

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

"Family violence" includes many different forms of **ABUSE** that adults or children may experience in their intimate, kinship or dependent relationships. Family violence also includes being mistreated or being neglected.

**Family violence is against the law in Canada. An abuser can be charged with an applicable offence.**

### **Some common types of family violence are:**

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse and exploitation (being used for a sexual purpose)
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Economic or financial abuse
- Neglect

### **Criminal charges could include:**

- Criminal harassment (sometimes called "stalking")
- Uttering threats
- Assault causing bodily harm
- Sexual assault
- Forceful confinement
- Intimidation
- Murder, Attempted murder, Infanticide

For detailed information, please refer to the Justice Canada website at:

<http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/fv-vf/about-appro/index.html>

**"If I had only known..."**

## **Sisters Speaking to Sisters About Family Violence**



*This brochure was developed by the Afghan community for the Afghan community through working group and focus group discussions. These groups were comprised of community leaders and scholars, survivors of family violence, perpetrators, settlement workers, violence against women workers and law enforcement officers. Information for this brochure was also obtained from the Justice Canada as well as other relevant websites.*

**Disclaimer:** This publication contains general information only. It is not a substitute for getting legal advice about your particular situation.

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## Resources

Ask for a Pashto/Dari/Farsi interpreter to assist you with these resources

**Assaulted Women's Helpline**  
1-866-863-0511

**National Sexual Assault Hotline**  
1-800-656-4673

**Crisis Helplines and Shelter Referrals**  
[www.shelternet.ca](http://www.shelternet.ca)

Here you can find out how to make a safety plan, what documents and items to take with you, how to protect yourself and your children if you need to leave, and what resources are available in your community. *(available in Farsi)*

**Information about abuse**  
[www.justice.gc.ca](http://www.justice.gc.ca) under ***Abuse is Wrong in Any Language*** and ***Stalking is a crime called criminal harassment***

**Information for newcomers to Ontario**  
[www.settlement.org](http://www.settlement.org)

**CLEO**  
Community Legal Education Ontario  
[www.cleo.on.ca](http://www.cleo.on.ca) / 416-408-4420  
Community legal clinic that produces material in different languages

**Legal Services Society in British Columbia**  
[www.lss.bc.ca](http://www.lss.bc.ca)  
Legal information for battered women



**What to do if you are in an abusive situation or you are in danger of being abused?**

**Talk to someone you trust**

Your doctor  
ESL teacher  
Your welfare worker  
A friend  
The leader of your local place of worship  
A relative  
A neighbour

**If you are in immediate danger**

Dial "911" for police assistance and say "HELP"

Say the name of your language and they can connect you with an interpreter.

*(If you are using a cell phone, you must tell the person who answers your call where you are)*

**OR**

*Go to a place where you feel safe, like a Public Library or a store, and ask for help.*

## Women's Rights

Under Canadian law, women have the same legal status, rights and opportunities as men. Violence against women is against the law. Women who are abused can seek temporary residence for themselves and their children in local shelters. They are also entitled to legal protection to keep them safe.

A woman leaving an abusive marriage can qualify for government funded financial assistance. If the abuser is not a Canadian citizen, a criminal conviction can lead to the abuser being removed from Canada.

Immigrant, refugee or non-status women have the same rights and responsibilities as Canadian-born women under family law. You can bring a claim for custody, access, child and spousal support to the court. If you choose to separate, you can ask the court to award you a share in your family's property on separation.  
<http://www.onefamilylaw.ca/en/familylawissues/>

If you are a citizen, permanent resident or landed immigrant, you cannot be removed from Canada for leaving an abusive situation, even if you were sponsored by the person who is abusing you. If you have temporary status or do not have status, you should contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada or a lawyer because you may be able to apply for permanent residence. You have the right to privacy when dealing with officials.

- Does your partner threaten to take your children back home?
- Does your partner or a family member threaten to have you deported?
- Does your partner threaten to divorce you or commit suicide?
- Does your partner threaten to harm your family members or relatives?
- Does your partner or a family member shift the responsibility for their abusive behavior by saying that you caused or provoked him?
- Does your partner use male privileges to make all the decisions in the family?
- Are you being treated like a servant?
- Does your partner put culture ahead of the Canadian laws?
- Do the male members of your family support forced or unwanted marriages?
- Does your partner use the children against you by telling them lies?
- Does your partner make you feel guilty about the children's mistakes or shortfalls at school

**If you are experiencing some or most of the above behavior from your partner, it may be a sign that your relationship may become abusive.**

**Being abused is not your fault.  
You did not cause the abuse.**

## Abuse of Women

Abuse of women is a form of Family Violence that is any verbal threat or physical force used to create fear and control over a woman. Abuse of women may happen at any stage of a relationship to any woman, whether she is single, married, rich, poor, professional, full-time mother, young, or old. It happens to women of all backgrounds, religions, races, cultures and ethnic origins.

Early Warning Signs of Women Abuse

- Are you being beaten, slapped, pushed, choked, burned, kicked, assaulted with a weapon, and/or locked up?
- Are you being stalked and/or are your relatives being forced to give out information about you?
- Are you being forced to have sex or touched inappropriately?
- Are you being yelled at, criticized, mistreated, and humiliated, especially in front of others?
- Are you being controlled and isolated by your partner or other family members based on cultural context?
- Are your emails and mail being checked, and phone calls screened against your will?
- Are you being denied access to financial resources?
- Are you being stopped from sending money overseas to relatives?
- Are you being threatened to have your refugee claim, landed immigrant, or sponsorship process stopped?