

The Strengthening Families in Canada Project: *Immigrant Men's Research Project on Family Violence*

Research Team:

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Research Advisory Committee

Summary

The goal of the *Immigrant Men's Needs Assessment* was to develop an understanding of how family violence is perceived by immigrant and refugee men in Winnipeg, and to determine the best approaches to delivery culturally responsive community education and public awareness on the issue of family violence for immigrant/refugee men. This presentation describes the process involved in conducting the needs assessment as well as the main findings from the study.

Collaboration between community-based organizations, a researcher, members of the community, and an academic advisor were critical factors in the design, data collection, analysis and dissemination processes. Highlighted are the themes drawn from the research findings, and the implications these have for action at both practice and policy levels.

How did this project start?

The *Strengthening Families in Canada* project was the result of a joint training program between the Sexuality Education Resource Centre (SERC) and Immigrant Women's Counselling Services (IWCS) in Winnipeg, Manitoba:

The Women's Action Against Violence (WAAV) training program was a program for immigrant and refugee women on the issue of domestic violence

The program participants suggested that there was a need for violence prevention education programs for immigrant and refugee men.

To work on this recommendation, SERC worked together with IWCS, Mount Carmel Clinic and Teen Talk/Klinik in developing the Strengthening Families in Canada Project. This year project had three streams: youth, women and men.

What are the goals of the Immigrant Men's Needs Assessment?

- To better understand how family violence is understood by immigrant/refugee men in the community

- To determine the best way to deliver culturally appropriate community education/public awareness on the issue of family violence for immigrant and refugee men.

How was the assessment conducted?

- A Research Advisory Group was formed including SERC, Mount Carmel Clinic and a university researcher

- A literature review was conducted

- Focus groups and individual interviews with 65 immigrant and refugee men from various communities are being organized in May and June 2005

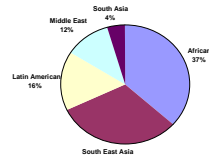
- With two facilitators leading the focus groups, groups of 4 to 13 participants were asked a series of questions about family violence. The facilitators took notes on flip chart paper so that participants can see how their responses are being recorded. One person also took notes and the session was also recorded using a tape recorder

- Research data was compiled, analyzed, and a report written with recommendations for a prevention education approach that includes men's perspectives on the issues of family violence. All team members participated in this process by attending a meeting on data analysis and interpretation and reviewing drafts of the report.

- Further funding will be sought for a second phase of the project, to follow up on these recommendations

- Finally, a community meeting(s) with participants from all 3 streams of the project was planned to share learnings, celebrate successes, further disseminate findings, garner further support and resources, and develop recommendations at a community level for the next phase

Focus Group Participants by Region of Origin



Findings

The level of interest and participation in the focus groups surpassed the expectations of project partners and the members of the research team. Sixty-five immigrant and refugee men from diverse backgrounds participated in focus groups and interviews on domestic violence prevention. Here are the main findings from these consultations:

- A participatory research approach which included the involvement of immigrant men in the research design, participant recruitment and the analysis of results was integral to the success of the research project.
- Intergenerational conflict, the discipline of children, and adaptation to shifting gender roles were strongly recurring themes.
- Participants identified a broad range of actions they would consider to be domestic violence. They provided examples of physical, sexual and emotional abuse.
- Participants identified economic stress, cultural adaptation, addictions, miscommunication, the lack of information and expanded rights and freedoms as causes of domestic violence.
- There was general consensus that physical violence between spouses was not acceptable. Participants expressed differing views on the acceptability of physical discipline of children.
- Participants identified both physical and psychological impacts of domestic abuse. Family disintegration was identified as a critical concern.
- There was strong support for providing immigrant and refugee men with more information and education on domestic violence prevention. Dominant themes were cultural adaptation, the need to gain a better understanding of the law and the importance of providing information to newcomers.
- Participants expressed a concern that a program directed at immigrant men alone would stigmatize immigrant men. There was strong support for a joint program that included women and youth.

Key Recommendations

Project partners should work together with community groups. They should develop programs that stop family violence. These programs should focus on the needs of immigrant and refugee men.

Here are our recommendations:

- Offer a series of workshops to help immigrant men stop family violence. Include immigrant men, women and youth from different backgrounds. Hold separate classes for women, youth and men, but bring them together at the end.
- Cover all aspects of family violence and focus on family issues, including: partner violence, child abuse, disciplining children, and conflict between generations
- Invite immigrant and refugee community members (including men) to play a big part in developing and presenting the workshops.
- Offer individual sessions of the workshop series to community groups.
- Offer a *Train the Trainer Domestic Violence Prevention Education* program to immigrants and refugees. Include these topics: program development, workshop design, public speaking/facilitation skills, issues covered in the workshop series
- Try to develop the community in this work, by building skills, using existing talent and providing jobs
- Support the development of family violence programs led by ethno-cultural community groups.
- Develop new partnerships and expand networks in working towards ending family violence.
- Look for long-term core funding to support family violence programs.
- Make sure that education and publicity does not reinforce any negative stereotypes.
- Make sure that funding is available to evaluate new programs.