laws that limit the freedoms of women and their roles in the family and society. Some examples from Muslim countries include depriving her from having the right to divorce her husband and forcing her to obey her husband. Muslim clerics differ on these issues. Some are of the opinion that a wife is obligated to obey her husband. A wife disobeying her husband can result in punishment that leads to her forced obedience or that deprives her from family support. Others are of the opinion that marriage is a partnership based on mutual support and thus reject the idea of absolute obedience.

Mohamed Fathi Nageeb (2001) contends that there is a difference between laws based on an interpretation of the Qur'an and the text of the Qur'an itself. According to Nageeb the legislation that restricts the rights of women results from the way the Qur'an was and continues to be interpreted in various cultural traditions.

The Teaching of Islam and Domestic Violence

The Qur'an can clearly be interpreted to reject the abuse of women. The Qur'an supports the equality of rights and responsibilities between a husband and wife. The abuse of women in Arab countries, as in many other places, is distorted and downplayed in order to minimize attempts by women to challenge their status as being inferior to men. The traditions of Arab culture rely on deliberately patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'an, coupled with political legislation that unjustly restricts the rights of women. This is the cultural weight of a male dominated society.

The Muslim Wheel of Domestic Violence

The Muslim Wheel of Domestic Violence (pictured below) was developed by Dr. Sharifa Alkhateeb. It conveys some of the ways religion can be distorted to justify abuse against women

and children in the family context. It is an adaptation of the Power and Control Wheel developed by the Domestic Abuse Project of Duluth, Minnesota.

Muslim Wheel of Domestic Violence
by
Sharifa Alkahteeb
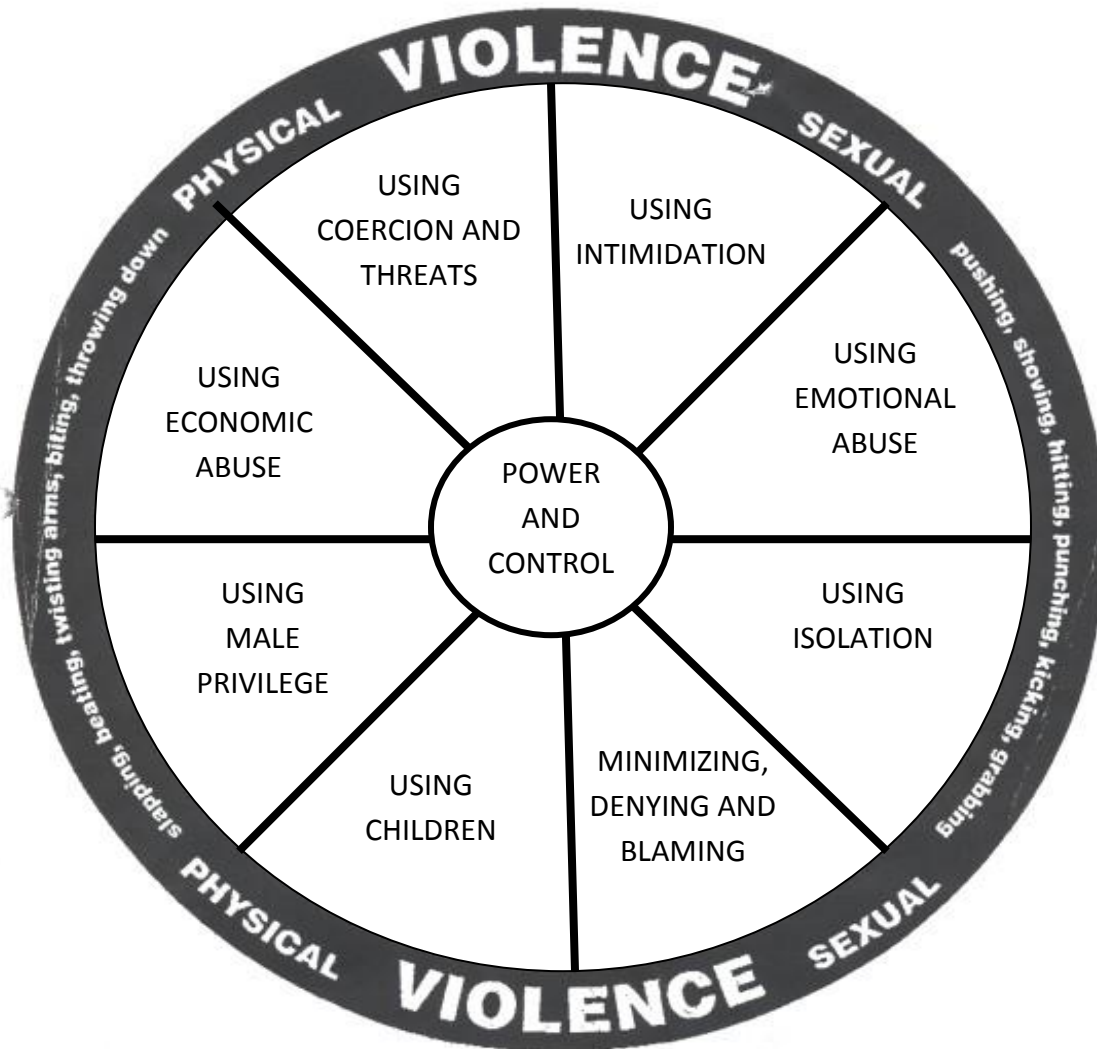
Using Isolation
- Husband says that he is the "qawwamun" (manager) of his wife and has the God-given right to control her every movement, who she sees and talks to, what she thinks, what she reads
- Wife is made to get permission to use the telephone, go grocery shopping, visit parents
- Even if the marriage contract gives her full mobility, her husband ignores it

Minimizing, Denying, Blaming
- Children are directed by the husband to lie about/trivialize the abuse
- Husband denies the abuse by calling it "discipline"
- He says the wife caused the abuse
- He tells his wife that divulging episodes of abuse equals violation of her Islamic responsibility to respect her husband's privacy and God will condemn her for it

Using Children
- Children are told they are being beaten to prevent becoming too "Canadian"
- Father threatens to get custody from Islamic court, send children overseas, marry them off young or kidnap them
- Children's trauma symptoms are used by the husband as an excuse to batter his wife
- Father encourages children to insult, disrespect their mother
- Father says he has to abuse the mother so that he will not abuse his children

Using Male Privilege
- Husband's dominance and inflexibility extolled as being mandated by the Qu'ran requiring obedience in all matters
- Wife's opinions, aspirations, plans considered as "Western" and un-Islamic[3]
- Verbal / physical abuse of children justified as the "right" of the Muslim father
- Wife is encouraged to fear her husband
- Husband repeats untrue Hadith [religious text] about women bowing to men

Using Economic Abuse
- Refusing to allow his wife to get education or training
- Refusing to let her get a job
- Demanding she quit a job
- Taking her entire paycheck while Islam allows her to keep it all
- Hiding family income

Using Coercion and Threats
- Threatening to marry another wife
- Threatening "god-ordained" wife beating (Qur'an 4:34)
- Threatening to leave her without money
- Threatening to spread the word that she is an adulteress
- Making her drop charges to preserve extended family's reputation

Using Intimidation
- Grossly dirtying her kitchen several times a day
- Having the local Imam [clergyman] tell the wife that the abuse is her fault

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[3] The concept of Western culture refers to cultures of European origin that place high value on individualism and rationalism.

- Customs are disguised as religion
- Hiding/destroying important documents
- Taking all her jewelry and selling it
- Apologizing to others for her disobedience
- Collecting, displaying weapons
- Stalking

Using Emotional Abuse
- Belittling/calling wife unfit Muslim mother
- Making fun of her inadequate Islamic knowledge
- Calling her names/calling her crazy
- Making her believe she is incapable of directing her own life
- Telling abused women they must be quiet, docile, obedient to uphold family honor
- Lying to her extended family in letters
- Saying her lovemaking is inferior to Western women

How Muslim Men Perceive Domestic Violence

According to a study, (BaObaid 2008) there are three predominant views of domestic violence held by Muslim men in Canada:

A. Some Muslims think that violence against women comes from the breakdown of the family in Canada and from a lack of religious awareness. Muslim families are taught to live by Islamic teachings that stress a strong moral code of behaviour for each member of the family. A good family follows tradition and doesn't have problems. If a husband is responsible for a domestic dispute it is because a wife or child has not obeyed tradition. Beatings that take place within the family from time to time are merely discipline. Domestic violence is not a crime. There is no need for the authorities to be involved. *It should be noted that this view is held by only a very small percentage of the men interviewed.*

B. Some Muslims are of the opinion that protecting the family from outside influences is not an excuse to commit violence against women. They understand that Canadian laws exist in order to protect abused women from assault by any man, including family members. They outwardly reject any justification, whether cultural or religious, that allows a husband to assault their wife. *The number of individuals constituting this group makes up a small percentage of the Muslim community.*

C. Some Muslims believe that domestic violence occurs in all societies including Arabic and Islamic societies. There is a difference between violence that results in bruises and broken bones or emotional distress, and disputes that result in yelling, and shoving. A woman may experience many disputes with her husband, but that is seen to be of no consequence to her health. Some Muslims may not consider other forms of woman abuse, such as economic and emotional control as abusive behaviour. *This group constitutes a large percentage of the Muslim men who were interviewed in the London community*.

Perceived Challenges of Migration for Muslim Men

Muslim men may believe that the difficulties of migration to Canada for Muslim families will lead to a situation where the husband no longer feels he is able to provide for his family. These feelings may grow stronger as a result of wives finding work outside the home, needing women to help support or even fully earn the family's income. Some men may feel that a lack of social and economic success in Canadian society weakens his image within the family and his community.

Most men will find it difficult to embrace a marital relationship based upon Canadian ideas of partnership. Instead, many men feel more comfortable holding onto traditions that associate manhood with strength and control. Domestic violence tends to occur most often in families where the husband resists letting go of old patterns of marital interaction and gender expectations.

Men are brought up not only to be the provider, but also to ensure that cultural and religious traditions continue to guide family life. If the husband feels his status within the family is diminishing, he may become more concerned about maintaining and enforcing traditional cultural roles within the family. As frustrations within the husband begin to build, he may begin lash out against his wife and to punish her for supposed transgressions from the cultural role she is meant to play. This sort of popular reasoning pushes the blame of domestic violence onto women themselves. In this respect, the link between women's behaviour and the justification for violence by Muslim men is no different from abusive men in mainstream society who also blame women for their violent actions.

As women being to integrate into Canadian society, they may feel empowered to act differently or 'selfishly' because the Canadian legal system supports equality. Thus, popular reasoning within the Muslim community holds that women begin to betray their obligations to the family because of their awareness of the protection they receive from the Canadian legal system. Such understandings distort the realities of domestic abuse. In this situation, the husband gains the sympathy of the community because people feel that it is the wife who has failed to live up to traditional obligations. As a result, when abused women refer to community leaders for help and guidance often they will not find a sympathetic support system.

Most people in the Muslim community feel that woman abuse arises out of the frustrations and disappointments of husbands who find themselves unemployed or underemployed, and from the so-called 'disobedience' of wives who look to Canadian legal protections and rights. It must be recognized that such reasoning by the community ultimately serves to justify domestic violence.

Level of Integration in Mainstream Canadian Society

Integration into Canadian society may happen differently for the family members. The journey of each individual can cause great conflict for the family as a unit. For example, one partner may become more religious or traditional after migrating. This will have significant impact on how the children's integration unfolds.

If a daughter has ideas that she can go out to play soccer or the movies with boys it may not be a problem if the family in general has integrated with Canadian social norms. If one of the parents views integration as a threat to the family, the perception can cause alarm and trigger the protective instinct that will cause internal family conflict.

The protective instinct may also come into play if the family believes there are risks and negative consequences of allowing a daughter to participate in sports or social activities with other teens. Parents may lack a frame of reference to determine what is appropriate and safe for teens in Canada. The resulting anxiety can cause strong reactions on the part of the parents who want to keep their children safe on one hand, but who may use violence to retain control on the other.

Family of Origin

Moderate or liberal families that have no concerns about a daughter who attends parties in the company of other young men and women may be criticized by the extended family or community who disagree with the parenting choices.

Some families are residents in Canada but feel primarily attached to their home in another country. Refugees often plan to return when times are better to re-build and resume their lives and extended family ties. This connection can lead to a strong desire to maintain traditions, religious practices and language that preserve a social order that is from their past. It is a struggle if one member of a family is devoted to the idea of remaining connected to their country of origin while other members begin to integrate into Canadian society. Change that seems to conflict with tradition can be seen as a threat to the future success of the family. Violence may be used to control the threat.

Section Four
Understanding Honour Related Violence (HRV)

What is honour killing and honour related violence?

One of the challenges in understanding honor related violence committed against women is that there is no common definition (Ewing 2008) and (Toprak 2000). Such killings and acts of violence are assaults committed against women both by female and male family or community members, for what is considered immoral behaviour. These behaviours range from women choosing their own marriage partner, seeking a divorce, disobeying a husbands orders, allegations of premarital or extramarital sex, for being a victim of sexual abuse or rape and even talking innocently with a man who is not a relative (Goodwin, 1995; Sen, 2001).

Abu Lughod (2009) also found that Arab activists could not agree on basic common characteristics. In one case, a Palestinian man murdered his daughter out of fear that she would reveal he was an informant; although the murder had nothing to do with her sexual misconduct, it was nevertheless counted as an honor-killing statistic.

Amnesty International contends that that HRV has been an established feature in the lives of many women in numerous South Asian and Middle Eastern nations, but governments have inconsistent opinions on how to deal with these crimes (Amnesty International, 2004). Anthropologist Lila Abu Lughod's ongoing research on statistics related to honor killings in Arab countries shows that statistics do not tell a complete story since there is not a clear definition and the methods of "counting" these crimes are extremely elastic.

> **In This Section:**
>
> • There is no common definition of family honour related violence (HRV). This makes it difficult to collect accurate statistics
>
> • Governments in South Asia and Middle Eastern nations have no consistent opinions on how to address HRV
>
> • HRV is a global issue
>
> • The basic cause of HRV is a rumour that a female family member has behaved in a dishonourable way
>
> • Dowry murder is considered a form of HRV
>
> • Honour killings are perpetrated by a blood relative
>
> • There are differences between HRV and domestic violence

Where does HRV occur?

HRV exists in many Middle Eastern and South Asian societies. According to a 2002 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, "honour killings" take place in Pakistan, Turkey, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Iran, Yemen, Morocco and other Mediterranean and Gulf countries. In 2002, the United Nations estimated that around five

thousand girls and women in at least fourteen countries, among them Pakistan, Jordan and Turkey, were killed yearly because their families felt they brought dishonour on them." [4]

With migration, honour killing is no longer limited to particular nations.[5] In recent years there has been increased attention paid to HRV against girls and women in many European countries and North America. HRV has recently been brought to light in the West due to media reports on crimes committed in the UK, USA, Canada, Germany and Sweden (Bird, 2007; Tickle, 2006).

In 2004, a sixteen year old Kurdish girl was stabbed by her father because of her choice of boyfriend. Another twenty one year old girl was killed by her cousin in her wedding dress for marrying against family wishes. In 2002, a twenty six year old Turkish University student with a Swedish boyfriend was murdered by her father in Sweden because he insisted she marry a man from Turkey. Experts say such killings are on the rise in different places around the world, however the issue remains largely hidden from public view and exact numbers are unknown.

> **"A murder carried out as a commission from the extended family, to restore honour after the family has been dishonoured. As a rule, the basic cause is a rumour that any female family member has behaved in an immoral way."**
> **(Wikan, Unni. 2008)**

Why Does HRV Happen?

Usually HRV takes place within communities and societies that believe women are the upholder of the family honour and men are the protector of this honour. That means that women's sexuality is bounded by the tribal and family rules and honour. Women and girls who have resisted honour related indoctrinations can face severe consequences. Unni Wikan, a social anthropologist and professor at the University of Oslo, defines honour killing as "a murder carried out as a commission from the extended family, to restore honour after the family has been dishonoured. Generally, the basic cause is a rumour that any female family member has behaved in an immoral way" (Wikan, Unni. 2008).

While advocacy organizations such as CAIR *the Islamic Society of North America* denounce any link between honour killings and Islam, some Muslim sheikhs and leaders still preach that disobedient women should be punished. However; the majority of Muslim sheikhs and leaders condemn honour killings as anti-Islamic. Nabil Abbas from the Shi'a Islamic Centre in Montreal states that; "there is no Islamic proof from the holly Quran and/or the prophet *hadith* that Islam practiced honour killing; or that there is Islamic acceptance or justification to such an act. "It is *haram shara'n* (forbidden with all Sharia law) to kill an innocent human being."[6]

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[4] See: www.world.de (Retrieved Aug 2010)
[5] See: www.csmonitor.com (Retrieved Aug 2010)
[6] See: (http://www.rcinet.ca/arabe/) Retrieved Aug 2010)

Dowry Murder

Another form of violence or murder that is associated with HRV is the dowry murder. "Dowry murder is a brutal practice involving a woman being killed by her husband or in-laws because her family is unable to meet their demands for her dowry. A dowry is a payment made to a woman's in-laws upon her engagement or marriage as a gift to her new family. It is not uncommon for dowries to exceed a family's annual income."

While cultures throughout the world have dowries or similar payments, dowry murder occurs predominantly in South Asia. According to official crime statistics in India 6,822 women were killed in 2002 as a result of such violence.[7]

> *"[Since] men commit violent acts in culturally specific ways, there is something about the violence that we will not be able to fully describe if we refuse to talk culture outside our communities. Stories involving gruesome culturally specific details will simply be suppressed ... the very secrecy that gives abusers power."* **(Razack, Sherene, 2009)**

Who Commits Honour Killings?

The perpetrator of honor killing is a blood relative of the victim. In the United States, most honour related murder-suicides that have three or more victims usually involve a "family annihilator" - a subcategory of intimate partner murder-suicide. Family annihilators are murderers who kill not only their wives/girlfriends and children, but often other family members before they kill themselves, usually because they feel their family members have humiliated them (Violence Policy Center, 2006). There is seldom remorse. In one case Wafik Abu Abseh, a twenty two year old Jordanian woodcutter who killed his mother, brother and sisters said; "we do not consider this murder; it was like cutting off a finger." Abdel Rahim, a convicted killer who was released after two months, also said he had no regrets. "Honour is more precious than my own flesh and blood" (New York Times).

Forced Consent

For many young females from immigrant families, the circumscribed tradition of maintaining family honor has been used as a coercive and often extremely violent means of acquiring submissive obedience (Lindisfarne, 1998; Tickle, 2006). Many women, who are aware of the violent treatment of women in their homeland obey the demands of family because threats and violence and are used to force consent to arranged marriages (Goodwin, 1995; Kassam, 1997). Women who have resisted honor related indoctrinations have faced severe consequences.

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[7] See: http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/facts_figures.php?page=4 Retrieved Aug 2010

Justifications of HRV

Below are some of the most common justifications for HRV. This list is a summary of many studies and reports published in Europe and North America.[8]
- Daughters are accused of being too Westernized
- Refusing to marry a relative or any man the family arranges
- Suspension of dating
- Dating
- Filing for divorce
- Getting married without the consent of her parents
- Behaving inconsistently with cultural and religious norms
- Involved in sexual relationship
- Refusing to wear hijab
- Wanting too much freedom; not appreciating Muslim values

Honour Killings and Domestic Violence

There are key differences between HRV and domestic violence.

Honour Killings	Domestic Violence
Committed mainly by fathers against their teenage *daughters* and daughters in their early twenties. Wives and older-age daughters may also be victims, but to a lesser extent.	Committed by an adult male spouse against an adult female spouse or intimate partner.
The planning and execution involve multiple family members. If the girl escapes, the extended family will continue to search for her to kill her.	The murder is carried out by one man with no family complicity.
The reason given for the honor killing is that the girl or young woman has "dishonoured" the family.	The batterer-murderer does not claim any family concept of "honour."
The extended family and community valorize the honour killing. They do not condemn the perpetrators. Mainly, honour killings are seen as normative.	The batterer-murderer is seen as a criminal; no one defends him as a hero. Such men are often viewed as sociopaths, mentally ill, or evil.

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[8] See appendix for more complete information

Section Five
Challenges Facing Immigrant and New Canadian Women

Institutional Racism

Institutional racism is described in Canadian society as a significant barrier to service for abused immigrant and refugee women.

Agencies that have been created to support women who face violence are generally run by Canadians of European heritage. It is only recently that multiple language services and multicultural staff have become available or visible. Despite increased awareness of the multi-cultural population of women who need service; leadership positions in the social service sector still does not reflect the wide diversity of Canadian society. This is not particular to the social service sector, however; in the social services it is impactful in particular ways that create additional barriers to service for immigrant women.

The first study of immigrant women who experience abuse was written in 1990 for the federal government and was followed by another in 1993. The authors, Linda Macleod and Maria Shin explain in their report that immigrant women face all the same difficulties that non-immigrant women experience but their problems are "magnified many times by the loneliness, strangeness and newness of their environment" (1990: 7). They need information about their immigration status, their legal rights and they may fear being deported. The report states that they need the "opportunity to discuss and reassess their beliefs and assumptions concerning wife abuse...with women and men who understand their culture and who can communicate in their language."

In the 1980s and 90s the Korean-Canadian Women's Association and the South East Asian Services Centre and the Chinese Family Life Services groups argued that they are better able to provide culturally sensitive services to women in the Greater Toronto Area. This led to the formation of the Toronto Advisory Committee on Cultural Approaches to Violence against Women and Children (Ministry of Citizenship – Wife Assault Prevention Training Program). The Committee has documented anti-racist and culturally appropriate responses to domestic violence.

In This Section:

- **Immigrant women affected by domestic violence face a number of challenges in seeking help**

- **Institutional racism in Canadian society provides additional barriers for immigrant women to seek help**

- **The impact of domestic violence is "magnified" for immigrant women by loneliness, strangeness and newness of their environment**

- **Western perceptions of equality privilege individual rights. Other cultures have collectivist values that need to be supported**

- **Working with difference is challenging and requires a willingness to respect values that are not the same as one's own.**

Since that time there has been much attention paid to racism in social service responses to abuse, but organizations demonstrate little change to include minorities in decision-making processes or positions. Despite the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which calls on all citizens to respect differences among people, there is still a clear preference for the values that come from English Protestant traditions and French culture. Western philosophy and the rights of the individual are assumed and not generally made visible or open to question. As well, the government does not provide incentives or funding that would facilitate greater diversity in the social services. Without that diversity, cultural differences are interpreted through a strictly Western worldview lens.

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is an issue for everyone as the dominant ideology in almost all societies and cultures across the world. It provides a framework for organizing political, social, economic and personal relationships. For the purposes of this manual we turn our attention to patriarchy in the Muslim community.

While Islam clearly articulates equality between men and women, the teachings of Islam have been interpreted in a manner that is supportive of male dominance and patriarchy. These dominance hierarchies continue for Muslim families in Canada. Many Muslim women believe wrongly that Islam endorses men's violence against women and children. Thus they would be reluctant to ask for outside help. In April 2008 a Muslim man was found guilty of repeatedly beating his wife, including the day after she gave birth to their second child. During the trial, his wife, a devout Muslim, testified she continually returned to her husband despite the abuse he inflicted on her because she believed the Qur'an gave permission for a husband to beat his wife. She also feared that she would lose custody of their children if she went to police (Ottawa Citizen December 5, 2008).

The Established Identity of Muslim Men as Patriarchs

Baobaid (2003) interviews of Muslim men found although they are not accepting of physical violence towards a spouse, the majority of respondents' held views that a man has the right to hold his wife accountable for money spent, that wives can be stopped from leaving the house and that the man has the final say in all family matters. One interviewed man stated:

"A woman cannot leave the home without the permission of her husband. A man has a right to prevent his wife from hanging with people he believes would have negative impact on her. It is the duty of a man to protect his family".

As a result of these patriarchal attitudes, neither men nor women will readily identify with Western definitions of intimate partner abuse. Finally, Muslim families are found to be reluctant to use services that are not sensitive to the communal nature of families and are very concerned to do anything that jeopardizes the economical and social status of the family by revealing family secrets or sharing negative information about members of the family.

Reading Violence as a Product of Culture

Violence against girls and women in Muslim communities has received little scholarly attention in Canada. Over the past ten years, a number of high-profile cases have appeared in the Canadian media, drawing attention to violence against girls and women within Muslim families, particularly those cases that occur between fathers and daughters. This tendency to attribute violence against girls and women, particularly when it takes place within racialized communities, to a set of prescribed cultural traditions and expectations is problematic and has been addressed by several researchers (Grewal, 2008; Jiwani, 2006; Razack, 2002).

The Problem of Blaming Culture for Violence

The prevailing discourse has been one that depicts 'crimes of honour' in such a way that the public wonders how a 'culture can be so violent'. Several scholars have discussed the problem of attributing violence against girls and women to culture. (Grewal, 2009; Jiwani, 2006; Razack, 2002). Feminist scholars, Uma Narayan (1997) and Grewal (2009), have used the phrase, "death by culture", to describe a pattern whereby, within racialized communities, moral prescriptions are transmitted in the language of culture. The implicit suggestion is that there is something intrinsic to Islamic 'culture' that allows and encourages violence against women and girls to occur and so therefore nothing can be done to prevent it from happening. This is a dangerous idea that must be challenged.

The categorization of "honour-related" violence as a cultural phenomenon ignores its position within the wider spectrum of gendered and racialized violence in all societies. This can result in a number of unintended side-effects, including fewer advocates for the rights of girls and women within minority communities. Potential advocates may be self-silencing for fear of reinforcing cultural stereotypes and undermining their community.

As well, blaming culture stigmatizes those communities in a way that further isolates them. The tendency to blame culture is further exacerbated in a climate of fear and mistrust – perpetuated by both the dominant society and Muslims- and that has intensified in the post-9/11 era. According to Ayyub (2007), this atmosphere of mutual suspicion and misunderstanding contributes to a denial of violence and reluctance on the part of women and girls to speak out or seek help.

At the same time, the cultural aspects of violence against women can not be dismissed. Instead, a more nuanced approach is required that carefully balances the benefits and limitations of taking cultural factors into account.

Caught Between Two Cultures

In 1993, the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights established the international Working Groups on Girls (WGGs) to monitor treatment of the human rights of women and girls among signatory nations. The WGG reported that immigrant and refugee girls and young women experience higher rates of violence because of dislocation resulting from migration, the reversal

of gender roles within their own families, as well the impact of racism and sexism from their own communities and the host society (Friedman, 1995). Caught between two cultures, where their birth culture is devalued and inferiorized, and where cultural scripts in both worlds encode patriarchal values, these girls and young women face a tremendous struggle in trying to 'fit' (Jiwani, 2006) into Canadian society. When they fail to conform, they often suffer intense backlash. Lack of self-esteem, barriers to integration, and marginalization are some of the consequences that have been identified as contributing to the increased vulnerability of immigrant and refugee girls to violence (Berman & Jiwani, 2002).

Intersections of Violence

Violence that occurs in Muslim families is similar to other communities and reflects overlapping social hierarchies that are based not only on gender, but also on race, culture, class, disability, age, and marital status. According to Statistics Canada (2006), there are currently approximately 750,000 Muslims in Canada, constituting the largest religious minority. The Muslim population is not a homogenous group and is comprised of highly distinct and diverse groups who come to Canada primarily from regions in Africa and Asia. Although mainstream health, social service and justice agencies across the country are increasingly aware of the need to provide culturally appropriate outreach services for the social, cultural and economic development of communities, they lack the training to understand the specific issues with these communities.

Hate Crimes

A recent pilot study on hate crimes in Southwestern Ontario, conducted by the Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration (MRCSSI), in partnership with the University of Western Ontario, explored the social and emotional consequences of hate crimes on women in the Muslim community of London, Ontario (Cody & Hamou, 2010). Findings revealed that hate activity is a common experience in Muslim women's everyday life. Although much of this activity does not break the law, the women surveyed experience serious effects on their sense of self and their physical and emotional well-being, which in turn affects their families and ultimately the community more broadly. Based on the findings, the authors conclude that more research is needed in order to better understand the complexities of racism and prejudice directed toward Muslim women, and to examine the intersections among violence, gender, culture, and religion.

Lived Experience under Repressive Authority

Despite the need in Muslim communities, few Muslim women access existing family violence prevention and intervention resources. In qualitative interviews, Baobaid (2003) shows Muslim women are unlikely to use existing Canadian resources to address issues of intimate partner violence. Participants who were interviewed expressed worries about reporting victimization to authorities. Some women feared a police report on their husband would place the immigration status of their family in jeopardy. Others came from backgrounds where the police and authorities are repressive, intimidating and discriminating against women. This distrust of authority carries over into their lives in Canada.

Four Dilemmas of Abused Women Seeking Help

Haj-Yhaia (2008) highlights four basic dilemmas that Muslim women face in seeking help. Practitioners need to understand that the interventions they are trained in are based on the values of individualistic society and may not be appropriate in working with abused women in collectivist communities.

- The first dilemma is the price that abused women in collectivist communities feel they must pay for **revealing the secret of abuse**. Asking assistance from mainstream agencies contradicts the notion that the family is obligated to solve its own problems, and to provide support and protection for female members and their children.

- The second dilemma is the pressure an abused woman will feel if the service provider insists upon **a focus of gender inequality** rather than focusing on treating the violence.

- The third dilemma is the **lack of support for self determined goals** set by the woman that may be designed to keep her in her home and community and that may minimize or marginalize the violence.

- The fourth dilemma is being **challenged in her belief** that she is partially responsible for the violence against her. Muslim women whose identity is firmly embedded in the family and community have more difficulty assigning individual responsibility for behaviours than women whose values are individualist in orientation.

These dilemmas grow out of a distinctly Muslim perspective of domestic violence. They are presented here not to justify or deny gendered violence or to condone victim blaming. It is rather to place an emphasis on the collectivist orientation to domestic violence that differs from the dominant culture attitudes and beliefs in Canada. These are differences that may never be acceptable to mainstream service providers. Nevertheless, they must be treated with respect in order to ease the way for abused Muslim women and their families to find help and support.

Section Six
Delving into Difference

Cultural Difference: Individualist and Collectivist Societies

There are significant differences between individualist and collectivist societies that are not well understood. Mainstream service providers face significant challenges in their attempts to effectively address domestic violence in immigrant and New Canadian communities without an appreciation for the socio-cultural differences in collectivist societies such as Muslim and Arab communities.

Collectivism is described as any philosophic, political, economic or social outlook that emphasizes the interdependence of every human in a group and the priority of group goals over individual goals. Collectivists usually focus on community, society or nation.

Collectivism is widely seen as being opposed to individualism; however most philosophies, political and economic systems have a degree of both collectivist and individualist aspects. (Wikipedia)[9]

Why Doesn't She Leave?

The Western perspective of equality is based on the rights of the individual. Under the law, all citizens have equal human rights; however, the lived reality for many Canadians is quite different. Overlapping socio-economic factors such as poverty, education, class, disability, gender and race intersect to disempower and disadvantage people in different ways, even though the ideal of equality is enshrined in the constitution and the law.

In the case of domestic violence, Canadians who do not understand the issue often question why a woman who is abused doesn't just leave her home. *"If it is her right to live free from abuse, then why doesn't she just leave?"* Blaming victims for failing to 'take control' and not changing their abusive situation is a common response to domestic violence in Canada and one that service providers frequently strive to change. The view reflects a generalized public ignorance of the coercive power dynamics involved in many abusive relationships. It is also an attitude that fails to hold the abusive man responsible for his actions.

> **In This Section:**
>
> - **Differences between individualist and collectivist societies are not well understood**
>
> - **Collectivism emphasizes the interdependence of every human in a group**
>
> - **Western perceptions of equality privilege individual rights. Other cultures have collectivist values that need to be supported**
>
> - **Working with difference is challenging and requires a willingness to respect values that are not the same as one's own.**

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[9] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collectivism Retrieved January 2011

Anti-violence feminists in Canada have worked hard to educate the public to place the responsibility for violence solely with the violent perpetrator and to respect the rights of women to choose to stay or leave the relationship. Despite the effort, it is still difficult for people in the general population to understand and accept how a woman can 'let' herself be abused or choose to stay in an abusive relationship.

Many women from minority cultures that embrace a collectivist worldview face additional complications on this already existing tendency to blame women for staying in their abusive relationships. The collectivist values that put priority on family and community may also serve to keep a Muslim woman in an abusive home. Even if she seeks help from available services, she may have no desire, or support from her friends and family to break the community bond. In these cases, it is not helpful for a mainstream service provider to focus on the unequal gender relations in the family. Instead, it is important for the worker to focus on building trust with the woman because the trust is a necessary step toward safety. As well, service providers need to understand that Muslim women who choose to stay within the family may fully accept their 'place' within the collectivist system. Differences in values make it too easy for people from the dominant culture to reject such thinking as a sign of subservience and submission. While the woman may be fully aware that the abuse is wrong, at the same time, she may be unwilling to give up the security she derives from her place in the family and community.

Women, who grow up with values that reinforce the value of autonomy, also have difficulty leaving their abusive relationships. Relationships are always complex and multi-dimensional. They can offer forms of safety, security and even love and affection at the same time as abuse. For Muslim women, the difficulty of leaving the positive and reinforcing parts of the relationship is even more difficult given that her identity is so closely tied to family and community.

Mainstream service providers who are already embattled in trying to shift the attitudes of the general public from victim-blaming to greater support for abused women are particularly challenged by collectivist values that reinforce maintaining the family. For many providers, safety is equated with leaving. Working with immigrant women poses a challenge to reinterpret and redefine the concept of safety. This is a knowledge chasm that sits at the juncture of individualist and collectivist worldviews.

Becoming more inclusive is an intensive process that is being demanded of the existing service system that already struggles to meet day-to-day pressures with limited resources. It is not reasonable to expect diversification of the sector without also adding capacity to meet the unique needs of other cultures.

Safety as a Relative Term

With very few exceptions, all societies are patriarchal. Canadian society also functions within a predominantly patriarchal value system. There is also a tendency in Canada to assume that other cultures are 'more' patriarchal. If all societies are patriarchal, then we can expect that all women and men operate within the limits of their society. The rules of culture and society bind everyone, often in ways that are invisible. As a result, people can and do believe that they are fully

autonomous. There is no 'outside' where patriarchy does not exist. Choice is therefore relative to the situation and every citizen experiences an imposed limit of some kind to their choices. This is the reality of living in any social system. The difficulty comes when members from one society pronounce that members from another society are less able to choose under the patriarchal rules of that culture.

The idea that Muslim women have the ability to define their role in a collectivist hierarchy is perhaps one of the more difficult concepts for mainstream anti-violence feminists. There is a long-standing Western feminist perspective that automatically equates hierarchy in a patriarchal system with unequal and unjust power relations. If Muslim communities are deemed 'more' patriarchal than the dominant society, then choice is not really 'free' choice for Muslim women, but rather coercion. Yet many women from collectivist societies assert that they are exercising their rights in choosing the role they have assumed within the family and the community.

Rather than imposing a single Western definition on concepts like safety, it may be more helpful to explore safety as a dynamic in Muslim families whereby each member has responsibility both to create safety in the family and also to define it for themselves. A choice to maintain her place in the family and community by staying in an abusive relationship does not mean that safety is not possible or achievable for a Muslim woman. If a family member uses protection as a rationale to enforce family safety it is a contradiction. The common ground for mainstream service providers and members of the Muslim community in situations of domestic violence can be found in a shared desire to achieve safety. The caveat is that the abused woman must be included in defining what safety means to her.

Cultural Safety

The concept of *cultural safety* may be useful for service providers. The definition of cultural safety has been evolving in healthcare systems around the world between dominant culture service providers and indigenous peoples. Cultural safety reinforces the idea that each person's knowledge and reality is valid and valuable. Care may be deemed unsafe if the patient is humiliated, alienated, or directly or indirectly dissuaded from accessing necessary care. Cultural safety insists that mainstream service providers recognize themselves as the bearer of their own culture and attitudes that either consciously or unconsciously exercises power over patients.

The concept of cultural safety has political relevance because it attempts to change health professionals' attitudes about power relationships with patients. Many academics maintain that cultural safety in the mainstream health care system cannot be achieved by individual interactions. For example, in our current context, cultural safety depends on the meaningful participation of Aboriginal people in decision-making processes that allow transfer of power to Aboriginal governments (Browne, Fiske, Thomas, 2001)[10].

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[10] http://www.naho.ca/english/documents/Culturalsafetyfactsheet.pdf (retrieved Jan 2011)

Safety in Belonging

If the goal is to find new ways of providing support to immigrants and newcomers then safety must be understood in a way that is consistent to "cultural safety" as described above. Support is defined as being meaningful by the people being served. For Muslim women and girls who are abused, the choice to leave the home may provide short term safety, however; long term safety will forever be tied to a sense of belonging to their Muslim community. The challenge for everyone involved is to find ways to stop the violence without breaking the tie to the community.

Exploring cultural difference is a necessary experience for training and capacity building within the Muslim communities and with mainstream service providers to develop specific techniques that are relevant and appropriate to working with women from collectivist societies. Ultimately, the goal is to discover tools and methods that can promote gender equality and safe families in all societies. Acquiring an appreciation for the real differences between collectivist and individualist societies is the key to success. It is a challenge not easily met without a willingness on both sides to question the underlying assumptions and biases that are embedded in any single perspective or worldview.

Conflation of Patriarchy with Collectivism

In an individualist society, autonomy of the individual is perceived as the highest priority. In a collectivist society, the interest of the group holds priority over the individual. If there is no opportunity created to exchange ideas about what individual autonomy means in a collectivist society, outsiders will develop an interpretation of the other based on their own perspective. This is to be expected in the absence of true dialogue and respect for difference in itself.

It can also help to explain why, from a strictly Western individualist viewpoint, the privileging of the collective over the individual in Muslim communities is often interpreted as happening *because* the society is patriarchal or as a result of patriarchy. In fact, it is not. The conflation of patriarchy with collectivism in this way reveals a bias that does not appreciate that the role of the individual in a collectivist society is fundamentally different from the role of the individual in an individualist society. A woman in a collectivist community is not by definition 'oppressed' and people raised in individualist centred societies do not have the right to impose their understanding as the only legitimate possibility. The conflation between patriarchy and collectivism is unavoidable so long as the assumption that individuals are merely subservient in a collectivist society remains unspoken.

The Limits of Understanding and Respect for Difference

A person with an individualist orientation will never grasp what it is to be a member of a collectivist society because it is not their direct lived experience. While the pursuit of deeper understanding should always be fostered, the drive must also be accompanied by the explicit knowledge that the journey toward understanding of a different culture will always involve interpreting and judging the experience through one's own life lens. The limit of human understanding is inescapable. Recognition of this limit can be a powerful support to social

change because it ensures ongoing dialogue and interaction in working creatively with differences. It also provides an advantage to achieving shared goals because it is the acknowledgement that a person from an individualist culture can never become so expert about collectivism that they can speak for its members or exclude them from the conversation.

In this way, 'understanding cultural difference' means that difference itself is respected in the sense that one 'understands' that there is cultural difference that cannot be reduced to understanding. Difference will never become something fully understood, something one can make their own – otherwise it ceases to be difference. Respect is actively demonstrated in the attempt to gain understanding when accompanied by the acknowledgement that there will always be a limit to that understanding.

The importance of learning to live with difference without trying to turn it into something one can grasp - and hold independent of the other - is challenging, and yet there are truly important gains to be made for the effort. If we can accept the idea that difference between peoples can never truly be 'known', then the urgent need to increase diversity, both in legitimatizing perspectives of minority groups and in the composition of the service sector becomes even more evident as an imperative.

Working with Difference

The mutual challenge of finding ways to respect difference – especially when the difference is perceived as being culturally 'unacceptable' - should not be underestimated. This is what it means to work *with and for* diversity. It is said in many ways and in many places that today we need the strength of a wide range of ideas and perspectives that diversity gives us to meet the social, economic and environmental challenges the human family is facing around the globe. Learning how to accept and work creatively with the limits of our own understanding and to appreciate the ideas and values that are not, and will never be our own, may be the most important individual and collective learning we can do.

Section Seven
Toward Prevention

Family Protection in Service to Family Safety

To move toward prevention, the specific concerns that underlie domestic violence in different cultures must be recognized and acknowledged. As described in Section 4, many Muslim families are concerned about losing the religious and cultural values of their families because of the strong influence of the Western culture on their children. Women are held as being primarily responsible for family honor and men have a duty to protect that honour.[11]

These are some of the specific concerns:
- Concerns about children's religious and cultural identities
- Children becoming more Westernized
- Disobedience shown to parents
- Disconnected from family and community heritage
- Community pressure on parents (in Canada and in country of origin)
- Parental responsibility to fulfill religious obligations

Concerns related to family honor:
- Concern about girls sexuality
- Overreaction toward girls mistakes, there is generally more tolerance for boys mistakes
- Conflicts between the parents and with the broader community

Concerns related to family unity:
- Family relations versus individual interests
- Perceived breakdown of the family

As concerns such as these begin to surface in a family, usually as the children age or as female members become more interested in Western culture, the drive to protect the family can dominate family life. A Muslim man may use controlling and even violent behaviour to 'protect' his family from Western influences. Whereas this behaviour is understood to be abusive, for Muslim family members who are intent on preserving their way of life, the behaviour is understood as being merely responsive to much larger invasive forces that are entering into the family home. In this sense, an angry violent man may see himself as a victim under attack and without power or

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In This Section:

- **Primary concerns about losing religious and cultural values and identities need to be acknowledged**

- **Muslim families can perceive themselves as victims of Western society**

- **Protecting the family means different things to different family members**

- **What begins as a drive to protect the family can become violence in the family**

- **The protective instinct can be engaged to move a family toward family safety in some cases**

- **Coercive control needs to be identified before any intervention**

- **Domestic violence threatens both individuals and communities of all kinds**
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[11] See: http://www.unn.ac.uk/societies/islamic

choice. He is merely trying to keep his family safe. The perception of being victimized and the ongoing struggle to resist being overtaken by Western society can become the dominant driver that circulates through the daily interactions of the family. In this way, the obligation to protect the family becomes the very thing that begins to break it down.

The Cycle of Victimization
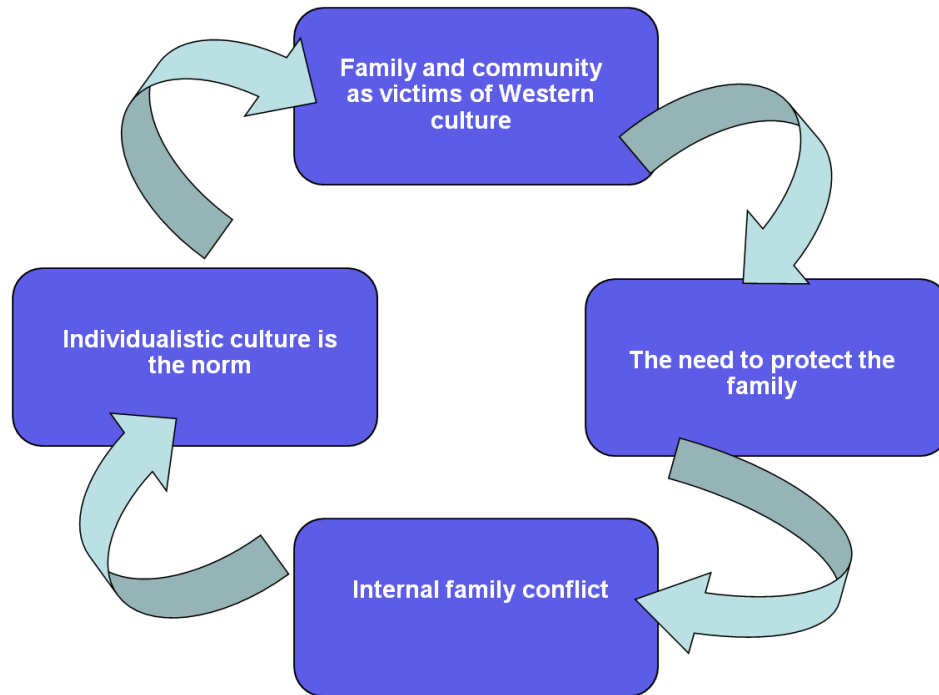
The cycle of victimization diagram above shows how many Muslim families become ensnared in a vicious circle that contributes to family breakdown. A family migrates to Canada and is immediately immersed in a culture that espouses individualist values. As the children begin to integrate into Canadian society their independent activities can invoke a perceived threat to traditional Muslim values. Concerned parents may fear that the road to integration will lead their children outside the protection of the community and that if they become estranged from the collective, they will not be safe. The parents may feel themselves to be victims of the dominant culture that is everywhere. The protective instinct that is stimulated in response to the perceived threat can divide the family. The mother may be blamed for the behaviour of the children. As limits and controls are imposed and then resisted by family members who want to integrate with Canadian society, the need to protect may intensify the internal family conflict, causing the family to spiral into an increasingly conflicted state.

The internal conflict in the family can also be understood in the larger context as the clash of difference between individualist values and collectivist values. As stated earlier, individualism and collectivism have historically been defined as being opposed. Because the Western values of individualism make up the fabric of the dominant Canadian culture, a Muslim father may feel overwhelmed and increasingly isolated in his attempt to protect the collectivist values of his family.

Family Protection

Family protection is an important concept, especially in consideration of a prevention strategy. While men have explicit responsibility for protecting the family, the safety and integrity of the family is dependent on a cooperative dynamic that involves all members. It is a mistake to automatically interpret the role of protector as an autonomous and absolute ruler over the family. In fact, the male protector must act with deep regard for each individual and the overall wellbeing of the family. Despite the common perception that the male head of the household has absolute power over his family, he relies on the goodwill and cooperation of all family members to fulfill his responsibilities. Family protection in this sense is a mechanism to preserve and protect the safety and integrity of the family. This means both the relations within the family as well as the family's relation to the wider community.

Family Safety

Family safety can only be realized if everyone in the family is safe. It calls for a balanced set of relations in a family whereby each member contributes to the overall harmony of the household environment. There is a hierarchy, however; the different roles and responsibilities in the family are not static and require negotiation and agreement from family members. For family safety to exist, each member contributes to the agreements of the family as to how it will function. This means that as a family begins to integrate into Canadian society, issues will arise according to how the family views and responds to change.

Differing Views of Family Protection

When all members of the family agree upon the definition of family protection there is balance in the family. However, there can be different views within a family that can cause divisions among family members.

- Wives and mothers are held responsible to maintain the family honour. Daughters must behave properly at all times and obey their parents. In this way, family protection can become a burden for female family members.

- Children have fewer rights and must be obedient and respectful of elders. Children may be unable to understand the reasons why a younger brother has more rights and freedoms than an older sister.

- Husbands and sons are less responsible for bringing shame on the family. If a man's behaviour contradicts tradition, it is likely to be less shameful, and will often be overlooked by others.

- A mother-in-law may pressure her daughter in law to behave in certain ways and then pressure her son to 'be a man' in meting out punishment she disobeys. As a result, the son may do things he wouldn't do on his own in an attempt to show respect for elders and community tradition.

Whenever family differences are not fully considered, family protection is sacrificed. By definition, family protection holds and protects the common interests of the family. When a man is focused on his own image and how he is perceived in the broader community he transgresses and lapses in his responsibility. Family protection is a privilege that should not create tension or be used as justification to maintain power and control. Together, the family maintains its own safety and integrity.

When Protection Turns Violent

Family protection that is not defined by all members of the family is conflicted. If the conflict is denied in a household where some family members believe they are under attack by the dominant culture that threatens their way of life, then the drive to protect the family can turn violent. When this happens, it is most often women and children who are the victims.

Family Conflict in Isolation
Justification of Family Violence
Protecting / Preserving Religious and Cultural Values: • Protecting Family Unity ➡ Controlling Behaviours ➡ Woman abuse / child abuse • Protecting Family Honour ➡ Controlling Behaviours ➡ Honour-related Violence (HRV) / Woman abuse / child abuse
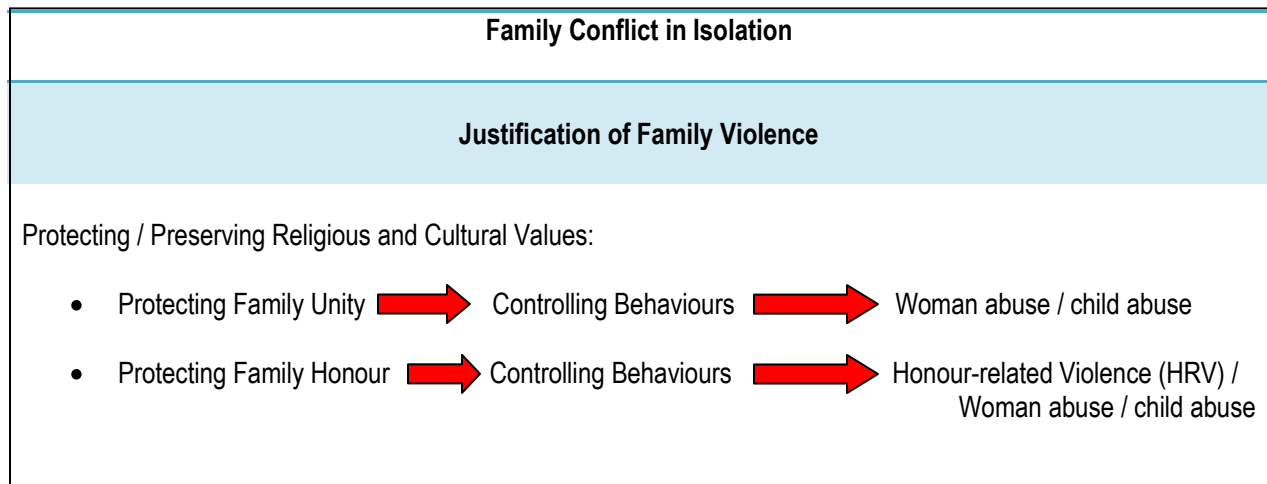
Increasing Isolation

If protecting the family is interpreted to mean strictly resisting integration into Canadian society - at all costs, a Muslim man can become increasingly isolated within his family and in his community. His family may be divided as some members start to embrace Canadian society. This can create conflict that deepens with his every effort to control or change the situation. As identified earlier, he may see himself as a victim of the overwhelmingly individualistic culture that surrounds and influences his family, alone and accountable to his community for keeping his family within traditional values. If he is unwilling to consider alternative perspectives about what family protection means, he is left to his own fearful imaginings that can grow to support increasingly extreme responses. He may begin to fantasize worst possible scenarios that lead him to do 'whatever it takes' to protect his family from losing traditional relations and values. In the worst of cases, protection that becomes violent has resulted in domestic homicide.

In addition to the breakdown and suffering within the family, if a Muslim man resorts to violence to control the family situation, he will be in conflict with Canadian laws. If his children are seen to be at risk, the child welfare authority will become involved. These are new realities that reconstruct the traditional role from *protector to perpetrator* of family violence in Canadian society. This can be a shattering reality for a man who believes he is fighting to keep his family safe and to fulfill his obligations as a man. What can be done to support him to make other choices that actually create safety for everyone involved?

Intervention Strategy: Aligning Protection with Safety

To align family protection with family safety is a logical movement. It is logical to assume that family protection is driven by a desire for family safety. However; when attempts to protect the family result in domestic violence, there are a number of issues that must be considered prior to any intervention plan.

Different types of domestic violence require different interventions

- Working with Michael Johnson's typology described on page 7, there are three types of domestic violence.
    - Situational couple violence
    - Coercive control
    - Violent Resistance

Coercive control is the most lethal form of domestic violence

Coercive control does not arise from a desire to protect the family although family protection may be the reason given for abusive behaviour. Rather, coercive control occurs when one partner in an intimate relationship uses violent tactics to dominate and control the other partner. The purpose of the violence, usually and specifically, stems from a powerful sense of entitlement to hold power over a female partner and/or female children. An appeal to family safety will have little meaning in this case. The motives behind the violence are self related and as such, are not restricted to any particular culture or community affiliation. Coercive control happens in both individualist and collectivist societies. It is a dynamic that is supported by patriarchal values that place women as inferior to men. As noted earlier, even in Canada where women have equal rights under the law, patriarchal values continue to structure dominant society.[12]

To ensure safety, any plan to intervene should routinely begin with the assumption that the violence is part of a coercive control dynamic. Safety concerns must be constantly attended to by both bystanders and the professionals who are trained to assess risk and who are authorized to respond to criminal actions and to do safety planning. Extreme caution should always be

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[12] Despite the Charter of Rights that set out equal rights for all Canadians, embedded patriarchal values are still evident in institutional and social-structural reference points such as ongoing wage disparity, lack political representation of women, lack of corporate representation of woman in leadership positions, poverty statistics as well as the rates of violence perpetrated against women.

exercised so as not to put victims at greater risk or escalate the violence. The need for safety cannot be overstated – *all types of domestic violence can be very dangerous, and it can be difficult to determine which type of violence is involved.* (See page 56 for more information about how neighbours, friends and family members can learn to recognize the warning signs of coercive control).

Using Logic to Intervene in Situational Couple Violence

For protection to be aligned with family safety, this intervention strategy must be understood as being limited to the first type of domestic violence described in the typology above; *situational couple violence*. The 'situation' that has been described throughout the manual is one where members of a Muslim family begin to integrate into Canadian society in a way that raises concern about the potential loss of traditional Muslim culture and values. Real fear is generated that the family member(s) will become estranged from the safety of the community. The motivation of this type of violence is a misdirected attempt to keep the family safe. This is very different from coercive control violence that is motivated by the need a man has to retain power and control over his family to ensure his personal sense of entitlement and right to be obeyed. As described earlier, coercive control motivation is not attached to concerns about family safety.

The Protector Role in Service of Family Safety

A key intervention strategy is to teach everyone the warning signs of domestic violence so that neighbours, friends and extended family members who are concerned with the safety and integrity of the family can play a role in protection. The movement toward protection can interrupt the isolation that surrounds the family by linking with available services and by using the strength of existing relationships to offer support. Working together, both Muslim and mainstream allies have different roles to play in ending violent responses that stem from a misdirected protective instinct.

In working with Muslim men, and as long as fulfilling the protector role is truly the motive behind the violence, then strengthening the internal rationale that links protection to safety is a powerful connection to be made. Male friends and other family members who have significant relationships with the man can support him in recognizing that violence does not produce the result which is truly being sought and by reminding him that violence is not the way of Islam. This is a key role for members of the Muslim community.

For the abusive man, a significant shift is necessary to bridge the gap between family protection and family safety. He must be willing to recognize that he is creating a destructive family dynamic by his actions and that he has the ability to change his behaviour. If he insists on being the only one to decide on the meaning and scope of family protection, he commits himself to a role of policing and punishing his family for any actions he deems inappropriate or threatening.

In order to engage in a process that will de-escalate the violence and ensure safety, he must accept that there are differing perspectives of family protection and integration in his family that require discussion. He must come to believe that thoughtful and open discussion with his family

and with his community is the means to cultivate respect and also to reflect on the value of maintaining tradition. In this way, he will be better prepared to serve his family / community and to negotiate the considerable challenges of migration and integration. Support from friends and relatives can make a critical difference in reducing the isolation and in strengthening the rationale that will lead to greater family safety.

Working with Family Conflict

In the figure below, when internal conflicts in the family are denied, the different perspectives of family members are not allowed to be considered. As a result, miscommunication, misunderstanding and mistrust operate to create a negative family climate that embroils the family in conflict that may escalate to violence. In this situation, the protective instinct divides the family.

When Conflict in the Family is Denied

Escalating family conflict is contrary to family protection

- Family Violence
- Increasing Conflict
- Negative Family Climate
- Mistrust
- Miscommunication
- Misunderstanding
- Denial - Conflicted Perspectives of Family Protection
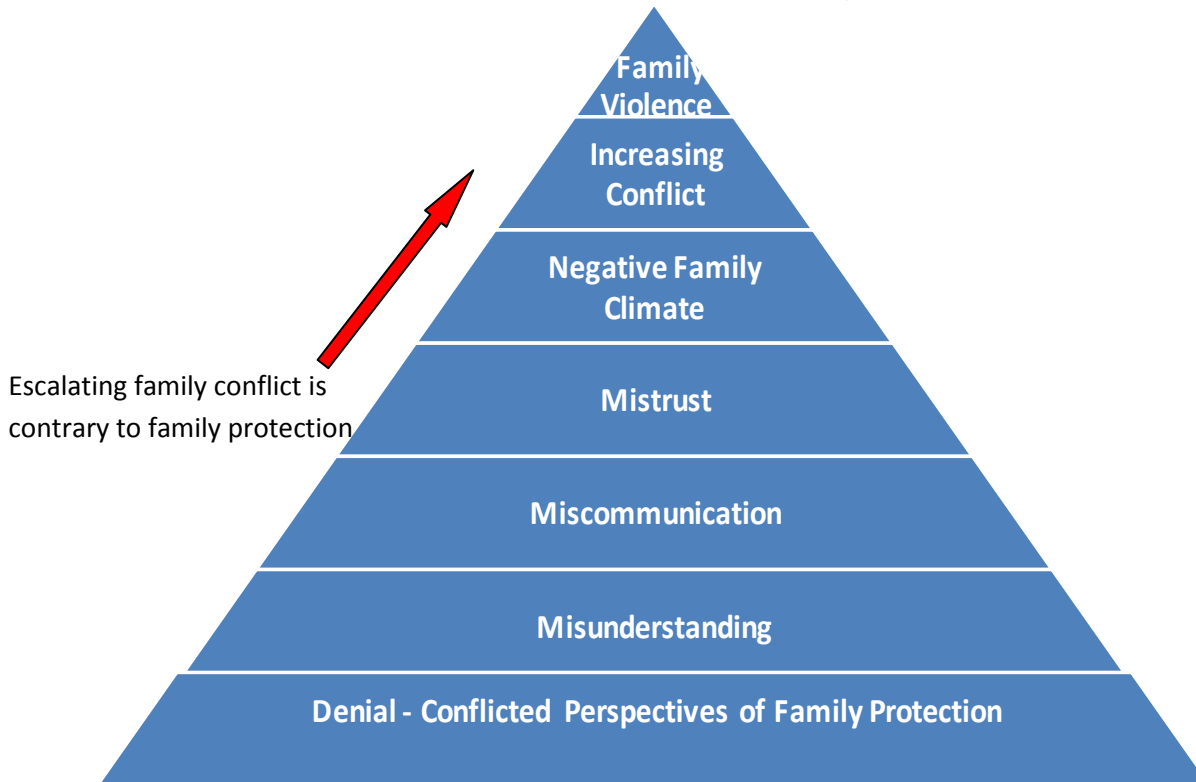
In the second figure below, if the internal conflict is recognized and acknowledged, the protective instinct can actually propel better family relations. Acknowledgement allows for mutual understanding through open communication that builds the trust that is essential for a positive family climate. The conflict is resolved in a manner that achieves family safety. In this way, family protection and family safety are aligned.

When Conflict in the Family is Recognized

Recognizing Conflicted Perspectives of Family Protection

Building Mutual Understanding

Better Communication

Building Trust

Positive Family Climate

Healthy Family Conflict Resolution

Family Safety

De-escalating family conflict achieves family protection
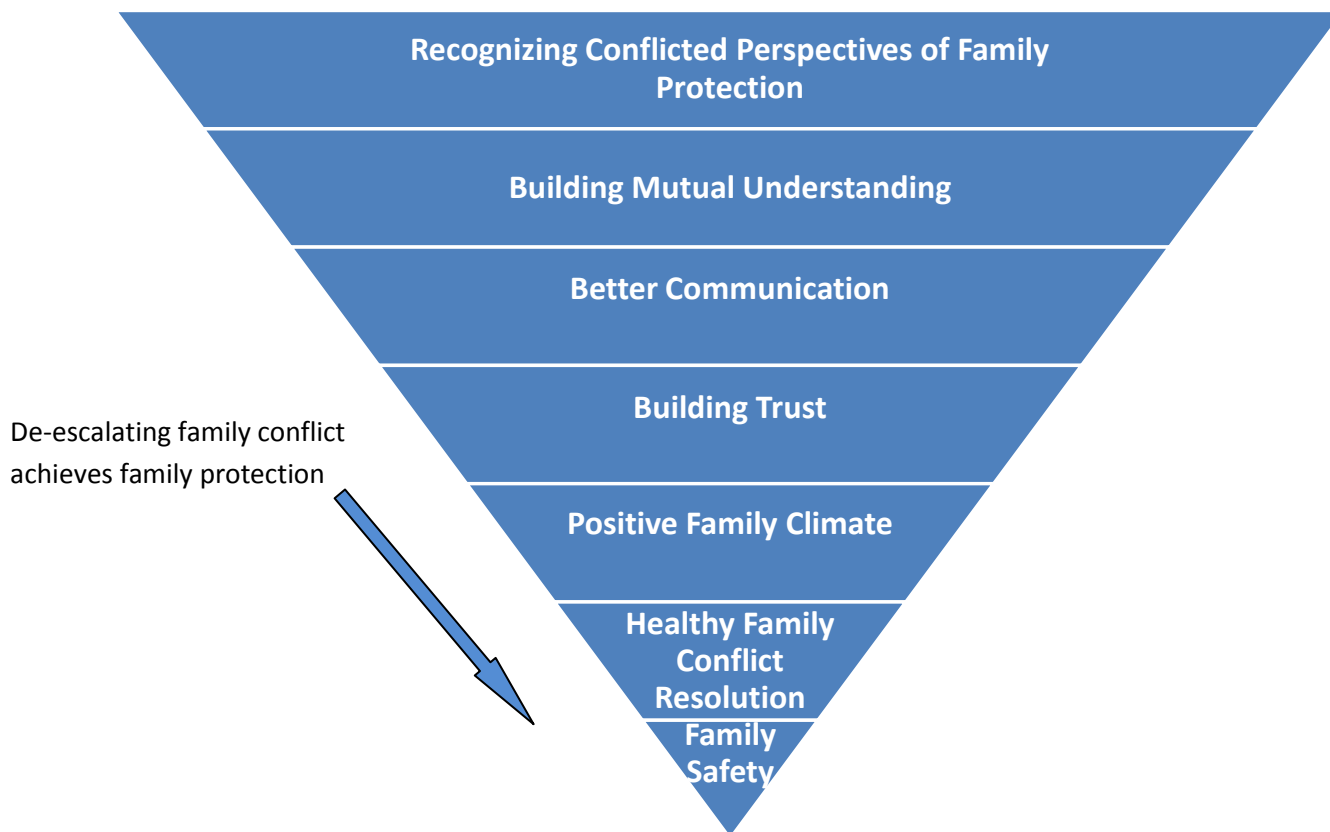
Other Pressures

The concerns raised by integrating family members must also be understood as existing in the particular situation of the family but at the same time, in a larger socio-cultural context. Traditional Muslim values have been described throughout the manual as collectivist. In simple terms, this means the good of the community is privileged above individual rights; not because individuals do not matter but rather, the way to family safety is through the community. The community is necessary to protect individuals and therefore must have priority.

Concerns that arise as a result of an individual's integration may be voiced by family members or by the larger community. Intense pressure may be brought to bear in different ways and from different sources to restore traditional roles and behaviour. A family that is embracing Canadian individualist-based society may find itself at odds with more traditional members of the Muslim community in a way that jeopardizes their place in that community. The pressure to conform may therefore also be brought to bear by the extended family and/or larger community. This can intensify the anxiety felt by the man to control the behaviour of his family.

The Logic of Common Ground

Individualist and collectivist doctrines have a long history of being opposed to one another. This is a fundamental divide between societies. There is as yet little understanding or imagination for how individual and collective societies can co-exist and even be seen as mutually supportive. It is reasonable to assume that the strength of communities is related to, and dependent on, the strength of the people who comprise it, and also that the strength of individuals is directly related to their belonging and inclusion in a healthy community. It is a self-reinforcing circle of relations. Domestic violence undermines the strength of the collective because it rends the family unit. Family members become more and more isolated by the violence that usually escalates without intervention. Domestic homicide devastates families and communities. The impact of domestic violence cuts across all social differences in a way that could unite people in working together across longstanding historical divisions of individualist and collectivist societies.

Finding Common Ground for Family Violence Interventions				
	Motivation for Acting	Intervention	Means	Outcomes
Muslim family in conflict	Protecting / Preserving Religious and Cultural Values	Family Protection to preserve family unity and honour	Recognition of conflict. Entire family is engaged in achieving Family Safety	Family unity Family honour
Service providers	Safety for abused Muslim women and children	Appreciation of the importance of family unity and honour in Muslim families	Teach non-violent and culturally acceptable ways to negotiate a resolution to the conflict	Increased safety and support for Muslim women

The ambition set out in this manual is to create the conditions where dialogues between Muslims and mainstream service providers can take place with a clear goal to increase the safety of Muslim women and children by recognizing and respecting the difference that will always exist between individualist and collectivist values and experience. The challenge is to understand both the ways that people and societies are different and also to find the places of common ground. Learning to respect difference and to work more inclusively are critical aspects to achieving safety.

Section Eight
Community Engagement Best Practices

The Muslim Family Safety Project

The Muslim Family Safety Project (MFSP) is a community-based collaborative project of the local Muslim communities and the London Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse (LCCEWA). The MFSP was initially housed at Changing Ways and brought anti-violence agencies and the London Muslim community together to address domestic violence in a respectful manner. The project was launched in February 2004 at the London Muslim Mosque with the participation of over 250 members of the Muslim community and representatives of local anti-violence agencies. Initial funding for the project was provided by the National Crime Prevention Centre (2004-2006), and later supported by the London office of the Ontario Victim Services Secretariat, Ministry of Attorney General, London Community Foundation and the London Mosque. Funding was used to implement a community outreach plan for the Muslim community to address the issue of woman abuse and for service agencies to be sensitive to the needs of the Muslim community.[13]

The objectives of the MFSP

- To establish and promote dialogue between the Muslim community and mainstream anti-violence agencies.
- To facilitate an environment of mutual understanding and respect.
- To enable and promote the mobilization of the Muslim community on the issue of family violence.
- To empower Muslim women to define and articulate their needs and social realities.
- To enable the collaborative development of prevention and intervention materials and services that meets the needs of Muslim women.

In This Section:

- **The Muslim Family Safety Project as best practice**

- **MFSP provides a model for collaboration between the Muslim community and mainstream service providers**

- **Mutual respect and learning are key in a community development framework**

- **It is essential to involve Muslim religious leaders and influential men in the community**

- **Public education is an important element**

- **Muslim Family Support Service has evolved from MFSP**

- **Neighbours, Friends and Families: Learn the warning signs of coercive control**

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[13] See: www.changingways.on.ca

Guiding principles

- Use a collaborative and community development framework for action
- Build an integrated framework that includes the Canadian legal and social frameworks with Islamic teachings on domestic violence
- Include men in project activities

Use a collaborative and community development framework for action

From the beginning, the approach of the Muslim Family Safety Project (MFSP) has been one of community development through broad participation and collaboration. In order to meet the needs of Muslim women and families affected by woman abuse, it is important to engage a diversity of voices from the Muslim community and the local service provider community in the process. From its inception, the Muslim Family Safety Project made a conscious effort to include a multiplicity of stakeholders from the Muslim community, including the various Islamic cultural and religious groups, religious leadership, local women's organizations and groups, and youth, as well as a broad representation of local service provider agencies. Participatory project activities involved opportunities for dialogue, the exchange of knowledge, perspectives, concerns and ideas. These activities helped to build mutual understanding and common ground for collaborative work on anti-violence strategies that reflect the specific experiences of woman abuse in the Muslim community and that integrate the expertise of both the service providers and Muslim communities.

Finding common ground for members of the Muslim community to work in collaboration with local service providers is a key ingredient to meeting the needs of Muslim women and children victimized by violence and also male perpetrators of violence. Without the expertise and guidance of stakeholders, creating an environment that is safe and responsive to Muslim women and families affected by woman abuse is much more difficult. Project partners played a significant role in shaping the process: they helped define objectives and determined how best to achieve them. The contributing voices of the Muslim community in particular, play an important role in integrating some religious elements that emphasize the rejection within Islam of domestic violence.

In addition, the strong involvement of members of the Muslim community and the service provider community translate into greater capacity building in both communities. The participation and contributions of a diversity of stakeholders generate valuable knowledge by improving understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics of woman abuse in the Muslim community and thereby support meaningful strategies for change. The collaborative and participatory approach of the Muslim Family Safety Project enables members of the Muslim community to learn from one another, allows them to develop a greater understanding of the expertise of the service provider community, and makes it possible for the local service providers to gain a deeper awareness of the experiences, knowledge, needs and values of the Muslim community.

The framework focus on connection and exchange supports the development of an environment in which services are more appropriate for Muslim women and families affected by violence. Service provider agencies are then able to engage in more effective outreach and service relationships with abused women in the Muslim community due to an improved contextualized understanding of challenges, concerns and needs.

Build an Integrated Framework

In order to overcome barriers of cross-cultural disconnection in service relationships, it is important to appreciate and acknowledge the experiences and perspectives of Muslim women who are abused. The development of culturally-appropriate community responses to address domestic violence refers to the establishment of service relationships with members of the Muslim community, and also public education materials that integrate religious and cultural knowledge, values and perspectives. The integration of the understandings, values and concerns of members of the Muslim community on the issue of woman abuse enables the project to respond in a manner that is meaningful and engaging. Members of the Muslim community need to be able to relate to any process that seeks to support Muslim women and families affected by woman abuse, otherwise strategies for change and support will not have much impact. The inclusion of Islamic perspectives and teachings provides a familiar context to public education on woman abuse for members of the Muslim community.

Include Men in Project Activities

To support the development of a safe environment for Muslim women to speak out and seek help, men and women of the Muslim community need to be involved. While the main strategy lies in empowering women through awareness-raising activities and women's support services, a significant part of the strategy for change lies in the inclusion of Muslim men.

Community development practice on anti-violence work must include men not only in prevention and intervention strategies, but also in developing the project process. The involvement of Muslim men in the development of the Muslim Family Safety Project had a positive impact on the acceptance of project related objectives and activities by the Muslim community. The integral participation of both female and male community members builds a sense of ownership toward the project and supports the proactive stance that woman abuse and family violence issues are a community responsibility. By engaging both men and women of the Muslim community directly in shaping the content and structure of the Muslim Family Safety Project, the importance of the issue of woman abuse gains legitimacy. This enables the building of a safe and responsive community environment in which Muslim women and families affected by woman abuse can step forward and seek out appropriate support.

Developing the Muslim Family Safety Project

The MFSP grew out of several factors that were identified by previous research about the barriers of accessing services by Muslim women and the observations of mainstream service providers. Providers recognized the need to work harder to ensure that their services would be

available and appropriate for the growing number of Londoners who are new to Canada. They articulated the need to cultivate better outreach strategies for new Canadians, especially those who speak neither English nor French. Changes in population can be understood as propelling the need for change. At the time of the project, ten percent of London's population (about 35,000 people) were Muslim, the highest proportion in Canada. (Baobaid, M. 2002).

Abused women from the dominant society who choose to access advocacy and residential services receive sensitive and effective assistance. However, the focus on advocacy, safety, and coordinated/enhanced prosecution may not be culturally-appropriate and may not meet the needs of Muslim families. The study conducted on barriers of accessing woman abuse services suggests that these barriers should be the principal focus of efforts to raise awareness of the issue. The current model in effect is complaint-driven, and depends on a woman accessing the service and/or contacting the police. As such, abusers are unlikely to be held accountable through mechanisms such as batterers' treatment programs, and their children may be exposed to violence for many years, increasing the possibility of emotional problems and violence in their adult relationships. As well, providing services to Muslim women in isolation of their families and their community of origin is not likely to be as effective as it has been for women from the mainstream society. The study recognizes that men must be included in prevention and intervention efforts.

Building relationships between the anti-violence agencies and the Muslim community

Key individuals in the Muslim community were identified by the coordinator of the project prior to its establishment. Participatory action research was conducted to look at the barriers of accessing services by Muslim women. The research process included interviews of key people from both the Muslim community and mainstream anti-violence agencies. The study discussed the social, political and religious context of gender and family relations in a Muslim community and the perception of members towards domestic violence and related services. The findings of this research have helped agencies represented at the London Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse (LCCEWA) to better understand the Muslim community and the Islamic perspective of domestic violence. For advancing the relationship and mutual understanding, the following steps were undertaken:

- The LCCEWA, as project sponsor, appointed a project coordinator who was a member of the Muslim community and who also worked at Changing Ways. Changing Ways served as the lead agency for the MFSP. The coordinator worked with the support of an advisory committee from the LCCEWA.

- After the project began, the coordinator and the advisory group decided to extend the advisory committee by including representatives from the Muslim community.

- The coordinator of the project acted as a cross-cultural facilitator and helped both groups to identify and move beyond stereotypical attitudes being held towards each other.

- A community map was developed and key people from faith-based groups as well as ethno-cultural groups were identified. All this happened with the participation of representatives of the Muslim community in the project advisory committee.

The Official Launch of MFSP

The Muslim Family Safety Project was officially launched at the London Mosque on February 8th 2004 with presentations by religious and community leaders in the Muslim community and service provider representatives. This was followed by an open discussion forum. The official launch took place after almost a year of outreach with organizations and members in the Muslim community and local anti-violence agencies. Such outreach and relationship-building activities played, and continue to play, an important role in setting the foundation for dialogue and collaboration between two groups: the Muslim community and anti-violence agencies, which have differing perspectives concerning the advancement of safety of women and children within their families.

Preparation for the launch included:
- Discussing the proposed plans at the advisory committee meetings.
- Developing posters that were culturally-sensitive and that included Islamic perspectives of domestic violence.
- Using the ethnic media, in particular the Arabic language newspapers and the Mosque's weekly newsletters, the Mosque's emailing lists, and the Friday sermons at which time the Imams agreed to advertise for the launch.

Strategic Planning

On Saturday June 26th 2004, the Muslim Family Safety Project and the Association of London Muslims (ALM) held a day long joint workshop at the Islamic centre of South Western Ontario. The goal of this workshop was to bring members of the Muslim community and representatives from anti-violence organizations together to collaborate in developing strategies to address the issue of family violence in the Muslim community.   Speakers from both groups shared their views about woman abuse and child abuse in the morning session. The members of the workshop had an opportunity to get to know each other through dialogue in six small groups where they discussed their thoughts for the next steps of the project.

Key themes that came out of the discussions include:
- There was consensus that the preferred model would be one of collaboration between mainstream services and the Muslim community. Some participants saw such collaboration as a step towards providing unique and independent services to the Muslim community.

- While collaboration is the most demanding model of service, it is essential for several reasons. It requires a process of two-way education. Collaboration invites mainstream agencies to learn about the Muslim community and to develop sensitive and appropriate

responses. And for Muslims, it is an opportunity to benefit from an increased awareness and understanding of Canadian culture and laws.

- Participants noted that there was a need to identify leaders from the Muslim community and from mainstream services to promote collaboration and offer opportunities for joint learning.

Public Education

Fifteen different presentations were given that focused on the negative impact of domestic violence on family members, especially women and children. More than 50 articles were published in the Muslim community local media. Most of these articles were published in Al-Bilad Newspaper (in Arabic). It was the first time in the history of London's Muslim and Arab community to have articles in a community newspaper dedicated to addressing domestic violence. Over the same period of time many mainstream agencies were also profiled in the newspaper. The Imams of the London Mosque and the Islamic centre dedicated six Friday sermons to the issue of woman abuse and child abuse.

The process leading to public education included:
- Engaging Muslim community leaders in addressing domestic violence in their community.
- Planning for most of the activities to take place in the Mosques, and other places where members of the Muslim community gather.
- Integrating Islamic perspectives of domestic violence in all public education programs.
- An information pamphlet was developed that includes Canadian legal information about domestic violence, as well as the Islamic viewpoint stating that violence against women is not acceptable in Islamic law. The Islamic perspective was written by London's two Imams who agreed to put their names on the pamphlet thus giving it more legitimacy in the eyes of the community. It was translated into the six most commonly spoken languages in London's Muslim communities.
- Mainstream service providers were invited to the Mosques to educate the Muslim community about their services and domestic violence.

Engaging Religious Leaders

Religious leaders were actively engaged in the MFSP as an opportunity to dispel the myths on the position of Islam towards domestic violence against women that some Muslim men and women wrongly believe. As well, involvement of religious leaders provided legitimacy for publically addressing violence against women and this helped women understand that according to Islam, abusive behaviour is unacceptable. As a result, Muslim women were publicly encouraged to ask for outside help.

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The Importance of Mutual Respect

The MFSP process was based on developing mutual respect and understanding such that everyone involved felt equally represented and that their core values were respected.

Training workshops for service providers
A series of training workshops for mainstream service providers was organized. 402 workers from 17 agencies participated in the workshops. The focus was oriented towards building the knowledge and skills of local agencies to engage in culturally-appropriate service provision for Muslim women and their families affected by woman abuse.

The main objectives of the trainings were:

1. Improved knowledge of Islam including: the role and status of women, the position regarding violence against women, and family relations in Islam.

2. Improved knowledge of the cultural diversity of Muslims in London and the social, cultural and religious context of the lives of Muslim women and their families in Canada. This included an understanding of the world views of Muslim clients.

3. Increased practitioner awareness of values, assumptions and biases that impact the communication and the relationship-building with Muslim clients and those that interfere with providing religious and culturally-appropriate services and supports.

4. Increased knowledge of applicable skills for religious and culturally-appropriate service relationships with Muslim clients. This included strengthening cross-cultural communication skills, empathic understanding and connection with Muslim clients.

Muslim Family Support Service (MFSS)

In 2005, the MFSP initiated the Muslim Family Support Service (MFSS). It was launched in cooperation with local service agencies and the London Mosque to meet the needs of Muslim women and their children affected by domestic violence. The MFSS grew out of the research and recommendations of the Muslim Family Safety Project and the direct experience of women who had experienced partner abuse and were experiencing barriers to utilizing community services.

The MFSS is overseen by an advisory committee that is comprised of 50% of representatives of the Muslim community and mainstream agencies. The MFSS assists individuals, couples, and families from the Muslim community in their efforts to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties through:

- Outreach to the Muslim community to encourage use of this service;
- Establishing knowledge of and links with community services/resources;
- Clarifying and understanding the individual/family situation that is causing distress;
- Providing assessment, crisis intervention and safety planning as needed;

- Facilitating connection with appropriate community resources to meet identified needs.

The importance of continued dialogue with existing agencies in order to reflect upon how to provide more accessible and culturally-appropriate service has emerged as a fundamental element of the work of the MFSS.

Since February 2005, the service has assisted more than 800 individuals. The client base is very diverse and countries of origin include Pakistan, Iraq, Somalia, Iran, Afghanistan, and Lebanon. Clients are from different Islamic sects. The service was initially funded by the London Community Foundation, and later sustained through the support of the London Mosque until 2007. MFSS was originally located at Changing Ways in London. Currently the outreach worker is housed at Family Service Thames Valley and is funded by the United Way of London and Middlesex.

Challenges

Integrating differing conceptual approaches of the Muslim community and feminist oriented anti-violence agencies to the issue of woman abuse has been a central challenge for the MFSP. The work of developing appropriate and meaningful services and supports requires responsiveness to the needs, values and concerns of members of the Muslim community as defined by their unique perspectives. In order to advance the safety of women and children in the Muslim community, and to address male violence in the home, it is necessary to engage in flexible relationships around service provision to encourage the voices of minority religious and cultural communities to be heard in developing services. This process certainly requires an examination of key concepts and practice in existing anti-violence work, in order to address barriers of access and gaps in service. As well, it is important to integrate an intersectional understanding of the dynamics of woman abuse in its specific social, cultural, and psychological contexts as experienced by women and families in Muslim communities. The following are some of the main challenges that the Muslim Family Safety Project faced:

The Role of Islam

Within the first year after the launching the MFSP, a debate arose in Ontario about Sharia Law. This was an unfortunate coincidence for the project. At the time it was made very clear that the MFSP is not a religious project, but rather is a collaborative work to address domestic violence in London's Muslim community. Many people from both mainstream services as well as the Muslim community wrongly assumed that the implementation of Sharia in family disputes was endorsed by the project. This pervasive perception has lingered and has at times hindered the work of building the necessary relationships across mainstream and Muslim communities. The MFSP continues as a non-religious organization committed to working inclusively to end domestic violence in Muslim communities.

Engaging the Imams and Male Community Leaders

One of the main strategies of the MFSP has been to work with the religious and community leaders of the Muslim community. For feminists, the divide between the secular and the sacred is necessary. Religion has not been supportive of women and all too frequently is used to justify men's oppression of women. The concern persists that any engagement in a religious context comprises the core values of equality. Even though the Muslim leaders have provided the project significant support, there continues to be some hesitancy from the anti-violence partners who question the possibility of true collaboration with religious leaders who remain committed to an explicitly patriarchal doctrine. Patriarchy and religion assign more power to men over women and so create an uneven ground for collaboration between men and women. There is little evidence that safety for women can be found inside religious belief or institution of any kind. The Western conflation of patriarchy with collectivism (that was discussed earlier) further contributes to the unease. Alongside all these concerns, the media continues to sensationalize negative representations of Islam.

In this light, it is understandable that anti-violence partners of the MFSP have questioned the legitimacy of collaboration with Muslim leaders and that they worry they are being asked to support abused women in a way that upholds the very systems that inevitably puts women at risk. The helpful and collaborative efforts that Muslim religious leaders have provided support the development of more trusting relationships.

Clarifying the Definition and Use of Culturally-Appropriate Services

Initially, there was concern about culturally-appropriate prevention and intervention services. It has been challenging to find a balance between the belief system of the given community and open dialogue about the safety of women and children.

A number of insights have been gained:

- It is important to understand the perspectives, values, and experiences of both women and men.
- Understanding the manner in which Muslim men define or give meaning to violence will help to develop appropriate prevention materials to change attitudes.
- It is important to understand how Muslim women define domestic violence.
- A gap exists between how social services are provided by anti-violence agencies and the needs, values, and priorities of members of Muslim families affected by domestic violence.

Lessons learned from the MFSP

It is critical to employ an intersectional and contextual approach to understanding different realities and worldviews. Equally important is creating spaces for participation, open discussion and active listening to allow for productive dialogue. There is a need for services to develop methods that are culturally-appropriate and responsive, and that take into consideration the

values, experiences, perspectives of the identified community without letting go of the larger questions with respect to the global reality of the inequality of women.

Neighbours, Friends and Families: Public Education on Woman Abuse

Neighbours, Friends and Families (NFF) is the public education component of the 2004 Domestic Violence Action Plan sponsored by the Ontario Government. The campaign seeks to engage neighbors, friends and family members in active social change by teaching them to recognize the warning signs of domestic violence, including coercive control, and by training them to take safe and effective action in response.

Research has shown that earlier intervention by the people who are closest to the family experiencing domestic violence can have profound and positive impact. The campaign focuses on **coercive control** because it is the most lethal and devastating form of domestic violence. Because the victims of coercive control are almost always women, the language used in the campaign refers explicitly to the violence as **"woman abuse"**. This is an important step toward the desired 'whole culture' change that does not back away from the challenges of naming **men's violence** as the central issue.

The campaign was launched in 2005 after an Expert Panel was convened to develop materials and resources. The ongoing commitment of the Ontario Government to ending domestic violence remains in evidence by the continued availability of the materials that are free of charge to the public. The provincial campaign is managed by Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children at the University of Western Ontario in London.

The materials include a comprehensive and resource-rich website and three brochures that serve as the core content of the campaign.

The website can be found at: http://www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca
The brochures include:
- How You Can Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse
- How to Talk to an Abusive Man
- Safety Planning for Women Who Are Abused

Materials are available in many languages, including French. There is also an Aboriginal campaign called *Kanawayhitowin* which means: *Taking Care of Each Other's Spirit* in the Cree language. Neighbours, Friends and Families is pioneering work that strives to engage everyone in the issue of woman abuse across all cultural and social boundaries.

The Muslim Resource Centre for Support and Integration is working with the Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children to adapt NFF training and materials for Muslim communities. Teaching the warning signs and high risk factors of woman abuse is a central activity of the campaign.

Below are lists of warning signs and high risk factors. If you recognize some of these warning signs, it may be time to take action.

Warning Signs of Abusive Behavior:
- He puts her down
- He does all the talking and dominates the conversation
- He tries to suggest he is the victim
- He tries to keep her away from you
- He acts as if he owns her
- He lies to make himself look good or exaggerates his good qualities
- He acts like he is superior and of more value than others in his home

Warning Signs that a Woman is Being Abused:
- She may be apologetic and make excuses for his behavior or, she may become aggressive and angry if approached about it
- She is nervous about talking when he's there
- She seems to be sick more often and misses work
- She tries to cover her bruises
- She makes excuses at the last minute about why she can't meet you or she tries to avoid you on the street.
- She seems sad, lonely, withdrawn and is afraid
- She may be using alcohol or drugs to cope

High Risk factors: When Women are Killed

86% of the cases reviewed by the Ontario Domestic Violence Death Review Committee had 7 or more risk factors. The most common risk factors are:

- Actual or pending separation
- A history of domestic violence
- The level of violence had been increasing
- Obsessive behavior including stalking
- Depression (of the perpetrator)
- The abuser threatened to kill the victim in the past

Finding Help

The Assaulted Women's Helpline at **1-866-863-0511** offers a 24-hour telephone and TTY **1-866-863-7868** crisis line for abused women in Ontario. The service is anonymous and confidential and is provided in up to 154 languages. Local services are available in most communities.

Helpline staff can support you in helping the abused woman or abusive man. They will discuss the warning signs of abuse you have seen and give you practical advice on ways to help.

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2. http://www.buffalonews.com/cityregion/story/602683.html.
3. http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0707/
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Part II
Manual – Practices
Working Group Discussions

We must be or become, curious. The idea of sharing obviously implies that of meeting, but also that of equality. Whilst believing with our hearts and minds in the greatness of our truth, we must recognize with our reason and in our hearts the legitimacy and contribution of the truths and values of others.

Tariq Ramadan, The Quest for Meaning (24)

This section of the manual includes content for discussions that are intended for workshops in which the challenges of addressing domestic violence within Canadian Muslim communities can be explored. The goal is to create a safe space for dialogue and reflections about the different perspectives and responses towards domestic violence within Muslim communities through:

1. Demonstrate statements mentioned in part I and discuss

   ▪ This group will be mixed group from both mainstream as well as members of trainees from the Muslim community

   ▪ The diverse group will help learn from one another

2. Demonstrate some case scenarios that reflect the complexity of domestic violence cases in Muslim families and talk about best ways to response to them.

   • One group will be non-Muslim service providers

   • Another or other groups will be from the Muslim community

   • This will help in highlighting the possible different strategies to response to these case scenarios

   • Both groups will report to the larger group about their response to the cases

   • Facilitators will point to places of difference and also of congruence as the groups report back

In the following you will find the main statements to be discussed and the case scenarios

Domestic Violence: Facts and Myths:

Statements:

- Women are as abusive as men
- Domestic violence doesn't have a serious impact on children who witness it
- Men who don't believe in gender equality are most likely to abuse their wives
- Abused children are more likely to act abusively in their future life.

Questions:

1. What do you think about the above statements?

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2. Why do you think some people would believe in these statements?

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3. How would you response to these statements?

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Criminal Justice System Response Towards Domestic Violence

Statements:

- Police should not be involved in domestic violence situations
- The justice system is biased against men
- Children should not testify against their parents for domestic violence allegations
- If a child witnesses domestic violence he or she should not be removed from home
- Men who are involved in abusive behaviour should get treatment
- The justice system could be biased toward Muslim men involved with domestic violence

Questions:

4.   What do you think about the statements?

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5.   Why do you think some people would believe in these statements?

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6.   How would you response to these kind of statements?

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Domestic Violence within Canadian Muslim families

Statements:

- The more a man is religious the more he would be violent towards his wife
- The more a woman is liberal in her outside look, wearing cloths..etc, the higher she put herself in violent risks
- Wearing hijab or niqab is a sign of women oppression
- Women who ask for outside help putting a Muslim family and community at risk
- The virginity of a Muslim girl reflects the honour of the family
- Girls should be treated differently because their negative behaviour will impact the honour of the whole family
- There is no proof in Islam and particularly in the holly Qur'an that talk about of honour killing due to women committing adultery

Questions:

7.   What do you think about the statements?

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8.   Why do you think some people would believe in these statements?

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9.   How would you response to the people who believe in these statements?

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