

Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative



Creating Safety Plans with Vulnerable Populations to Reduce the Risk of Repeated Violence and Domestic Homicide

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The Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative with Vulnerable Populations presents its sixth Learning Brief, *Creating Safety Plans with Vulnerable Populations to Reduce the Risk of Repeated Violence and Domestic Homicide*. Within this Brief, safety planning strategies are defined and the importance of protecting women and those close to them by creating a safety plan is discussed. Safety planning with vulnerable populations is discussed in detail including common challenges, promising practices, and emerging issues. Safety planning tools and resources are provided.

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WHAT IS SAFETY PLANNING?

Safety is a paramount concern for women experiencing violence by an intimate partner and children exposed to domestic violence. Safety planning involves identifying specific strategies that a woman may use to protect herself and her children from a current or former violent intimate partner (Davies, Lyon & Monti-Catania, 1998; Campbell, 2001; Murray et al., 2015).

A safety plan may include the following strategies:



Planning an escape route



Packing an emergency bag



Storing money



Making copies of important documents (e.g. passport, bank statement, proof of residency)



Making arrangements for animals

Developing a safety plan commonly involves an on-going conversation between a woman and a service provider who is knowledgeable about domestic violence (Davies, Lyon & Monti-Catania, 1998; Murray et al. 2015). Safety planning may be part of on-going case management, counseling, court support or a phone call to a crisis line (Logan & Walker, 2018a). Self-directed safety planning tools are also available online to educate women about their level of risk, increase safety and encourage help-seeking by women experiencing domestic violence (Doherty, 2017; Glass et al., 2010; Ford-Gilboe, 2017). Online self-directed approaches empower women to make informed decisions about their safety. Women may use an online safety planning tool on their own or with a support person (e.g. service provider, family member, friend) (Doherty, 2017).

The Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative with Vulnerable Populations (CDHPVIP) defines safety planning as strategies to protect the woman and individuals close to her (e.g. children). Strategies may include educating women about their level of risk; changing residence, planning a method of escape and relocating elsewhere, an alarm for a higher priority police response, a different work arrangement, and/or readily accessible items needed to leave the home in an emergency including contact information about local/closest domestic violence resources.

Safety planning differs from risk assessment and risk management. A risk assessment is used to identify the risk factors present and evaluate the potential for repeated violence or homicide. A risk assessment is typically completed by a service provider based on information about the aggressor and/or the woman. Safety planning is related to risk assessment because the strategies developed address the risk factors identified. Additionally, risk management involves developing strategies to reduce the risk of the aggressor acting violent (e.g. close monitoring, treatment for substance abuse). Safety planning strategies are specific to the woman. Risk management strategies are specific to the aggressor. Therefore, it is important that safety planning and risk management strategies do not conflict. For more information about risk assessment and risk management, see the CDHPVIP Domestic Homicide Brief #2 *Domestic Violence Risk Assessment: Informing Safety Planning and Risk Management*.

WHY SAFETY PLAN?

Safety planning provides women with an opportunity to assess their situation and identify both short- and long-term needs. Talking with a woman about her safety helps her to consider a range of options and strategies that she can use to protect herself and her children (Campbell, 2001; Doherty, 2017). Safety planning is important for women experiencing domestic violence because it helps them to consider what they can do before a violent situation occurs. Research finds that safety planning provides women with a sense of control over their lives (Kulkarni et al., 2012; Riddell et al., 2009).

Having a safety plan motivates you, [and] makes you believe you can do it.

(Riddell et al., 2009: 147)

Victims are coping with a variety of competing needs, demands, resources and feelings which can and does, influence whether and how much of a safety plan will be implemented

(Logan & Walker, 2018b: 222)

SAFETY PLANNING IS MORE THAN AN EXIT STRATEGY

Traditionally, service providers addressed only physical violence when safety planning with women experiencing domestic violence. Women were often required to end the relationship. More recently, some service providers recognize that leaving is not a practical or preferred option for every woman. Woman-defined advocacy requires developing strategies to decrease immediate physical violence and/or non-physical violence. The strategies developed will depend on the frequency and type of contact the woman has with the aggressor (Davies, Lyon & Monti-Catania, 1998; Davies, 2009).

INDIVIDUALIZED SAFETY PLAN FOR EVERY WOMAN

Every woman's experience of domestic violence is unique. A woman's social positioning (e.g. race/ethnicity, age, socio-economic status, Indigeneity, geographical location, nationality) influences her fears, life-generated risks, how she responds to violence and the strategies she uses to protect herself from violence (Davies, Lyon & Monti-Catania, 1998; Lindhorst et al., 2005). Developing a safety plan and putting it in writing with clear and specific strategies that address her risks and needs can increase use. It is also beneficial to discuss how to adapt the strategies in various situations and locations (Murray & Graves, 2012).

SUGGESTED PRACTICES FOR SAFETY PLANNING WITH WOMEN EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

WOMAN-DEFINED ADVOCACY

Woman-defined advocacy involves treating a woman as an expert of her own situation and empowering her to take control of her life. This approach involves considering a woman's perspectives, needs, access to resources and her culture (Davies, Lyon & Monti-Catania, 1998; Davies, 2009). Research suggests that creating a safety plan requires a collaborative partnership between a woman and a service provider (Davies, Lyon & Monti-Catania, 1998; Murray et al., 2015). One study found that working collaboratively with women increased their use of the safety plan (Logan & Walker, 2018a).

No one strategy to end violence will work for every woman, and leaving cannot be the only legitimized option [...] offered as we help women create pragmatic, sustainable responses.

(Lindhorst et al., 2005: 347)

COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION AMONG SERVICE PROVIDERS

Families affected by domestic violence are often involved with multiple systems and agencies. Each agency has information about the circumstances of the situation and risks present. As a result, critical information “falls through the cracks” because service providers are working alone. Collaboration and coordination among systems and service providers can increase women and children’s safety network through information sharing by ensuring that everyone is working towards the same goal (Davies, Lyon & Monti-Catania, 1998; CCWS & EVA BC, 2011).

MAKING EFFECTIVE REFERRALS

It is important for service providers working with women experiencing domestic violence to be knowledgeable about services available in the community and ensure they are appropriate for the woman (Davies, Lyon & Monti-Catania, 1998; Campbell, 2001). Some agencies have eligibility criteria or conditions for accessing services. For example, in Ontario, individuals are required to satisfy a financial test to receive a certificate for provincially funded legal representation in family, immigrant and refugee, and criminal matters (Legal Aid Ontario). Therefore, it is important that service providers are aware of these conditions and that they tell the woman when providing the referral (Davies, Lyon & Monti-Catania, 1998).

Proactive referrals may be necessary when working with women experiencing domestic violence, particularly in high-risk situations. Making a proactive referral involves contacting an

individual at the referral agency and developing a personal connection to speed up the process. A service provider may also go with a woman to the referral agency (Davies, Lyon & Monti-Catania, 1998).

Getting consent from a woman to make a referral is recommended because it shows respect for her independence. It is also important to respect a woman’s decision not to interact with a specific service, unless it is required by law (Davies, Lyon & Monti-Catania, 1998; Campbell, 2001).

TRAINING NON-TRADITIONAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

Some women who experience domestic violence do not access traditional domestic violence services (e.g. domestic violence agencies, police, victim services). It is important to train non-traditional service providers (e.g. religious leaders, ethnocultural and settlement service workers, health care providers) on risk factors and safety planning so that they can help a woman experiencing domestic violence by working with her directly or referring her to another service (Campbell, 2004; Lindhorst et al., 2005).



SAFETY PLANNING WITH VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

This section highlights some challenges and promising practices identified in the research related to safety planning with vulnerable populations, specifically women living in rural, remote, and northern communities; Indigenous women; immigrant and refugee women; and children exposed to domestic violence.

RURAL, REMOTE, AND NORTHERN WOMEN

Challenges

- Limited availability of social services and supports and access to transportation
- Confidentiality of the location of domestic violence services
- Dual relationships between women and/or aggressors and service providers
- Presence of firearms (long guns) in rural homes
- Women's dependence on the farm for their livelihood

Generally, availability of domestic violence services in rural, remote, and northern communities is limited (Anderson et al., 2014; Shepherd, 2001). Women living in rural, remote and northern communities are often required to travel a far distance to access services and supports (Bosch & Schumm, 2004; Peek-Asa et al., 2011). Traveling to a domestic violence agency is challenging in a rural, remote or northern community because it requires access to a working vehicle, and it can be costly and time-consuming for women.

Domestic violence agencies in rural, remote, and northern communities are balancing increasing awareness of services available for women and keeping information away from aggressors. Keeping a "low profile" of the location of domestic violence services, specifically residential services (e.g. shelters, safe houses) is critical in rural, remote and northern communities (Macy et al., 2010). Because of the small population size and close-knit relationships between individuals in rural, remote and northern communities, it is easier for an aggressor to find a woman who has fled from violence.

Dual relationships refer to situations where a service provider knows the woman and/or the aggressor through a personal connection (Pugh, 2006). Dual relationships are challenging because they create a conflict of interest. As a result, a woman may avoid seeking help or telling a service provider that she is experiencing domestic violence. A woman may also leave out important details about the violence (Logan & Walker, 2018b). Because individuals living in rural, remote and northern communities are close-knit, a woman may be at high-risk of repeated violence or death if a service provider shares any information with someone that has a personal relationship with the aggressor (Logan & Walker, 2018b).

Rural, remote, and northern communities in Canada have high rates of gun-ownership (Department of Justice, 2015; Doherty & Hornosty, 2008). Because guns have a longstanding cultural tradition in rural, remote and northern communities for lawful purposes, removing guns from the home may not be a preferred option. Women living in eastern Canada experiencing domestic violence reported that they did not want to call the police for protection because they were afraid that the aggressor would fight back if the police removed guns from the home (Doherty & Hornosty, 2008).

Farm women are a unique subpopulation within rural, remote and northern communities (Doherty & Hornosty, 2008). Women are often the primary caregiver for the farm animals. Some farm women rely on the sale of livestock as well as other farm-related commodities (e.g. produce, land, equipment) as their primary or sole source of income. As a result, farm women are afraid to leave their violent partners because they may lose their financial interest in the farm and the animals may be at risk of violence (Barton et al., 2015; YMCA Canada, 2009).

Keeping survivors safe in rural and isolated communities where access to shelters, crisis centres, or similar supports is often dangerously limited, and weapons maintained for hunting and subsistence purposes abound, is not easy.

(Dickinson-Gilmore, 2014: 433)

PROMISING PRACTICES

- Identify formal and informal sources of support for women
- Be creative when developing a safety plan with women living in rural, remote and northern communities
- Include animals in safety plans
- Consider safety planning strategies for staying in the relationship

Because it can be difficult for women living in rural, remote and northern communities to locate information about domestic violence services, it is important to discuss formal and informal services and supports that she may contact (Dudgeon & Evanson, 2014). Identifying services and supports can be particularly helpful for women if they require help during a violent situation. Multiple strategies are needed to increase awareness of domestic violence services for women living in rural, remote and northern communities. One example is Hotpeach pages (www.hotpeachpages.net), which is an international directory of domestic violence agencies, including Canada.

Due to the limited availability of domestic violence services and transportation barriers, creativity is important when creating a safety plan with women living in rural, remote and northern communities. For example, a nurse working with a farm woman found a safe hiding place in the barn that she could go to if she felt unsafe (Evanson, 2006). A service provider may meet a woman at a location that she goes to regularly such as a

government building, grocery store, hairdresser or a doctor's office.

Animals are important to include in women's safety plans because they are a unique aspect of social and cultural life in rural, remote and northern communities. Domestic violence service providers may consider partnering with animal welfare agencies to develop safe haven programs for larger animals (e.g. cows, horses, sheep). Policies are needed to award custody and determine ownership of animals if a woman chooses to leave a violent relationship (Doherty & Hornosty, 2008).

Women living in rural, remote, and northern communities often have a strong bond to their community, family and property (Doherty & Hornosty, 2004; Wendt & Hornosty, 2010). As a result, leaving the aggressor may not be a practical or preferred option for these women. Safety planning with women living in rural, remote, and northern communities that stay in the relationship require strategies focused on staying safer in the relationship. See *Living in an Abusive Relationship: Strategies for Staying Safer* below in the Tools and Resources Section.

INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Challenges

- Limited availability of family/domestic violence services and culturally responsive supports
- Distrust of government agencies, specifically child welfare and criminal justice system (e.g. police)
- Disempowerment of Indigenous communities
- Language differences for talking about domestic violence
- Code of silence about intimate partner violence
- Poor living conditions (overcrowding, living with extended family)

A large proportion of Indigenous women and girls live in rural, remote, and northern communities in Canada (Dickson-Gilmore, 2014; Status of Women Canada, n.d.). Indigenous women have limited

access to family/domestic violence residential services (e.g. shelters, safe houses) and social services (Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association, 2005; Dickinson-Gilmore, 2014; Cripps, 2007). Additionally, culturally-responsive safety planning tools for Indigenous women have not been well developed or made widely available (C. Dumont-Smith, personal communication, January 30, 2018).

Domestic violence services are commonly developed and delivered by non-Indigenous service providers and they use an individualistic lens (Sue & Sue, 1999; Donnelly et al., 2005). Many Indigenous Peoples view safety holistically, which includes the whole family and the local community (Cripps, 2007; Richardson/Kinewesquao, 2016). A sample of Indigenous women reported that healing Indigenous men is important for their safety (Richardson/Kinewesquao, 2016). Therefore, safety plans that focus only on the woman and/or child(ren) may be inappropriate.

Many Indigenous Peoples do not trust government agencies because they were key players in colonization. In Canada, colonization refers to the systemic oppression of Indigenous Peoples by the federal government through law and practices including the *Indian Act* (1876), residential school system, and the "Sixties Scoop". Colonization was an attempt by the Canadian government to force assimilation of Indigenous Peoples with Euro-Canadians and commit cultural genocide. Colonization damaged Indigenous Peoples' connection to their land, cultural practices, language, and knowledge (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015; Brassard et al., 2015).

Many Indigenous Peoples are afraid of the police because they removed Indigenous children from their families and placed them in residential schools. Indigenous Peoples experienced physical and sexual violence for speaking their native language, talking about their Indigenous heritage and acknowledging their culture in the residential school system. Additionally, during the Sixties Scoop, the police took Indigenous children away from their families and placed them in the child welfare system. As a result, Indigenous Peoples

are particularly fearful of the child welfare sector (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015; National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2017; Brassard et al., 2015; Irvine, 2009).

Indigenous women and girls experience racism and sexism as victims of gender-based violence. Interviews with family members of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada reveal discriminatory police practices and devaluing of Indigenous women and girl's lives (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2017; Human Rights Watch 2017; 2013).

Indigenous women may not use the same language as service providers (e.g domestic violence, sexual assault, rape) to talk about violence caused by an intimate partner. 'Family violence' is a common term to refer to domestic violence within Indigenous communities. As a result, if an Indigenous woman tells a service provider that she is experiencing 'family violence' they may not understand that she is being abused by her intimate partner. Knowledge about how Indigenous women talk about violence between intimate partners as well as historical and current socio-economic, political, colonial contexts for seeking help is critical for working with this population (Cripps, 2007; J. Nepinak, personal communication, March 2018).

Indigenous Peoples live in poor conditions (YMCA, 2009; C. Dumont-Smith, personal communication, January 30, 2018). There is a housing shortage in many Indigenous communities in Canada. Indigenous Peoples commonly live with extended family members and many homes are overcrowded (Terzon, 2016; Shepherd, 2001). As a result, Indigenous women experiencing violence by an intimate partner may not be able to live alone or move in with family members (Terzon, 2016). Moving out of their community is not a preferred option for Indigenous women because they have long-established connections to the land and the community where they live (Shepherd, 2001).

PROMISING PRACTICES

- Increasing culturally-responsivity of services and supports
- Increasing safe space when working with Indigenous Peoples
- Community healing and trauma-informed approaches
- Restoring Indigenous Peoples' dignity

Cultural responsiveness is important for safety planning with Indigenous women experiencing violence by an intimate partner (Richardson, 2016; Richardson & Wade, 2010). Many Indigenous

Peoples view the world holistically, which means that the mind is interconnected with the spirit and body. A holistic approach to safety planning is “client-centered or family-centered, involves mutuality, empathy, decentring of the worker, uplifting the client’s perspective, life experience and ways they have tried to resist mistreatment and preserve their dignity” (Richardson/Kinewesquao, 2016: 251). Safety planning with an Indigenous woman may require varied strategies addressing physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, and cultural safety for survivors, their families, the community as well as restorative and community justice processes (Dickson-Gilmore, 2014; Richardson/Kinewesquao, 2016).

STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING CULTURAL RESPONSIVITY AND SAFE SPACES

- Include the voices of Indigenous Peoples in family/domestic violence prevention and intervention efforts, specifically Indigenous knowledge from scholars, leaders, advocates and communities (Yuan et al., 2014).
- Provide access to cultural supports and mentorship, including sacred cultural space, Indigenous knowledge, teachings, smudging, and ceremonies (J. Nepinak, personal communication, March 2018).
- Collaborate with Elders and invite them to participate in the safety planning process and/or developing a safety plan with an Indigenous woman (Riel, 2014). Many Elders have “transcended violence and healed,” and they may use their personal experience to guide other members of their community on how to heal from violence (Dickson-Gilmore, 2014: 433-4). However, some Indigenous women may not want to involve an Elder from their community because it may create a conflict of interest if they have a personal relationship. Therefore, it is important to get consent from the woman.
- Encourage hiring of Indigenous staff at family/domestic violence agencies to build trust and provide Indigenous women and their families with the option of working with an Indigenous service provider (Pauktuutit Inuit Women’s Association, 2005).
- Allow Indigenous women to decide what they want to discuss and how much detail they share about their experience of family/domestic violence and intergenerational trauma to avoid acting paternalistic and acting as an expert of their lives (Richardson & Reynolds, 2014).
- It is the responsibility of non-Indigenous service providers to educate themselves about the history and impact of colonization and cultural genocide of Indigenous Peoples in Canada to better support and increase safety when working with Indigenous women (Richardson & Reynolds, 2014).
- Explaining your culture and privilege to an Indigenous woman shows her that your social location is relevant to your interaction and it can increase her feeling of safety because she will not assume that you are “normal” (Richardson & Reynolds, 2014).
- Having open and on-going conversations about how to increase safety can make an Indigenous woman feel comfortable withdrawing from the conversation at any point without fear of punishment (Richardson & Reynolds, 2014).

Adapting cultural components of safety planning tools and strategies for different Indigenous groups is needed to increase utility for women (C. Dumont-Smith, personal communication, January 30, 2018). There are approximately 676 Indigenous communities in Canada including; 615 First Nation (Statistics Canada, 2008), 53 Inuit (Inuit Tapriit Kanatami, 2018), and 8 Métis (Métis Settlements General Council, 2018). Each Indigenous community is culturally unique.

Community healing and education using trauma-informed approaches are needed to provide awareness and knowledge to all stakeholders about the impacts of family/domestic violence and intervention. Knowledge about Indigenous women's historical and current lived experiences including the impact of colonization, residential school system, loss of language, culture, ceremony, and breakdown of traditional family influence is important for safety planning (J. Nepinak, personal communication, March, 2018).

Restoring Indigenous Peoples' dignity by acknowledging past experiences of humiliation related to colonization and/or interactions with other service providers can be helpful during the first meeting with Indigenous women and their families about safety (Richardson & Wade, 2010; Richardson & Reynolds, 2014). The following are some examples of questions that may be asked:

- How is everyone doing now?
- How do things look when your family is getting on well?
- Is this your first interaction with child protection workers?
- If we were to really mess up here today and do a bad job, what would that look like?

These questions can develop trust and encourage disclosure of family /domestic violence (Richardson/Kinewesquao, 2016). Using a response-based practice may also increase Indigenous women's engagement and help restore their dignity. Service providers using a response-based practice may ask an Indigenous woman how she responded to the violence as a way to acknowledge her resistance, resourcefulness, and creativity (Richardson & Wade 2010; Richardson & Reynolds, 2014). For

more information, refer to Islands of Safety developed by Richardson and Wade (2010) and Structuring Safety in Therapeutic Work Alongside Indigenous Survivors of Residential Schools by Richardson & Reynolds, (2014).

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN

Immigrant and refugee women share many similarities related to settling in a new country. However, a key difference between the two groups is their reason for migration. An immigrant or refugee woman's status impacts her needs, access to publicly funded social services, and her willingness to call the police for help. Refugees have fled their home country due to fear of persecution (Government of Canada, 2017; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017). Many refugees come from war-torn countries and they have experienced political violence, sexual violence, religious persecution and/or natural disaster. In contrast, immigrant women have chosen to relocate to Canada and settle permanently to study, work or live with their family. However, there are situations where immigrant women move to Canada for reasons beyond their control, such as violence committed against them by a family member (Bhuyan, Shim & Velagapudi, 2010). Generally, immigrant women have greater control over the location and timing of migration compared to refugee women (Government of Canada, 2017; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017).

Challenges

- Social and cultural differences related to experiences of violence
- Language barriers
- Frequent changes to immigration laws
- Pre-migration violence and trauma
- Fear and/or distrust of government services and police

Immigrant and refugee women experience challenges accessing and receiving support for domestic violence related to their legal status and culture (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). For example, an immigrant woman from a collectivist culture

may be experiencing violence by her in-laws as well as her male partner. Additionally, a refugee woman may have pre-migration trauma that has not been addressed. Because domestic violence services are developed based on the experiences as well as social and cultural beliefs of the White Canadian-born women, they may be less helpful for immigrant and refugee women (Bui, 2003; Guruge & Humphreys, 2009).

Most domestic violence services are set up and provided in English; therefore, they may not be easily accessible to immigrant and refugee women who do not speak English as their first language (Guruge & Humphreys, 2009). Similarly, legal documents are available primarily in English

and this makes it difficult for immigrant and refugee women to understand Canadian laws and their legal rights (Bui, 2003). Immigrant and refugee women may require a trained interpreter, which are often not available in a timely manner (Guruge & Humphreys, 2009). It is important to consider differences between immigrant and refugee women related to English language proficiency. An immigrant may have chosen to move to Canada because she is already proficient in English or she may have learned the language in advance, whereas a refugee woman is less likely to understand English when she arrives. Therefore, it may be more difficult for refugee women to access domestic violence services compared to immigrant women.

MULTILINGUAL RESOURCES FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- ***Abuse is Wrong in Any Language*** was developed by the Department of Justice and it is available for download in 11 languages; Arabic, Chinese (traditional), Dari, Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, and Urdu. The resource can be accessed at justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/fe-fa/index.html
- ***VictimLinkBC*** is a multilingual phone line that is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week to survivors of domestic and family violence as well as sexual violence in British Columbia and Yukon. The telephone line offers information and referrals to victims of crime in 110 languages, including 17 North American Indigenous languages and it is TTY accessible. The toll-free service can be accessed at 1-800-563-0808.
- ***Live Safe, End Abuse*** was developed by the Legal Services Society in B.C which provides information about leaving a violent relationship, including safety planning. The publication is available in five languages including French, Spanish, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Farsi, and Punjabi. The document can be accessed at lss.bc.ca/publications/pub.php?pub=494

Immigration laws change continually, which makes it difficult for over-worked service providers to remain up-to-date on the legal rights of immigrant and refugee women experiencing domestic violence (Bhuyan, 2013). Similarly, it is difficult for immigrant and refugee women to have the most recent information on their legal rights (Bui, 2003; Erez 2009). Understanding immigrant and refugees' legal rights is critical because it affects their ability to achieve safety, including accessing formal support services.

Many immigrant and refugee women are fearful of the police and government agencies, but for different reasons. Immigrant women who are undocumented may avoid contact with the police and other government agencies, including domestic violence services because they fear deportation (Moynihan et al., 2008). In contrast, refugee women commonly experience trauma related to their pre-migration experience. As a result, refugee women may be distrustful of the police if they experienced police brutality in their home country.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are five sanctuary cities in Canada – Toronto, Hamilton, London, Montreal and Vancouver. Sanctuary cities give undocumented citizens access to publicly funded municipal services without fear of detection, detention or deportation (Canadian Labour Congress, 2015).

PROMISING PRACTICES

- Collaborate with multicultural services (e.g. religious and cultural leaders)
- Translate domestic violence resources into the woman's native language
- Consider immigration status and when working with immigrant and refugee women
- Help women become financially independent

Collaboration between traditional domestic violence service providers and multicultural services can increase cultural responsiveness when working with immigrant and refugee women experiencing domestic violence (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005; Thurston et al., 2013). Culturally responsive practices respect immigrant and refugee women's ties to their family, culture and community (Justice Institute of British Columbia, 2007). Religious and cultural leaders can be invaluable resources when working with immigrant and refugee women who are culturally diverse. Therefore, culturally responsive strategies will differ for every woman. However, it is important to get consent from a woman before involving a religious or cultural leader because it may create a conflict of interest.

When working with immigrant and refugee women it is important to provide verbal communication and written materials about domestic violence and other relevant services and supports in the woman's native language, where possible (Moynihan et al 2008). Providing translation can increase immigrant and refugee women's comfort with domestic violence service providers (Bui, 2003) When searching for a translator, it is recommended that they understand domestic violence (Justice Institute of British Columbia, 2007). It is also important to consider community connections that translators

may bring to the interaction. For example, an individual may have a personal connection to the aggressor (e.g. relative, friend).

Considering legal status is important for developing a safety plan with immigrant women specifically if they are undocumented or they are sponsored by the aggressor. It is important to develop trust with immigrant and refugee women so that they feel comfortable discussing their status. Research cautions service providers about "don't ask, don't tell" policies because it can lead to unintended consequences (Bhuyan, Shim & Valgapudi, 2010). For example, undocumented women and children staying in a shelter may be deported because of the mandate issued by the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) in February 2011 allowing immigration officers to go into women's shelters to locate and deport "unauthorized" residents (Abji, 2016). Working with an immigration lawyer can provide immigrant and refugee women confidence and reduce their fears. An immigrant woman's status and sponsorship affects her fears, access to social services and her legal rights (CCWS & EVABC, 2011).

CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Challenges

- Varying intellectual and physical development and abilities
- Tension between violence against women and child welfare sectors

Safety planning with children exposed to domestic violence is challenging because they are all unique in terms of their intellectual and physical development as well as their verbal communication skills. Adapting safety planning methods and strategies when working with children is a specialized skill that requires knowledge and training in child development (Chanmugam & Hall, 2012; Kress et al., 2012).

Existing research reveals tension between violence against women and child welfare sectors due to competing mandates (Waugh & Bonner, 2002; Hester et al., 2007). Violence against women agencies aim to empower women to make informed decisions; therefore, women are the primary focus. Violence against women agencies may talk to a mother about how to keep her child(ren) safe, but they generally do not do safety planning directly with children (Hester et al., 2007). In contrast, child welfare agencies' primary interest is protecting children from violence by a parent or guardian. Therefore, child welfare workers do safety planning directly with children (Radford et al., 2006). As a result, safety planning with children is often separate from the mothers' safety plan.

PROMISING PRACTICES

A child's safety is directly related to the safety of their mother.

- Coordination and collaboration between services working with women and children
- Make the safety plan age-appropriate and appropriate to the child's development

- Explain to children that the violence is not their fault and they are not responsible for protecting adults

Increase coordination and collaboration between agencies working with women and children affected by domestic violence because a child's safety is directly impacted by their mother's safety (Shlonsky & Friend, 2007; Wendt et al., 2015). Re-defining success may be necessary to reduce tension between violence against women and child welfare agencies. It may be useful to use a harm reduction approach, focusing on reducing violence against women and children rather than elimination (Shlonsky & Friend, 2007).

Discuss safety in an age-appropriate manner and consider the child's development. Service providers may consider using multiple methods to meet the diverse needs of children and youth witnessing domestic violence (Chanmugam & Hall, 2012). The methods and modes of delivery may include a combination of psycho-educational activities such as lesson plans, games, quizzes, writing, drawing, role-play, and colouring activities (Horton et al., 2014; Chanmugam & Hall, 2012).



Clearly and effectively explain to children that they are not responsible for keeping their family members safe. Children are only responsible for their own safety. It is important for children and youth to understand that they should not intervene if there is fighting between adults at home (Horton et al., 2014; Chanmugam & Hall, 2012; Sillito & Salari, 2011).

EMERGING ISSUES IN SAFETY PLANNING

AGGRESSORS' USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Technological devices allow aggressors to maintain contact and monitor a woman's daily activities. Aggressors use spy-ware to get access to women's mobile phones without their permission, allowing them to see her cell phone activity such as phone calls, text messages, e-mail, and social media presence. Social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) are used to harass and stalk women (Dimond et al., 2011; Woodlock, 2017). Location tracking devices allow aggressors to monitor a woman from a distance in real-time and can lead to in-person confrontations (Southworth et al., 2007). Aggressors have also downloaded GPS software onto a woman's mobile phone or placed a GPS

device in her vehicle without her knowledge, making it unsafe to leave the relationship (Woodlock, 2017).

Aggressors' use of technology is a pressing issue related to safety planning because it decreases distance and physical boundaries, reducing women's feelings of safety (Woodlock, 2017; Hand et al., 2009). Offering education to women on warning signs that an aggressor may be monitoring her location, online and/or phone activity and showing her how to erase her Internet browser history can help women feel confident and stay safer.



The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV)

created a library of technology safety planning resources, which may be used by both women experiencing domestic violence and service providers. Some of the resources are available in multiple languages. To access NNEDV's technology safety planning resources, visit their website at <https://nnedv.org/>

TECHNOLOGY-BASED SAFETY PLANNING TOOLS

Technology-based safety planning tools are now available online for women experiencing domestic violence. Some safety planning tools target hard to reach populations such as pregnant women, emerging adult women, women living in rural communities, Indigenous women, racialized women, immigrant women, women who prioritize their privacy and women who have a partner that does not identify as a man.

Online safety planning tools may be self-directed or completed with a support person. Online safety planning tools can provide women with a sense of independence and self-determination because the strategies are tailored to the risks present and the needs of the woman (Lindsay et al., 2013). Online safety planning tools challenge myths about domestic violence by providing evidence from existing research about risk factors for repeated violence and homicide (Doherty, 2017; Lindsay et al., 2013).



iCAN Plan 4 Safety - an app that is under development by researchers at Western University, University of British Columbia and University of New Brunswick. The app has been pilot tested and has been found helpful to identify risk factors, personal fears and develop a safety plan (Ford-Gilboe et al. 2017).
(not currently available to the public)

CONSIDERATION OF ANIMALS

Actual or threatened violence against animals is a form of psychological violence used by violent men to control their female partners (Newberry, 2017). Women experiencing domestic violence have stayed in the relationship longer when there was actual or threatened violence towards an animal (Doherty & Hornosty, 2008; Collins et al., 2017). Animal-owning women are at risk of becoming homeless if they need to leave the relationship in a high-risk situation and they do not have a safe place for their animal(s) (Collins et al., 2017).

Discussions about safety planning commonly

focus on women and children. However, risks related to animal ownership, actual or threatened violence towards animals and general concern for animals are interconnected to women and children's safety. There are some options for working with women who have animals. A woman may search online for an animal friendly shelter. Shelters may collaborate with local animal welfare services to establish a SafePet program. Shelters may also consider creating a pet-sheltering program on-site. Domestic violence services may also consider working with women and children to process emotions related to animal abuse and the loss of an animal (Collins et al., 2017).

WEBSITE FOR PET-FRIENDLY SHELTERS



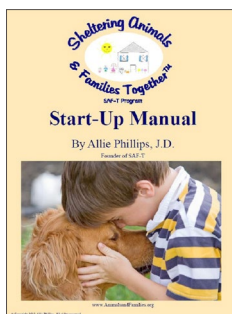
SafePlaceforPets.org is a searchable website that was created by Animal and Interpersonal Abuse Research Group (AIPARG) and Red Rover that lists pet-friendly shelters in Canada and the United States.

SAFEPET PROGRAM



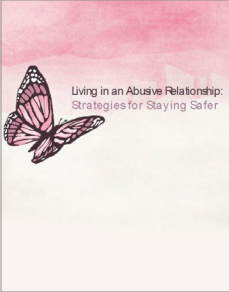
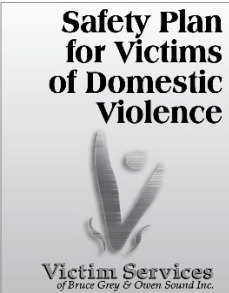

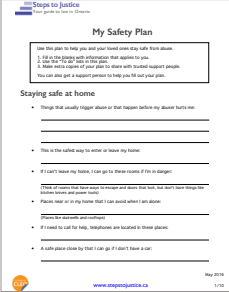
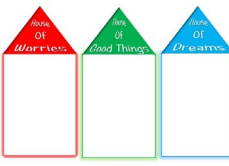
The *SafePet* program was initiated by the Ontario Medical Veterinary Association (OMVA) in 2003 to support women with animals leaving violent relationships. The SafePet program is a collaboration between the OMVA, women's shelters, veterinarians throughout Ontario. Volunteer pet foster parents care for animals while women are staying in a shelter.

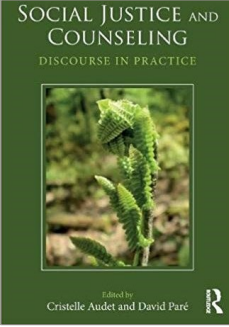
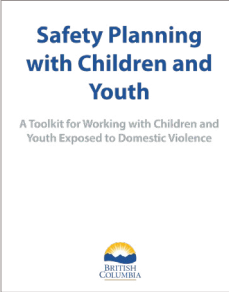
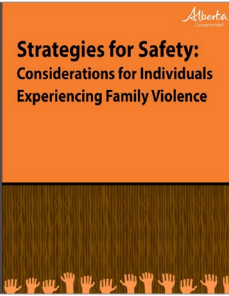

SHELTERING ANIMALS AND FAMILIES TOGETHER (SAF-T) START-UP MANUAL

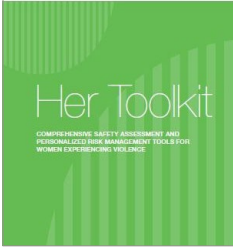




Allie Phillips, founder of Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T), developed a manual for shelters on providing housing on-site for women with animals. The manual provides multiple options for on-site housing models as well as how to manage pets on-site including what types of animals to accept; noise, allergies/odours; residents' fear of animals; how to handle abused, aggressive and stressed animals and pet grief counselling. [Access the manual online.](https://www.saf-t.org/)

SAFETY PLANNING TOOLS AND RESOURCES

	<p>Living in an Abusive Relationship: Strategies for Staying Safer</p> <p>“Living in an abusive relationship: Strategies for staying safer” was developed by Dr. Doherty for rural women living in New Brunswick. The tool may be self-administered or completed with a support person such as a domestic violence advocate and it is intended to be used as an on-going assessment tool. The tool contains three steps; (1) Identifying who she can tell, (2) Assess her level of risk, and (3) Creating a safety plan based on the risk factors identified in step two. Access the tool at www.legal-info-legale.nb.ca/en/uploads/file/pdfs/safety-planning/strategies/Safety%20Plan-Eng-Web.pdf and will soon be available as a mobile app.</p>
	<p>Safety Plan for Victims of Domestic Violence</p> <p>Victim Services of Bruce Grey and Owen Sound in Ontario developed a safety planning document for women living in rural communities as well as children exposed to domestic violence. The document provides space to write down an emergency escape plan, outlines strategies for increasing safety at home and in the community, strategies for emotional safety as well as what to do during a violent incident. The document has a list of contact numbers for local domestic violence services. Access the document at www.thewomenscentre.org/docs/SafetyPlanVictimsDomesticViolence.pdf</p>
	<p>You Are Not Alone: A Toolkit for Aboriginal Women Escaping Domestic Violence</p> <p>The Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) developed “You are not alone: A toolkit for Aboriginal women escaping domestic violence.” The toolkit provides space to write down information to ensure that a woman experiencing domestic violence is prepared in the event of an emergency (e.g. important phone numbers, a checklist for packing a bag, arrangements for animals). Access the toolkit at www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/NWAC-You-Are-Not-Alone-Safety-Plan-ENG_FINAL.pdf</p>
	<p>My Safety Plan</p> <p>The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants developed “My Safety Plan.” The document provides a list of strategies that a woman may use to stay safe in various situations (e.g. home, work, car, community, online). The document also considers children exposed to domestic violence. A list of phone numbers are included for provincial domestic violence crisis lines. The tool is available in 13 languages; Arabic, Chinese, English, Filipino (Tagalog), French, Hindi, Italian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Spanish, Tamil, Urdu, and Vietnamese. Access the document at www.settlement.org/ontario/health/sexual-and-reproductive-health/domestic-abuse/creating-a-safety-plan/</p>
	<p>Safety Planning with Children and Youth</p> <p>“Safety planning with children and youth: A toolkit for working with children and youth exposed to domestic violence” was developed by BC Society of Transition Houses and Ending Violence Association of BC and supported by the Ministry of Justice. The toolkit provides a step-by-step guide on how to safety plan with children, strategies for tailoring the safety plan based on the child’s developmental level, safety planning with children in different situations (e.g. drop-off/pick-up, during visitation with the aggressor, child is testifying in court, youth experiencing dating violence) and additional factors service providers may consider when safety planning with children.</p>

	<p>Creating Safety and Social Justice for Women in the Yukon</p> <p>Catherine Richardson/Kinewesquai, Ann Maje Rader, Barbara McInerney, and Renee-Claude Carrier advocate for a response-based practice to challenge male violence against women and hold aggressors accountable for their behaviour in Yukon, Canada. The response based practice involves a contextual analysis to gain information about the situation and the violence, understand social responses to the violence (e.g. police, child protection, pro-arrest policies), document women's resistance strategies, and how they react to social to the social responses. Response-based practice also involves activism through education campaigns and lobbying to improve social life for those who are disadvantaged. In Yukon, activism efforts target racism, inequitable access to the legal system for Indigenous women, increased support for Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), child welfare, health care, and social services. This chapter is featured in Social Justice and Counseling: Discourse in Practice, edited by C. Audet and D. Paré (2014; pp. 239-253)</p>
	<p>The Three Houses Model</p> <p>The Three Houses Model developed by Nicki Weld and Maggie Greening employs a strength-based approach to support families affected by domestic violence. Three Houses Tool is a visual method that uses words and pictures to give children and youth a voice to explore and process the violence in their life, identify safety concerns as well as their hopes and dreams for a stronger future. This model is intended for use by social service providers working with families affected by domestic violence to help adults and children identify familial strengths, hopes, dreams, and vulnerabilities. For more information see www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/childsafety/practice-manual/framework-three-houses-tool-booklet.pdf</p>
	<p>Strategies for Safety: Considerations for Individuals Experiencing Family Violence</p> <p>The government of Alberta developed “Strategies for safety: Considerations for Individuals Experiencing Family Violence.” The document provides a checklist of items to pack in case of an emergency escape and strategies based on the state of the relationship (e.g. staying in the relationship, planning to leave the relationship, separated from the aggressor). The document also includes considerations for developing safety plans with groups of women that have unique needs including Indigenous women, women with disabilities, immigrant women, older women, and women with animals.</p>
	<p>Advocacy Beyond Leaving: Helping Battered Women in Contact with Current or Former Partners</p> <p>Jill Davies, the deputy director of Greater Hartford Legal Aid Inc. and director of the Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence Initiative offers a victim-defined advocacy approach and a definition of “success” for women and children’s safety in the context of domestic violence. The resource focuses specifically on how to safety plan with women who are continuing the relationship with the aggressor or interact regularly for the purposes of co-parenting. The resource is available at www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/Children_and_Families/Advocates%20Guide(1).pdf</p>

	<p>Her Toolkit: Comprehensive Safety Assessment and Personalized Risk Management Tools for Women Experiencing Violence</p> <p>Her Toolkit: Comprehensive Safety Assessment and Personalized Risk Management Tools for Women Experiencing Violence was co-developed by Beth Jordan and Deborah Sinclair, MSW, RSW in collaboration with The Redwood staff, service providers, researchers and women who experienced violence by an intimate partner. The guide covers a range of topics including developing an emergency escape plan, leaving, what to prepare, as well as strategies for safety in various situations (e.g. online, at home, at work, in the community). The guide provides space to write down important people to contact, phone numbers, what to do in a violent situation, personal risks, institutional risks, cultural risks and protective actions. Request a PDF Toolkit at www.theredwood.com/what-we-do/learning-and-resources/.</p>
 <p>Neighbours, Friends & Families</p>	<p>Safety planning for Women Who are Abused</p> <p>Through the Neighbours, Friends, and Families Campaign, the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children highlights strategies women can use to protect themselves and their child(ren) from a violent partner, including strategies while living with the aggressor and getting ready to leave, how to leave, and post-separation. For more information, visit www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca/about/about-us?q=how-to-help/safety-planning</p>
 <p>Make It Our Business We all have a role to play in addressing Workplace Domestic Violence</p>	<p>Safety Planning at Work</p> <p>Through the Make It Our Business Campaign, the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children created “Safety planning at work,” which is a document that offers strategies employers may use to keep employees safe in the workplace including public access to the employee, phone calls, leaving work, confidentiality of employee’s information (e.g. work schedule, personal contact information). Access the document at www.makeitourbusiness.ca/sites/makeitourbusiness.ca/files/MIOB_Safety_Planning_at_Work_0.pdf</p>

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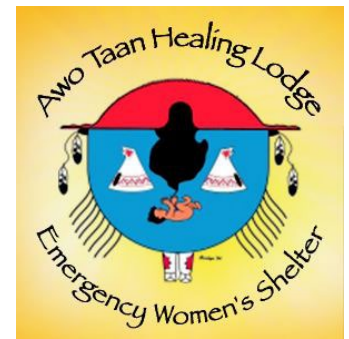
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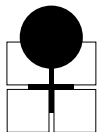


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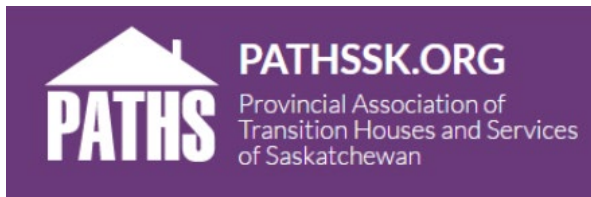


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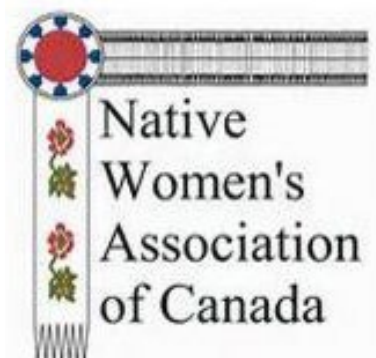
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