

## ETHNICITY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**“My fear of losing custody of my children, deportation or loss of residency status makes me stay in abusive relationships for years”.**

*(Connecting Voices, 2007)*

### Prevalence

- ❖ Significant data gaps exist regarding the prevalence of violence experienced by immigrant and visible minority women.
- ❖ According to General Social Survey data, approximately 11% of immigrant and visible minority women experience emotional or financial violence, and 4% experience physical or sexual violence.

### Who are the Perpetrators?

- ❖ Approximately 52% of violent incidents committed against visible minorities are perpetrated by a family member, friend, or acquaintance. Conversely, 48% of violent offences are perpetrated by a stranger.
- ❖ Approximately 70% of reported violent incidents committed against visible minorities occur within a public place. Only 24% of reported violent incidents occur within the home.

### Social and Economic Barriers

- ❖ Immigrant and refugee women who experience violence face many unique social and economic barriers to accessing services. Some of these barriers include:
  - Most immigrant communities still view wife assault as a taboo;
  - Inability to communicate in Canada's national languages;
  - Unaware of their rights in Canada;
  - Unaware of how law enforcement and court systems operate;
  - Fear of deportation by immigration authorities if they report violence;
  - Unavailability of interpreters when violence is reported. Often information is gathered by law enforcement officials through conversations with the abusive partner. This may lead to distortions in relevant case information;
  - Unaware that they are eligible for child support and other state financial assistance if they leave the abusive relationship;
  - Lack of social networks which could have a profound impact on self-esteem.

## Hate Crime

- ❖ In Canada, race and ethnicity is the most common motivation for committing a hate crime.
- ❖ In 2006, approximately 56% of all hate crimes reported to police were motivated by race and ethnicity.
- ❖ Approximately 81% of these police reported hate crimes were committed against racial and ethnic minorities.
- ❖ Approximately half of these racially motivated hate crimes were property related offences and 38% were violent crimes.

---

Dauvergne, M., Scrim, K., Brennan, S. (2008). *Hate Crime in Canada 2006*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

Sarma-Debnath, K. (2007). *A Second Look at Family Violence: Immigrants and Refugee Women in Newfoundland and Labrador*. Connecting Voices, Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers 11(1):18-19.

Smith, E. (2004). *Nowhere to Turn?: Responding to Partner Violence Against Immigrant and Visible Minority Women*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Statistics Canada. (2008). *A Profile of Visible Minorities in Canada*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.

Statistics Canada. (2008). *Racially-motivated Incidents More Common*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.