

**An Assessment of the Service Delivery Needs of  
Abused Immigrant Women in Kingston**

By

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Domestic abuse is an issue that is becoming increasingly recognized in Canada. However, government and service providers repeatedly fail to recognize the needs of different groups of women who are abused. One of these groups is immigrant women. This study seeks to assess and understand how services may or may not meet the needs of immigrant women in the city of Kingston. Specifically, it identifies and assesses service responses to abused immigrant women and provides recommendations on how to improve services for abused immigrant women.

The research method is qualitative. A literature review was carried out to develop an understanding of the issues found in previous research on domestic abuse and immigrant women. In addition, one-on-one interviews with nine key informants from were carried out. The key informants are staff of various service providers whose agencies may have direct contact with abused immigrant women. The agencies included in this needs assessment are as follows:

- Dawn House
- North Kingston Community Health Centre
- Kingston Sexual Assault Crisis Centre
- Kingston Community Counselling Centre
- Kingston and District Immigrant Services
- Queen's University, Health, Counselling and Disability: Student Counselling
- Interval House
- Kingston Police Force

An analysis of interview data was carried out and integrated with the findings from the literature review. The interview findings demonstrate a strong trend to providing services using a client-based empowerment approach. This model allows services to take a fluid and flexible approach, which promotes understanding an immigrant woman's needs, values and culture when designing a service or counselling response. However, service

providers were not always able to identify issues such as some immigrant women's collectivist orientation as affecting their decision making and healing processes.

Service providers identified a number of challenges immigrant women may experience in dealing with domestic violence, as well as barriers to service provision. Many of the challenges and barriers that were identified appeared to be linked to the types of services that the agencies provide. Barriers include issues such as language, isolation, economic concerns, immigration status and the legal system. Service providers also described the need for more culturally sensitive services, programming specific to immigrant women, input by immigrant women in service design, more funding, appropriate therapy models, educating service providers, etc.

Because Kingston is a small community, service providers are well-informed of the various types of services the city has to offer. In addition, both formal and informal collaboration takes place through a variety of channels. This is particularly effective as all of the agencies provide a unique type of service, thereby reducing duplication and increasing efficiency of service provision.

To improve services for abused immigrant women, the following recommendations are made:

1. Improve outreach into immigrant communities.
2. Create an inter-agency position for a follow-up and outreach worker.
3. Carry out workshops with agency staff on delivering services to abused immigrant women.
4. Build upon inter-agency collaboration.
5. Include immigrant women's input in the planning process.

6. Increase funding for providing services to abused immigrant women.
7. Develop a therapy model for abused immigrant women for service providers in Kingston.
8. Include special programs for abused immigrant women as part of agencies' service provision packages.
9. Develop indicators to allow agencies to evaluate how effectively they are providing services to abused immigrant women.
10. Increase public education about domestic abuse and immigrant women.