

If you are in immediate danger:

- 1) Dial "911" for police assistance. Say the name of your language and they can connect you with an interpreter or say "HELP."
- 2) Go to a place where you feel safe, like a public library, your neighbour's home or your local place of worship.
- 3) Talk to someone you trust, such as your doctor, ESL teacher, your welfare worker, a friend, a relative, a neighbour or your community worker.

Resources: Ask for a Punjabi interpreter to assist you with these resources:

Legal Services Society of British Columbia
1-866-577-2525 www.lss.bc.ca

National Center for Victims of Crime Stalking Resource Centre
1-800-394-2255

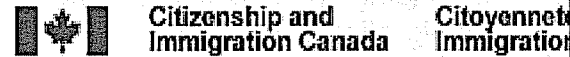
National Sexual Assault Hotline
1-800-656-4673

National Suicide Prevention Line
1-800-273-8255

Shelternet for Abused Women
1-866-693-3318 www.shelternet.ca
Shelternet is Canada's first and only national online resource and support network for abused women, their children and the local shelters that serve them.

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

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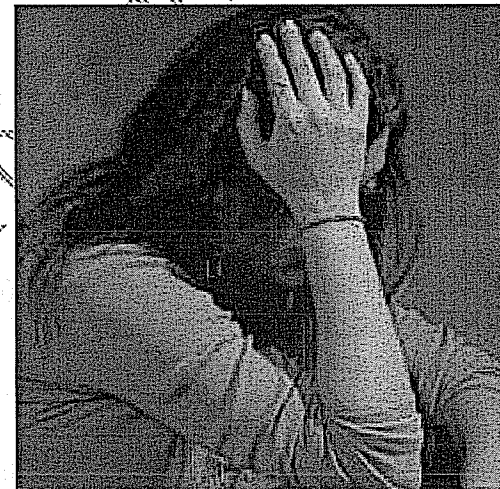


Family Service Toronto would like to thank Punjabi Community Health Services in Brampton Ontario for their work as our Community Partner.



"If I had only known before..."

Sisters Speaking to Sisters about Family Violence



This brochure provides you with information and resources to prevent family violence against women. This brochure was developed by the Punjabi community for the Punjabi community through working groups and focus group discussions and through information from the Justice Canada website.

Is this happening to you?

Are you being hit, slapped or pushed?

Are you prohibited from communicating with parents and friends?

Are you being forced to marry someone against your will?

Are you being forced to abort, give away or harm your child (if she is a girl)?

Are you insulted in front of your children and extended family members?

Do you have access to household income?

Are you being forced to have sex?

If you are experiencing any of these behaviours, you are advised to seek assistance because you might be abused or in danger of becoming abused.

This brochure contains important information about ABUSE and what you can do to protect yourself or how to seek help.

What does the Canadian Government say about Family Violence?

"Family violence" includes many different forms of abuse that adults or children may experience in their home environment. Abuse is when one person uses his or her power to control another person.

Victims of violence have the right to call the police if they are experiencing abuse. In some cases, once the police become involved in the matter, the victim may not be able to stop the investigation, withdraw the charges, or end court proceedings. The police could arrest, detain, and charge the abuser with a criminal offense.

An abuser can be charged with:

- Assault
- Assault causing bodily harm
- Sexual assault
- Sexual assault causing bodily harm
- Sexual assault with a weapon
- Criminal harassment (sometimes called "stalking")
- Uttering threats
- Mischief
- Intimidation
- Violation of a protective court order, such as a peace bond or a probation order
- Attempted murder
- Murder

Forms of Abuse:

Physical Abuse:

- Beating, hitting, rough handling
- Shaking, slapping, pushing
- Choking, biting, kicking
- Burning (i.e. throwing acid on your face and/or body)
- Forcible confinement

Emotional and Psychological Abuse:

- Degrading you in front of others
- Blaming you for not giving birth to a boy
- Using criticism, verbal threats and intimidation
- Telling you that you lost your cultural beliefs and are "western"
- Threatening to deport you back to your country of origin
- Threatening to take your children away
- Manipulating children into treating you disrespectfully
- Yelling at and harassing the children in order to hurt you

Sexual Abuse:

- Forcing you to have sex
- Controlling your reproductive system and decisions related to your fertility (i.e. having an abortion if the fetus is a girl; not allowing you to use birth control and/or decide if you want children)

Isolation and Neglect:

- Controlling what you do, who you see and what you read
- Preventing or limiting you from basic social contact with friends and family
- Screening and tracing your mail, emails and telephone conversations
- Following you around because he is suspicious of you
- Controlling access to your belongings (financial, legal and immigration documents)
- Refusing to assist you with accessing medical attention

Economic and Financial Abuse:

- Not allowing you to have your choice of employment
- Not having input into financial matters
- Selling your jewellery and/or other valuables against your will
- Exploiting and/or harassing your family members for dowry, to meet the demands of your in-laws.

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

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

Women's Rights

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Immigrant, refugee, refugee claimants 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/>
4. 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.