
Why promoting **HEALTHY FAMILIES** makes sense in **IMMIGRANT and refugee COMMUNITIES**

**Neighbours, Friends
And Families Immigrant
And Refugee Communities
Campaign In Hamilton**



IWC | IMMIGRANTS
WORKING CENTRE



Neighbours, Friends & Families
Immigrant & Refugee Communities



What is the Neighbours, Friends and Families Immigrant and Refugee Communities Campaign?

NFF is a public education campaign to raise awareness about the signs of violence against women so that people close to an at-risk woman or abusive man can help them change their situation for the better.

The NFF Campaign works to achieve:

- Increased public **awareness** of the warning signs and risk factors for violence against women.
- Increased **knowledge** about available resources for violence against women.
- Increased **confidence** for community members to offer support and make referrals.

People can experience violence no matter their age, religion, gender, race, marital or immigration status. However, **immigrant and refugee women can experience violence in distinct ways** which must be acknowledged and addressed.

Hamilton Urban Core

has been providing leadership for the Neighbours, Friends and Families Immigrant and Refugee Communities Campaign in **Hamilton, Ontario** since 2009. **The Centre identified best practices for addressing violence against women in immigrant and refugee communities, and recognized that diverse communities must be at the centre of the campaign.**

The 2014-2015 Campaign involved the collaboration of community members, leaders, and organizations serving immigrant and refugee women and their families. The project was based on the knowledge that comprehensive, coordinated, and culturally safe strategies are needed to engage immigrant and refugee women in leadership roles.

The following booklet is for **community organizations** and is **meant to raise awareness** in the sector about **best practices for supporting immigrant and refugee communities** on issues of violence against women. These best practices are laid out by answering the following questions:

- What is **violence against women**?
- What do **healthy families** look like?
- Why is it **important to support immigrant and refugee** communities in Hamilton?
- Why are **culturally safe** approaches needed?
- How can **community initiatives** address violence against women?

WHAT IS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?

Violence against women is the intentional and regular use of tactics to establish and maintain power and control over the thoughts, feelings, beliefs and behaviours of another person.

Violence may be **committed by any member of the family** who has power over another person.

Violence may be **committed against any member of the family**, especially those who are **vulnerable** because of age, race, gender, ability, language, immigration status, or employment status.

Violence against women can have a devastating impact on women and **isolate them from their communities**. It affects not only the female victim, but also her children and partners, other family members, and the community at large.

Types of abuse:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial

WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE



HE... SHE...

puts her down.

is apologetic and makes **excuses for his behavior** or becomes aggressive and angry.

does **all the talking.**

checks up on her all the time, even at work.

is **nervous talking** when he's there.

tries to **suggest he is the victim**/acts depressed.

seems to be sick more often and **misses work.**

tries to keep **friends away from her.**

tries to **cover her bruises.**

acts **as if he owns her.**

makes excuses at the last minute about why she can't meet you or tried to **avoid you on the street.**

acts **like he is superior**/or more **valuable than others** in his home.

seems **sad, lonely, withdrawn** and **afraid.**



1 in 4 incidents of violence against women **is reported to police.**



Hamilton Police Service received **5,769 calls** for service for **domestic violence** in 2009.



Half of women in Canada have **experienced** at least one incident of **physical or sexual violence** since age 16.



Every six days a woman in Canada **is killed by her intimate partner.**

References

Canadian Women's Foundation. (2013). Fact Sheet: Moving on Violence. Retrieved from: <http://www.canadianwomen.org/sites/canadianwomen.org/files/PDF-FactSheet-StopViolence-Jan2013.pdf> / Hamilton Community Foundation. (2012). Women and Girls in Hamilton. Retrieved from: <http://hamiltoncommunityfoundation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/2012-Women-and-Girls-in-Hamilton.pdf> / Hamilton Community Foundation. (n.d.). Vital Signs Report. Retrieved from: http://www.wesley.ca/cmfiles/hamilton_vital_signs_insert.pdf / Neighbours, Friends and Families. (2008). How you can Identify and Help Women at Risk of Abuse.

What do healthy families look like?

The NFF campaign in Hamilton engaged immigrant and refugee communities in discussions around healthy families as a means to address issues of violence against women using language that was culturally safe. **Each individual has their own vision of what a family healthy looks like.** Each individual has also had different experiences with family violence, and they have their own safety concerns and sources of risk.

Generally accepted components of **healthy families:**

- ♥ **Respect**
- ♥ **Communication**
- ♥ **Commitment**
- ♥ **Equality**

Individuals also have **different ideas of what violence against women looks like.** In addition, some individuals may think violence against women is a private matter that should be managed within the family without outside influence. Some individuals may also have less understanding of the **various forms of violence against women**, violence's effects on victims and their children/family, and the fact that **violence against women and children is a crime** in Canada.

Generally accepted components of
unhealthy families:

 **Not trusting** each other;

 **Hiding** important things from each other;

 **Feeling uncomfortable** consulting with each other before making big decisions;

 **Fear** of the other partner; and

 **Control** by one partner over what the other partner does, where they go, and who they see.

Unhealthy families exist in all communities.

The majority of programs and services are based on the values and belief **systems of mainstream Canadian culture and do not reach out to or resonate with a wide range of diverse communities. To address violence against women, services must take a culturally safe approach** to meet the needs of immigrant and refugee communities.



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE COMMUNITIES IN HAMILTON?

Hamilton is the **third destination** of choice for **new immigrants** to Ontario.

More than **24% of Hamilton's population** was born outside of Canada.

Visible minorities are 33.5% of Hamilton's immigrant population, and **6.1% of Hamilton's non-immigrant** population.

16,560 new immigrants from around the world settled in **Hamilton** between 2001 and 2006.



Immigrant and refugee communities can experience several barriers to success in Canada including language, lack of cultural safety, and social isolation.

**PRECARIOUS
IMMIGRATION
status is a legal barrier that can
INCREASE
THE RISK
OF VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN**

and limits their ability to leave and seek supports. Immigrant women are often unaware of the laws that protect them and are discouraged from leaving abusive relationships that could result in jeopardizing their status in Canada.

References

Hamilton Community Foundation. (2012). Women and Girls in Hamilton. Retrieved from: <http://hamiltoncommunityfoundation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/2012-Women-and-Girls-in-Hamilton.pdf>
City of Hamilton. (n.d.). Invest in Hamilton Report. Retrieved from: <http://www.investinhamilton.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/DowntownProfile.pdf>
City of Hamilton. (2013). Hamilton at a Glance: Access and Equity. Retrieved from: <http://www.hamilton.ca/CityDepartments/CorporateServices/AccessEquity/HamiltonAtAGlance.htm>

Cultural safety is crucial to engaging immigrant and refugee communities meaningfully and effectively in violence against women issues.

Cultural safety focuses on the experience of the recipient of care. **It gives people the power to comment on the care they received**, helping service providers build on and reinforce clients' positive experiences.

The **language of healthy families is culturally safe** and **supports immigrant and refugee women to engage with a community issue**

they may not have if approached otherwise.

WHY ARE CULTURALLY SAFE SERVICES IMPORTANT?

The four principles of cultural safety:

- Improving the overall health status and well-being of individuals through **recognizing beliefs and practices**.
- **Recognizing power relationships** between the people who use services and service providers.
- Recognizing and **acknowledging inequities and inequalities**, and addressing historical factors.
- Understanding **the impact** of services and how they are provided **on individuals' culture, histories, and life experiences**.

The following indicators can be used by community programmers when working with and designing programmes for culturally diverse populations. **These indicators can help community organizations analyze their programmes** and ensure programmes are relevant and **welcoming for diverse populations.**

SAFE APPROACHES NEEDED ?

Indicators of cultural un-safety:

- **Denial** of problem or issue;
- **Low utilization** of programs and services;
- **Low compliance** with recommended interventions;
- **Cautious in interactions** with service providers;
- **Anger**; and
- Feelings of **low self-worth, disrespect, exclusion**, and vulnerable sense of identity.

Indicators of cultural safety:

- **Acknowledgement** of **problem** or **issue**;
- **High utilization** of programs and services;
- **Implementation** of collaboratively developed action plans;
- **Open communication** with service providers;
- **Calm**, motivated, keen; and
- Feelings of **high self-worth, respect, inclusion**, and strong sense of identity.

References

Adapted from Ball, J. (n.d.). Cultural safety in practice with children, families, and communities. University of Victoria. Retrieved from: <http://www.ecdip.org/culturalsafety/>

How can Community Initiatives address

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?

Community initiatives are **organized actions undertaken by communities to address local problems** related to larger scale issues.

Community initiatives, **identify needs** in the community, **guide change** in the community, and **create broader change** beyond the community.

Community initiatives are **planned and led by community members**. They are **relevant, culturally safe, and successful** at engaging marginalized communities to address local issues.

Diverse communities must be at the centre of action and change in order to provide the highest level of care when addressing violence against women in marginalized immigrant and refugee communities.

Immigrant and refugee leaders can design and carry out relevant and culturally safe initiatives encouraging community accountability with greater successes than mainstream services.

HOW TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY LEVEL INITIATIVES:

Engage a large and diverse group in planning.

Clarify vision, goals, objectives, and strategies

Identify community **problems** and gather information

Develop **action plans**

Identify relevant community **resources** and **partnerships**

Establish **process for recording and sharing of information**

About



Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre

is an inner city health centre with thousands of registered clients who routinely access the Centre's many programs and services. Founded in 1996, Hamilton Urban Core is a non-profit agency, primarily funded through the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant (HNHB) Local Integration Health Network (LHIN). Over the years Hamilton Urban Core has worked diligently with individuals and communities to not only change the lives of thousands of inner city residents, but to also

**SHAPE A
BETTER,
HEALTHIER
CITY**

for the client communities served and represented by the Centre. As one of Ontario's 76 Community Health Centres, Hamilton Urban Core is non-profit, charitable and community-governed, and provides multi-disciplinary inter-professional healthcare framed by the social determinants of health.

IWC is a leader in providing settlement services in Hamilton, welcoming new Canadians and supporting their full social, civic and economic participation in their new city. For over 25 years, IWC has provided a broad range of settlement services to newcomers to Canada. We are Hamilton's only dedicated settlement service organization, delivering in-person and online services in 16 languages at four locations in Hamilton.

Founded in 1988, the Immigrants Working Centre (formerly the Immigrant Women's Centre) is an

**EQUALITY
SEEKING,
ANTI-RACIST,
CHARITABLE
ORGANIZATION**

dedicated to the social, political and economic inclusion of refugee and immigrants in a just and supportive Canadian society. Our Centre is committed to enabling refugees and immigrants to discover and build their new futures through skills development and settlement support.

The project partners (Hamilton Urban Core CHC and Immigrants Working Centre) would like to acknowledge all community leaders and community partners engaged throughout the project's lifespan, **without your passion and participation this project would not have accomplished its goals.**

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Neighbours, Friends & Families

Immigrant & Refugee Communities

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