

Gender-Based Violence Awareness During COVID-19

for Service Providers working with Newcomers, Immigrants & Refugees

Welcome & Introductions Webinar #1

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Agenda

- ✓ Thanks for joining us
- ✓ Review objectives
- ✓ Self-care ice-breaker
- ✓ COVID-19 Impacts
- ✓ Definitions & examples of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGVB)
- ✓ Risks & Barriers impacting newcomers, immigrants and refugees
- ✓ Intersectional, anti-oppressive, trauma-informed, culturally safe approaches
- ✓ Strategies for safety
- ✓ Resources & additional training



How can front-line workers in settlement and anti-violence be aware of the risks of violence and increase safety for clients?

In this webinar today , we will cover the basics of understanding, identifying and responding to GBV, as well as strategies for increasing safety especially during COVID-19.

Coming soon Webinar 2 May 29th

GBV-COVID-19 & working with newcomers, immigrants and refugees: Provide practical tools and resources about **risk assessment, safety planning** and the **cycle of violence**.



Objectives of Webinar 1

May 22nd



Identify Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGVB) and the impacts for safety of newcomers, immigrants and refugees during **COVID-19**



Explain **risk factors** and **barriers** to accessing services



Use **approaches** that are culturally responsive, anti-oppressive and that recognize intersectionality



Apply **practical strategies** for increasing safety for ALL individuals and families that may be at risk of GBV including children, 2SLGBTQQIA+, and other diverse families.



What Do You Do For Self-Care?

Ice-breaker



Self-care can be used as a preventative measure to avoid burnout and compassion fatigue



Compassion fatigue is a sense of hopelessness about the possibilities to make change for an individual or communities



Burnout results from stresses in the work environment and its impacts can be serious



COVID-19 Impacts

- Isolation
- Sheltering at home
- Stress
- Disruption of regular routines
- Borders are closed/no one can travel
- The Health Care system is stretched
- Many parts of the economy are impacted



COVID-19 Impacts

The realities and the conditions of this pandemic are affecting people on multiple levels:



Mentally-worries about self and others



Physically-restrictions on movement and gatherings



Emotionally- fear of contracting the virus



Financially-job loss or change



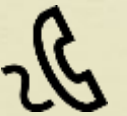
COVID-19 & Gender-Based Violence



Historical increase in rates of gender-based violence associated with disasters and crises



Emerging data from other parts of the world about increases in GBV



Increases and decreases to crisis lines, shelters, and sexual assault centres



Potential for sharp increase in demand when things get back to “normal”



What is Gender-Based Violence (GBV)?

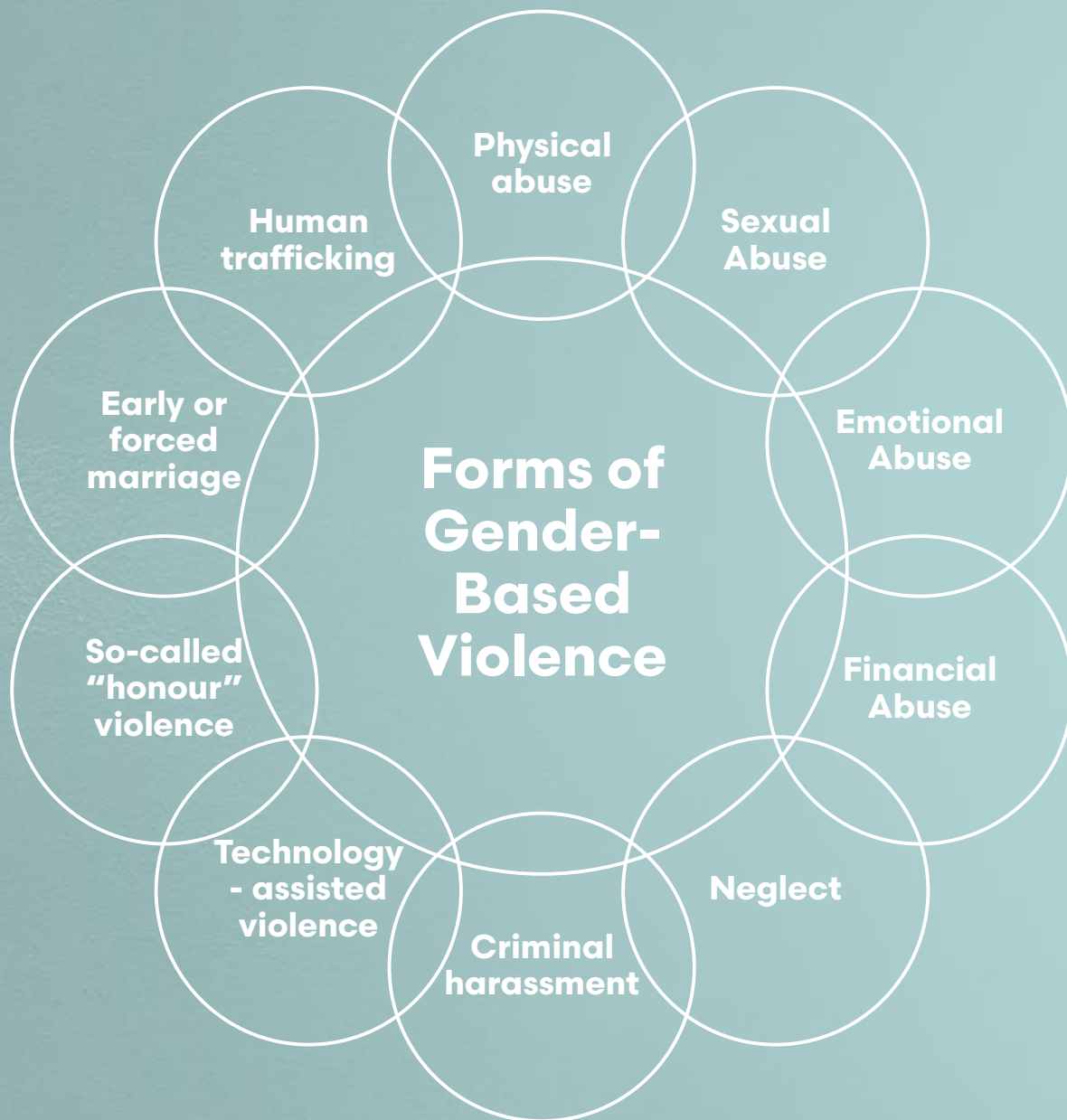
Gender-based violence ([GBV](#)) is violence that is committed against someone based on their gender identity, gender expression or perceived gender.

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) refers to any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships. It encompasses threats of violence and coercion.

United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR](#)

**GBV is not unique to any community
but rather affects all communities.**





GBV disproportionately impacts women & girls globally

Violence against women – particularly intimate partner violence and sexual violence – is a major public health problem and a violation of women's human rights:

- Global estimates published by the World Health Organization (WHO) indicate that about **1 in 3** (35%) of women [worldwide](#) have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.
- One **woman or girl** is killed every other day on [average](#) in Canada. About once a week, a woman is killed by her male partner **in Canada**.
- In a [single day in 2019](#), over **1800 women** and **1500 children** were staying in **shelters or transition houses**.



How Does COVID-19 Increase Risk for GBV?

- Isolation at home for long periods of time
- Breakdown of normal routines
- Stress associated with job loss or financial insecurity
- Loss of a sense of control and general uncertainty about what's next
- Staying connected to safe family, friends, or neighbours may be much more difficult
- Accessing services, such as a crisis line or counselling, more difficult if there is no privacy in the home or an abusive partner is controlling access to phone or technology
- Fewer options for simply getting out of the house when increased risk exists



How Does COVID-19 Increase Risk for GBV?

"You don't have your normal safe places. If you used to visit your parents, if you used to go out, we know your normal relief activities have been very strictly curtailed."

"The odds are stacked against victims of violence. This is absolutely a recipe for disaster."

Shiva Nourpanah

Transition House of NS regarding the first domestic homicide in NS during COVID-19



Pause & Check in



Terminology about immigrants and refugees:

Permanent resident – a person granted the right to live permanently in Canada. The person may have come to Canada as an **immigrant** or as a **refugee**.

What is the difference between a refugee and an immigrant? A refugee is forced to flee for their lives. There are convention refugees and asylum seekers. An immigrant chooses to move to another country.

Person without status – a person who has not been granted permission to stay in the country, or who has stayed after their visa has expired. The term can cover a person who falls between the cracks of the system.

Canadian Council for Refugees [CCR](#)



While newcomer women and girls do not report higher rates of GBV, they may be more vulnerable and less likely to report violence because of barriers to accessing services:

- Isolation
- Racism
- Language and cultural barriers
- Economic dependence
- Lack of knowledge about community resources
- Immigration status concerns
- Fear of stigma from their community
- Fear of racism from service providers
- Concern for their family in a new community
- Lack of awareness and accommodation for religious and cultural differences



5 Key Approaches in this work:

1. Intersectionality
2. Anti-oppression
3. Anti-racism
4. Trauma & Violence Informed
5. Cultural Humility & Cultural Safety

- **How** we interact in client-focused ways involves **key approaches** that are essential.
- They are important in working with newcomers, immigrants and refugees because they can reduce barriers, increase our understanding and empathy and promote equity in our services.





1. Intersectionality



Intersectionality is a theory developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, that explains how multiple forces work together and interact to reinforce conditions of inequality, social exclusion, the roots of violence. This occurs because there are intersecting types of oppression.

It is important to recognize that newcomers, immigrants and refugees hold **many intersecting identities** (e.g. sex, gender, education, race/ethnicity, sexuality, ability, religion).



These intersections will greatly impact not only their

- vulnerability to gender-based violence,
- but also their experiences and the system's responses to them (e.g. justice, housing).



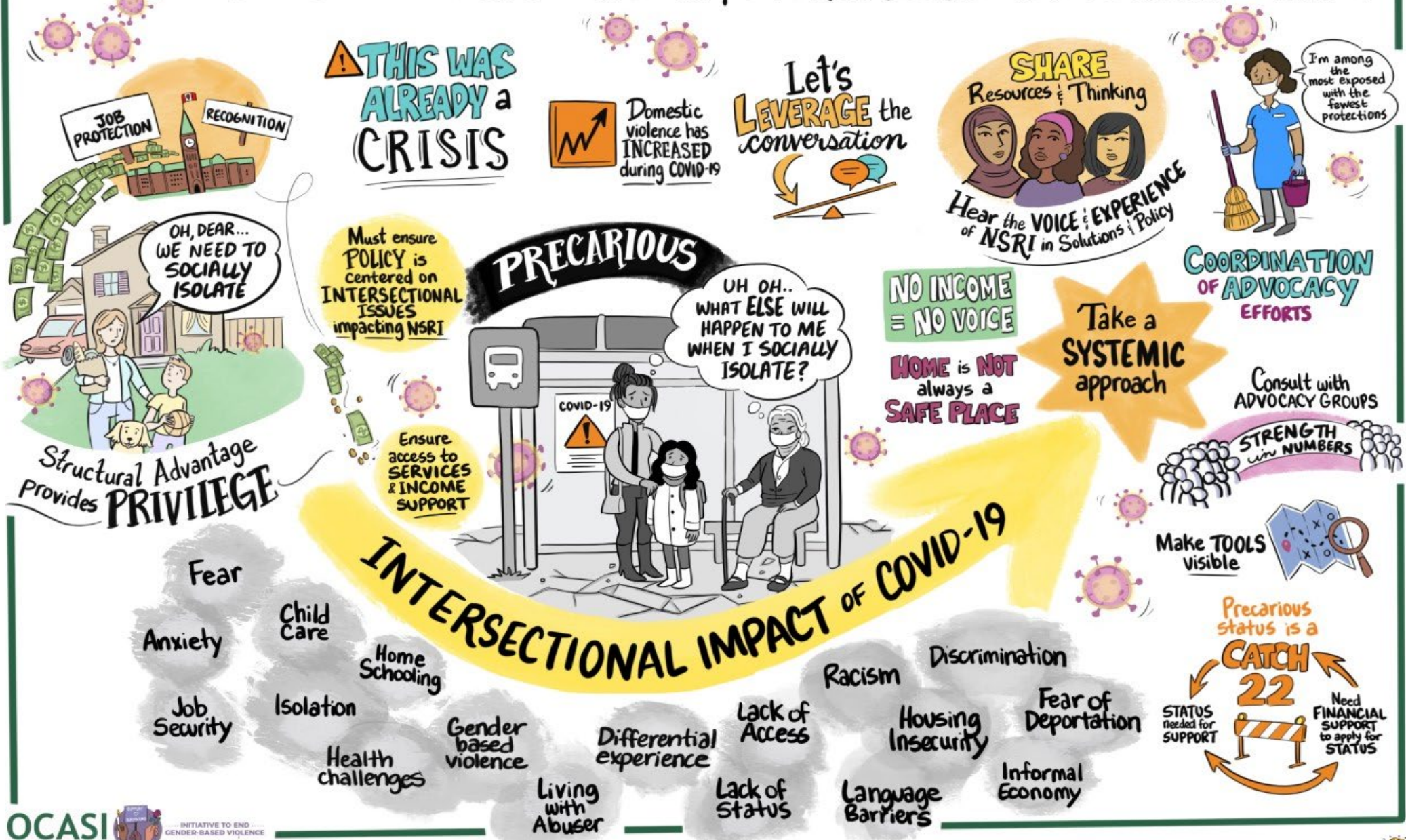
Women and other survivors/victims who are marginalized in multiple ways and who face structural violence by different systems of discrimination have difficulty being believed, accessing support, and finding safety.

APRIL 30 2020

Virtual

NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE on GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

IMPLICATIONS FOR NON-STATUS, REFUGEE & IMMIGRANT (NSRI) WOMEN IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19





2. Anti-Oppression

Anti-Oppression refers to strategies, theories and actions that challenge socially and historically built inequalities and injustices that are ingrained in our systems and institutions by policies and practices that allow certain groups to dominate over other groups.

- **Connects** the causes of personal and social problems to society's broader social and economic structures.
- **Recognizes** the role of societal structures in creating the personal problems that both individuals and marginalized communities face.

Anti-oppression is important for making choices about how to give, share and use power to assist and act in solidarity with people who are marginalized. *Sometimes called Anti AOR*



3. Anti-Racism involves:

- Understanding how race and racism negatively effect racialized peoples at all levels **Interpersonal – Institutional – Systemic**
- Examining power imbalances between racialized and non-racialized peoples
 - including how they offer advantages to those in power
 - (ex. gov't, law, education, private sector-big businesses)
- Developing actions and strategies to eliminate or address racism.

The COVID-19 Outbreak Has Provoked Social Stigma

The current COVID-19 outbreak has provoked social stigma and discriminatory behaviours against people of certain ethnic backgrounds as well as anyone perceived to have been in contact with the virus.

Social Stigma associated with COVID-19



A guide to preventing and addressing social stigma¹

Target audience: Government, media and local organisations working on the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

WHAT IS SOCIAL STIGMA?

Social stigma in the context of health is the negative association between a person or group of people who share certain characteristics and a specific disease. In an outbreak, this may mean people are labelled, stereotyped, discriminated against, treated separately, and/or experience loss of status because of a perceived link with a disease.

Such treatment can negatively affect those with the disease, as well as their caregivers, family, friends and communities. People who don't have the disease but share other characteristics with this group may also suffer from stigma.

The current COVID-19 outbreak has provoked social stigma and discriminatory behaviours against people of certain ethnic backgrounds as well as anyone perceived to have been in contact with the virus.



WHY IS COVID-19 CAUSING SO MUCH STIGMA?

The level of stigma associated with COVID-19 is based on three main factors: 1) it is a disease that's new and for which there are still many unknowns; 2) we are often afraid of the unknown; and 3) it is easy to associate that fear with 'others'.

It is understandable that there is confusion, anxiety, and fear among the public. Unfortunately, these factors are also fueling harmful stereotypes.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT?

Stigma can undermine social cohesion and prompt possible social isolation of groups, which might contribute to a situation where the virus is more, not less, likely to spread. This can result in more severe health problems and difficulties controlling a disease outbreak.

Specific to COVID-19 Some Communities May Face Increased Discrimination

**For example: Xenophobia and racism against
East Asian community members**

**In response, view this campaign by the
Chinese Canadian National Council for Social
Justice: Stop the [Spread](#)**





4. Trauma & Violence Informed Approaches

Trauma and violence informed approaches are policies and practices that recognize the links between violence and trauma causing negative health outcomes and actions.

Recently this concept has been expanded to include violence informed approaches – to emphasize the connections between trauma and violence

Examples:

Acknowledge causes of trauma without probing. Clients do not need to disclose what may have happened to them for you to help them.

Communicate in non-judgemental ways so that people feel deserving, understood, recognized and accepted.

Pay attention to welcoming intake procedures and signage, comfortable physical space, consideration of confidentiality. These can be communicated during COVID-19 in on-line conversations through opening with-what clients can expect in terms of confidentiality, their rights and inclusion for example: accessibility and 2SLGBTQQIA+ positivity.

These approaches increase wellbeing, control and resilience for people who are looking for services related to experiences of violence or have past experiences of violence.



The Triple Trauma Paradigm

Describes the three phases of traumatic stress during the migration process often but not exclusively experienced by refugees and asylum seekers. (Congress & Gonzalez, 2013)



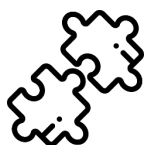
The Pre-Flight

Disruption, secrecy, fear, traumatic events



Flight

Food insecurity, separation, lack of trust



Resettlement

Cultural isolation, loss of status,
limited social support



5. Cultural Humility & Cultural Safety

Cultural Humility involves a process of **education** and **self-reflection** to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience.

"Culturally safe approaches are those that recognize and challenge unequal power relations between service providers and survivors by building equitable, two-way relationships characterized by respect, shared responsibility, and cultural exchange. Survivors must have their culture, values and preferences taken into account in the provision of services"

SOURCE: Government of Canada (2017). "It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender Based Violence- Fact Sheets."

Centering the client means understanding culture:





Quick Review

5 Key Approaches

1. Intersectionality
2. Anti-_____
3. Anti-_____
4. _____ & Violence Informed
5. Cultural _____



Working with Newcomers, Immigrants & Refugees

The immigration status of individuals, their life experiences, and their reasons for coming to Canada make each situation and person unique.

There are some common challenges and barriers that are experienced through the immigration process that are the basis for many settlement services.

It is important to recognize that newcomers, immigrants and refugees hold **many intersecting identities** (e.g. sex, gender, education, race/ethnicity, sexuality, ability, religion).

Settlement & GBV:

- Provide information and orientation as part of settlement. Have significant connection to and engagement with newcomer populations .
- Need to be informed of GBV services and resources to help navigate and bridge.
- Can be conversation starters about this subject.
- Interact with multiple sectors in the community (health, housing, education, legal) and, at the same time all these sectors engage with newcomers.

We all need to work together collaboratively and to be aware of each other's resources, expertise, information and services. Staff need to be alert to crisis needs and be aware of resources in **your community** such as shelters, crisis lines, and emergency services.



Immigration-related Vulnerability

Newcomers and refugees face many of the same types of family and GBV as others. They also face additional types of violence such as immigration-related abuse. Immigration status not only heightens vulnerability to violence but it can also worsen the nature of the violence experienced.

For example:

- **Immigrants** with status can face manipulation by their partner or other family members in ways that are tied to their newcomer experience. For example, they may be prohibited from learning English or French, socializing with others, from working, or having access to community programs and legal information which further isolates them.
- **Non-status individuals** face extreme vulnerabilities as they do not have any legal status. They are more reluctant to call the police as they fear deportation, loss of their children.
- **Refugee-claimants** may not be aware that they can separate their refugee claim from their abusive partner during the refugee process. They may be told by their partners that they can only receive refugee status if they remain in the relationship.



Strategies

Educate Yourself and Others

- ✓ Be aware that you could recognize signs of GBV or receive a **disclosure** at any time especially during COVID-19.
- ✓ Incorporate **GBV awareness** into your regular programming and into your discussions including informal opportunities and within language classes, skills workshops and currently on the phone or on-line.
- ✓ Regularly refer to information related to identifying GBV and **maintain skills** with respect to this issue.
- ✓ Become aware of **abusive behaviours** such as spreading rumors to dishonour the woman/partner or threatening to destroy their passport. (violence may look different)
- ✓ Due to the uncertainty of being in a new country coupled with the possibility of losses experienced throughout the resettlement journey, the victim/survivor may find a sense of security within the relationship and **seek to protect themselves** and children from the risk of future difficulties, hardship, or losses.



Considerations when Responding

- ✓ Use simple, easy to understand **language** to facilitate communication. Do not use jargon, abbreviations or complicated language.
- ✓ Try not to make broad **assumptions**, guess what they want to do in any situation or act like an “expert.”
- ✓ Be **non-judgemental**.
- ✓ Ask about children and their **safety**.
- ✓ **Do not minimize** the signs of GBV even though they might rationalize or normalize the violence.
- ✓ Understand the impact of war on refugee families including, in some cases, that violence has **been normalized**.
- ✓ **Dispel myths** about threats of deportation if they do not stay in the relationship or of not receiving funds except through the main applicant.
- ✓ They may not know what options and resources are available. **Collaborate** with other services including anti-violence, women's rights, justice and health services, 2SLGBTQQIA+ supports and provide resources especially multi-lingual ones.



Considerations when Responding

- ✓ Explain that abuse is not tolerated in Canada (referring to **human rights** laws) and that many forms (ex. threats, physical assaults, sexual offences) are subject to charges under the **Criminal Code** of Canada.
- ✓ Be aware of your own biases regarding what has been witnessed and/or disclosed. Convey **“this isn’t your fault.”**
- ✓ **Be careful** not to give out information without consent (unless deemed necessary) or inform the partner that they are talking with you even if they are in group programming together, for language instruction for example.
- ✓ The victim/survivor may not have family or community support. **Privacy** may be important to prevent stigma and discrimination within their community. They may or may not prefer to seek support from within their cultural community.
- ✓ Provide support and inquire about any **informal connections** they may have through community, family and cultural or faith-based spaces.
- ✓ DO NOT feel as though you need to have all of the answers. **Consult with colleagues** and supervisors about what you are noticing.
- ✓ It is important that service providers continue to provide **critical GBV supports** and to connect individuals with the necessary community resources during COVID-19 as they are deemed essential.



Referrals

- ✓ Explain resources available & provide written information in **preferred language** when possible and have an interpreter available when necessary to assist with information sharing.
- ✓ Request written **consent** (disclosure of information) to speak/refer to external organizations.
- ✓ Help to make a **safety plan** and obtain the assistance of a women's/intimate partner violence organization.
- ✓ If required, research more information about immigration status and ability to stay in the country. There are specific clinics and supports for **rights of those without status** to offer more support and information.
- ✓ Help with access to financial and other resources that might be **beneficial** ex. Income assistance, social services. Offer information about other resources that will increase self-sufficiency such as: language, employment, driver's education.
- ✓ Call ahead to any referral, to ensure services are still available and **accessible**.
- ✓ Make a referral to an organization or specific person when they indicate wanting assistance. **Explain** what will happen at any organizations you refer to and provide context/background information. Accept that they might not agree to access other services that have been discussed.
- ✓ Support them in making their own decisions and provide clear information about existing resources. **Follow up.**



In a Crisis

As mentioned, in our next webinar we will be getting into more specifics around risk assessment and safety planning however if there is a potential crisis or immediate danger these are some important things to know:

If a client is in crisis, there are 24/7 telephone supports available in different provinces and communities. If they are in immediate danger or have a medical emergency, call 9-1-1. **Fire/Ambulance/Police**

Convincing them to leave isn't always the best.

Come up with a safety plan and resource connections they can use. Domestic violence is complex and risk of harm often increases when the survivor leaves without a plan.

Suggest they have a friend or neighbor they can signal with a code word. Choose and agree on a random code word like "pen," or a hand signal to let them know you are in danger and to call the police.

Suggest they have a "go," bag In case they need to leave in a hurry to find safety, pack a go bag; include clothing, spare keys, list of prescriptions, copies of important documents and other items needed if unable to return home.

Encourage De-escalation

Try to avoid getting into arguments, have specific reasons to leave the house if needed.

For anyone who may know or be concerned about someone who is at risk of violence, you too can play an important role in keeping others safe. Check in on someone you're worried about by phone or **virtually** rather than simply through text.

adapted from: <http://elmwoodcrc.ca/>


COVID-19 Social Isolation and Sheltering at Home

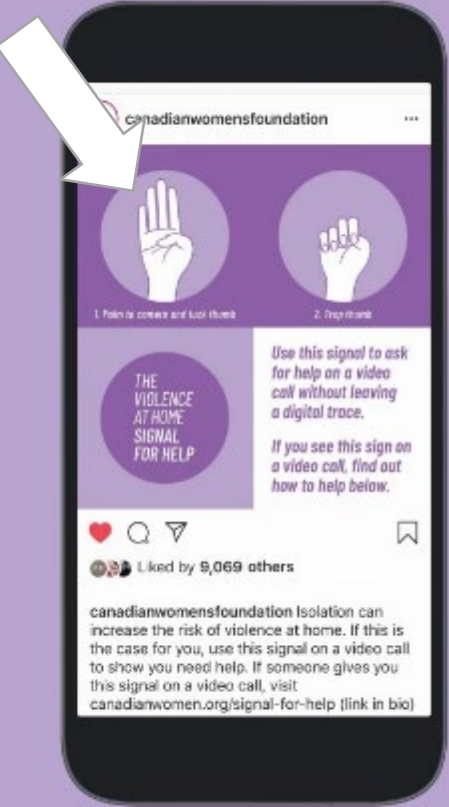
Many supports, including settlement services have moved to **on-line programming and using platforms** for offering services remotely. GBV awareness of staff in the COVID-19 context can be part of program planning, conversations to check in and information sessions.

Canadian Women's Foundation

THE VIOLENCE AT HOME SIGNAL FOR HELP

A way for those who are at risk of violence at home to video call for help without leaving a digital trace.





canadianwomensfoundation

1. Hold it across and lock thumb
2. Drop thumb

THE VIOLENCE AT HOME SIGNAL FOR HELP

Use this signal to ask for help on a video call without leaving a digital trace.

If you see this sign on a video call, find out how to help below.

Liked by 9,069 others

canadianwomensfoundation Isolation can increase the risk of violence at home. If this is the case for you, use this signal on a video call to show you need help. If someone gives you this signal on a video call, visit canadianwomensfoundation.org/signal-for-help (link in bio)

www.knowabuse.ca

Tip Sheet

How to respond if someone tells you they are living with abuse during the pandemic.


✓ Do	✗ Don't
Believe them. Tell them that you believe them.	Don't ask them to "prove" it.
Tell them it is not their fault. Let them know that the abuse is not their fault in any way.	Don't blame them in any way or make excuses for the abuser.
Ask them how you can help. Remember that the person who is living with abuse is the expert on their own life. They are in charge of deciding what steps to take next. Your job is to offer support and support their decisions.	Don't boss them around or try to control them. Do not go against their wishes or pressure them to leave the relationship.
Let them know about support services. Let them know about support services that are available. Remember that not everyone will be/feel safe or comfortable with the police.	Don't pressure or force them to use the support services. Don't pressure them to call the police.

page 1 of 2

If you are living with abuse, you can reach out to me.

I will do my best to support you & connect you with resources.

www.knowabuse.ca




Even as we are social distancing, there is **#NoExcuseForAbuse**.

#NoExcuseForAbuse

If you are living with abuse during self-isolation, you can reach out to me.

I will do my best to support you & connect you with resources.

www.knowabuse.ca



#NoExcuseForAbuse Zoom Backgrounds & Social Media Images

Engaging Men and Boys is an Important Strategy

Many settlement organizations and other community organizations offer Gender-based programming. This is an opportunity for groups to come together and share their experiences, thoughts and feelings with each other in a safer space.

Some discussion groups have moved on line during COVID-19

Men's Action Project (MAP)

Join our weekly **online** sessions for guys on Facebook with Ala! Talk about different topics related to Gender-Based Violence Prevention.

Ages 13-18 Mondays at 4:30

Ages 18-25 Tuesdays at 4:30



Contact **Ala At Work** on Facebook or Instagram to join!



Funded by:

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Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

Engaging Men & Boys:

There are many positive examples of engagement with men and boys in organizations that welcome newcomers, immigrants and refugees.

Engaging men can help create more awareness about creating safer communities and opportunities to do so.

Men can play a key role in the solution to GBV Prevention.

“Young Men Leading Change challenges racist stereotypes that men of colour are more aggressive and violent than others. We honour the ways that racialized communities resist oppression and offer young racialized men support as they become allies in preventing GBV and grow as leaders in community safety.”

[Manifest](#)



Coming soon Webinar 2

May 29th

GBV-COVID-19 & working with newcomers, immigrants and refugees:

Provide information about **risk assessment**, **safety planning** and the **cycle of violence**



**Please join us
for project updates, resources & discussion:**

Staff Network on GBV
@settnet.org



Resources

Crisis Intervention

www.sheltersafe.ca this provides a map that has all the shelters and transition houses
<https://endingviolencecanada.org/getting-help/> EVA Canada's Getting Help
<https://www.crisisservicescanada.ca/en/> National Suicide Prevention/crisis support
<http://211.ca/> 2-1-1 is Canada's primary source of information on government and community based health and social services. Available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, in over 150 languages. 211 recognizes the diverse needs of Canadians and provides specialized support for a number of different key communities including Indigenous Peoples, newcomers and 2SLGBTQQIA+ and is available by phone, chat, website and text in different regions.

<https://kidshelpphone.ca/> 1-800-668-6868 PHONE OR TEXT CONNECT TO 686868
Kids Help Phone is available to help address the well-being and mental health of newcomer children and youth through culturally responsive, immediate health services free of charge 24/7.

NEWCOMERS AND THEIR DEPENDENT CHILDREN WHO ARE IN CANADA AND EXPERIENCING FAMILY VIOLENCE CAN APPLY FOR A FEE-EXEMPT **TEMPORARY RESIDENT PERMIT (TRP)**, WHICH GIVES THEM LEGAL IMMIGRATION STATUS IN CANADA. AN EXPEDITED PROCESS EXISTS FOR THOSE IN URGENT SITUATIONS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE WHO APPLY FOR PERMANENT RESIDENCE ON HUMANITARIAN AND COMPASSIONATE GROUNDS:

[HTTPS://WWW.CANADA.CA/EN/IMMIGRATION-REFUGEES-CITIZENSHIP/CORPORATE/PUBLICATIONS-MANUALS/OPERATIONAL-BULLETINS-MANUALS/TEMPORARY-RESIDENTS/PERMITS/FAMILY-VIOLENCE.HTML](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/temporary-residents/permits/family-violence.html)

[HTTPS://WWW.CANADA.CA/EN/IMMIGRATION-REFUGEES-CITIZENSHIP/SERVICES/IMMIGRATE-CANADA/FAMILY-SPONSORSHIP/ABUSE.HTML](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/family-sponsorship/abuse.html)



Resources

Public Health Agency of Canada: Stop Family Violence site offers a wealth of guides and resources for professionals:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/stop-family-violence.html>

Women & Gender Equality-WAGE

<https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/violence/knowledge-connaissance/index-en.html>

For information about technology and digital services:

<https://bcsth.ca/digitalservices/>

For information about safety planning:

<https://www.immigrantandrefugeenff.ca/need-help/safety-planning>

For information about culturally informed risk & safety

<http://cdhpi.ca/domestic-homicide-immigrant-and-refugee-populations>

Engaging Men & Boys

<https://preventdomesticviolence.ca/our-work/men-and-boys/>

<https://www.manifestchange.ca/young-men-leading-change>

<https://www.whiteribbon.ca/>

<http://www.ymcahfx.ca/gbvp/>



THANK YOU!

