

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.

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