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**TECHNICAL REPORT**

**LEGAL INFORMATION  
AND WIFE ABUSE  
IN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES**

**San San Sy  
and  
Sudha Choldin**

**Legal Resource Centre  
University of Alberta**

**March 1994**

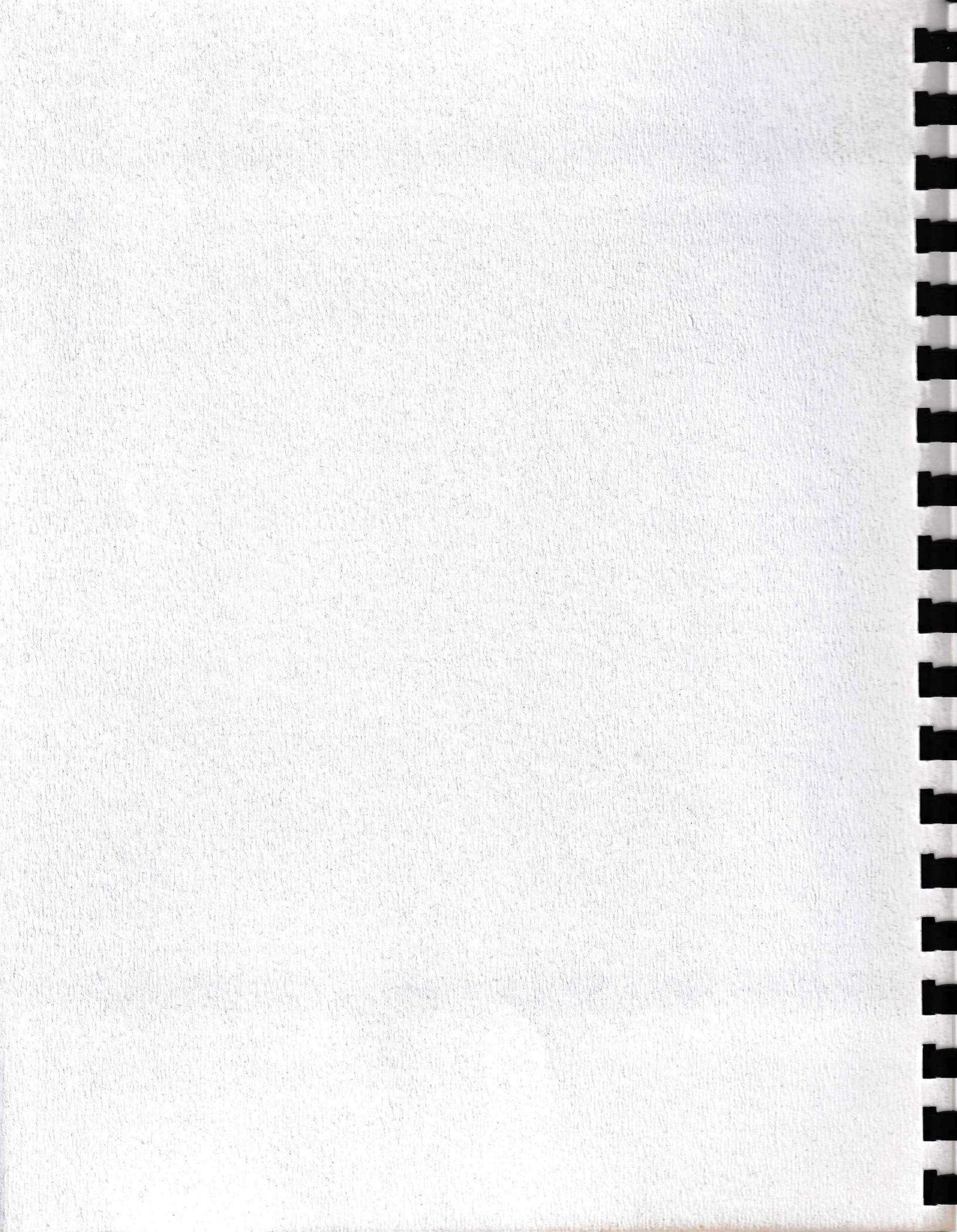
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solely those of the author and do not necessarily  
represent the views of the Department of Justice Canada.*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Key Concepts .....	1
1.2 Brief Review of the Literature .....	3
1.3 Understanding Wife Abuse in Immigrant Communities .....	5
<b>2.0 METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>7</b>
2.1 Interview Schedule .....	8
2.2 Selection of Agencies .....	8
2.3 Selection of Interviewer and Researchers .....	9
2.4 Analysis of Data .....	9
2.5 Reliability and Validity of the Survey .....	9
2.6 Limitations of the Research Process .....	10
<b>3.0 FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>13</b>
3.1 Immigrant Serving Agencies (ISAs) .....	13
3.2 Immigrants and the ISAs .....	14
3.3 Wife Abuse in the Immigrant Community and the ISAs .....	15
3.4 Role of Legal Information and Legal Services .....	19
3.5 Recurring Themes: A Summary .....	24
3.5.1 Isolation .....	24
3.5.2 Disenfranchisement .....	25
3.5.3 Distrust of Political and Legal Institutions .....	25
3.5.4 Cultural Constraints .....	25
3.5.5 Racism .....	25
3.5.6 Language Training .....	25
3.5.7 Cross-cultural Training .....	26
3.5.8 Spectrum of Violence .....	26
3.5.9 The Search for Identity .....	26
<b>4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>35</b>



## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A	Immigrant Serving Agencies in Alberta Contacted by the Researchers
Appendix B	Schedule of Interviews
Appendix C	Sample Letter
Appendix D	Structured Interview Schedule for Workers



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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This report was commissioned by the Department of Justice Canada to explore the role legal information and the legal system could play in meeting the needs of immigrant women who experience wife abuse.

The findings of the report are based on semi-structured interviews with service providers from immigrant serving agencies (ISAs). The report begins with brief descriptions of the key concepts. These descriptions provide the reader with working definitions and serve to contextualize the findings. We also discuss the current understanding of wife abuse in general and briefly review wife abuse in the immigrant community.

The next section of the report explains the process used to develop the interview schedule and to identify the role of service providers who participated in this study.

The third section of the report synthesizes the information provided by the key informants and describes themes that recurred throughout the research. The conclusion, based on the data, incorporates possible strategies and interventions to meet the needs of immigrant women who experience abuse.

The final sections of this report comprise a list of references and an annotated bibliography. The list of references provide information about the works cited in the research and the annotated bibliography focuses on wife abuse in the immigrant community. Appendices A through D provide other information on the research.

### **1.1 Key Concepts**

To approach the issue of wife abuse in the immigrant community in an informed, realistic and consistent manner, some understanding of key concepts and major issues is essential. Without such an understanding, potential interventions and strategies could be developed from differing perspectives and could be counterproductive. Therefore, this report will provide working definitions on (1) what is wife abuse, and (2) who are immigrant women.

#### **Wife Abuse**

A definition of wife abuse needs to encompass all types of aggression experienced by women. Aggression can be broadly understood as the use of force to achieve one's own end in a conflict (Steinmetz, 1977). Generally, wife abuse is seen to have four dimensions:

(1) Psychological Abuse: This form of aggression undermines a person's self-worth and is operationalized as of lack of communication or a total refusal to communicate or acknowledge the other person's presence (Hofeller, 1982; Larouche, 1986).

(2) Verbal Abuse: This type of abuse encompasses intimidation by threats, private and public put-downs and expressions of contempt (Larouche, 1986).

(3) Physical Abuse: This type of violence involves the use of physical force and includes hitting, pushing and shoving. It can result in wounds, bruises, broken bones and abrasions, and general bodily harm (Hilberman, 1980; Roy, 1977; Gelles, 1980).

(4) Sexual Abuse: This category encompasses the use of violence in sexual relations. Violence and coercion are used to force a person to participate in a sexual activity, or violence is part of the sexual activity itself (Larouche, 1986).

### Immigrant Women

In 1967, the quota system, which limited the numbers of people allowed to enter Canada from Third World countries, was replaced by the Immigration Act. The 1967 Act allowed immigrants into Canada in accordance with the needs of the employment market (Basran, 1983). Immigrants who had come before the 1967 Immigration Act were ideologically similar to the founding peoples and were culturally and ethnically related. The immigrants who came after the 1967 Act were ideologically different to the founding peoples and culturally and ethnically unrelated (Thomas, 1990). This difference complicates the definition of the term "immigrant." When one uses the term "immigrant," is one referring to anyone born and brought up outside Canada, or is one referring to someone who faces barriers and discrimination because they were brought up outside Canada?

In the strictest sense, the term "immigrant women in Canada" refers to women who have landed immigrant status in Canada. But as Ng (1988) points out "...in everyday life, however, women who are white, educated and English-speaking are rarely considered to be immigrant women" (p. 15). Therefore, although not technically correct, the term "immigrant women" generally refers to women who are members of visible minorities and whose culture and language make it difficult for them to cope and adapt to Canadian society. This understanding of the concept "immigrant women" is also supported in the work of Wiebe (1985) and Bodnar, Majury and Riutort (1989).

Being an immigrant is not a personal trait particular to an individual. It is a process that starts when a person immigrates to another country. In other words, it is a political and social construct (Sassen-Koob, 1981, cited in Ng, 1988). A woman becomes an immigrant after she leaves her native country and particular political system and migrates to



another. It is a social construct because after migrating she is integrated into the labour market and into a social hierarchy.

## 1.2 Brief Review of the Literature

Once the definition of the term "wife abuse" has been determined, one question that remains is, "what is the scope of wife abuse?" Given our growing understanding of wife abuse and the problems associated with collecting data on such a private problem, assessments about the incidence of wife abuse vary a great deal (Straus and Gelles, 1986).

A study by Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz (1980), based on a U.S. national sample, found that 12 percent of the wives surveyed were battered during the year of the survey. MacLeod's (1980) estimate, based on a Canadian survey, puts the figure at 10 percent. MacLeod's estimate was officially accepted by the Canadian House of Commons in 1982. In a more recent work, MacLeod (1987) estimates that one million women in Canada may be abused each year.

Assessing the scope of the problem is subject to definitional and methodological problems because women who experience abuse are not one homogeneous category, but they come from varied educational, economic and family backgrounds. As MacLeod (1987) points out "...battered women are not so different from other women..." (p. 5). There is no typical profile that will identify a woman as being at risk of being abused. However, the estimated number of women experiencing wife abuse indicates it is a problem of great significance to our society.

MacLeod (1987) points out that although various factors such as alcohol abuse, poverty and stresses may be associated with wife abuse, they are not causally linked to wife abuse. With the growing awareness of the problem has come a recognition that any woman could be a potential victim and any man a potential abuser.

There are two major perspectives put forward to explain wife abuse.

### Feminist Perspective

Feminists working in the area of wife abuse view it as a problem created by existing social structures. According to the feminist view, violence against women results from an imbalance in the societal power structures. By promoting and supporting unequal roles based on gender, social systems allow men to dominate women (Boyd, 1985; MacLeod, 1980; Walker, 1979, 1984; Dobash and Dobash, 1979). As Bowker's (1983) and Straus and Hotelling's (1980) research has shown, power is a prized asset in a marital relationship. In a given relationship, should the balance of power shift in favour of the woman, some men may resort to the use of violence to shift the balance of power in their favour.

In summary, a feminist perspective uses gender and power as explanatory constructs in understanding wife abuse. In addition, the feminist perspective views the family as a societal institution that reflects the functions and structures of society. When employing a feminist explanation to wife abuse, it is important that gender and power be understood within the socio-historical context of the family.

### Psychological Perspective

This perspective seeks to explain wife abuse through individual characteristics. Depending on the focus of the study, the characteristics may belong to the abuser or to the woman experiencing the abuse.

As Bogard (1988) explains, the two commonly offered psychological explanations are (1) psychodynamic theories, and (2) social learning theories. The former focuses on personality traits, the use of defence mechanisms and the possibility of psychopathology as possible causes of wife abuse. Under this model, Bogard (1988) explains, "...abusive men have been labelled passive-dependent, infantile, or lacking impulse control, while battered women have been defined as masochistic, paranoid or depressed" (p. 16). Social learning theory, on the other hand, explains behaviour through learning. Theorists using the social learning perspective explain abuse through role models and the presence of violence in an individual's family of origin.

However, it must be pointed out that to date no typical personality type that can be associated with the abuser or the abused has been developed. Abusive men do not necessarily evidence psychopathological characteristics and, as research (MacLeod, 1987; Walker, 1979, 1984) has indicated, all types of women experience abuse at the hands of their husbands.

Psychological theories tend to focus on psychopathological traits in either or both partners, but they do not address the issue of power nor do they place abuse in a socio-historical context. Feminist theoreticians, while acknowledging that some wife abuse may be a result of psychopathology, understand the phenomenon primarily through power and gender.



### 1.3 Understanding Wife Abuse in Immigrant Communities

The varying perspectives on wife abuse indicate that it is a multi-faceted problem. The phenomenon gets an additional layer of complexity when the focus of enquiry is an immigrant woman who is abused.

Violence against women is common to all racial and ethnic groups, and crosses geographical boundaries (NiCarthy, 1989; Heise, 1989). When examining the abuse experienced by an immigrant woman, it is necessary to take into account the context in which she experiences it. She is in a new country isolated by lack of language and adapting to values, norms and laws quite different from her homeland (Wiebe, 1985; MacLeod and Shin, 1990). The challenge of adaption adds to the already complex problem of wife abuse. Although the problems of immigration and adaption vary because of economic, social, educational and racial status, immigration is, nonetheless, an additional variable that is not present for the mainstream population of abused women.

The inability to speak English is an effective barrier to the integration process of an immigrant (Thomas, 1990). Thomas (1990) points out that the impact of this lack of linguistic facility is experienced differently by gender. Language programs are primarily provided to heads of households, which in most cases means men. As a consequence, immigrant women are denied access to government-funded language programs, which restricts their participation in all aspects of society and confines them to their own community. The women are thus isolated and denied knowledge of modes of interaction that are culturally determined. As other family members become acculturated through work and school, the gap between the women and their families widens and the women become isolated even within their own family (Wiebe, 1985). MacLeod (1987) showed that abused women in Canadian mainstream society suffer isolation. However, an immigrant woman who is abused suffers isolation because she is an immigrant *and* because she is abused, which heightens her sense of aloneness (MacLeod and Shin, 1990). An additional complication of the linguistic and cultural isolation is that in a crisis situation, immigrant women may not be able to access the services they need.

For an immigrant, the social structures and institutions that guide interpersonal relationships, family structures and educational systems can be very different from mainstream Canadian society. In many countries, religion, besides providing customs, traditions and spiritual solace, is the basis for laws and government. For an immigrant, religious practices provide a sense of continuity and identity in the new country. However, religion may also "...set up barriers to adoption of new ideas, new roles and new ways of seeing" (Wiebe, 1985, p. 9). It may prevent an immigrant from adopting customs and practices that are seen as contradictory to her religious beliefs (Kohli, 1991).

Most immigrants come from a highly patriarchal culture. Men are the heads of households and often of extended families. They have the authority to make decisions

regarding work, finances, education and discipline (Choldin, in press; Ho, cited in Crites, 1991; Kohli, 1991; Rafiq, 1991). In contrast, in Canada many functions, which in the home country were performed by the family or the extended family, are performed by specialized institutions or agencies. Such changes challenge the power dynamics of an immigrant family. Traditional roles often get redefined. In Canada, women have legal equality and Canadian families "aspire to the modern non-paternalistic egalitarian model" (Thomas, 1990, p. 21). The cultural ideal of a non-paternalistic family (although not always attained by Canadian families) can be a source of problems for the immigrant family. Ng and Ramires, cited in Thomas (1990), suggest that immigrant women value the equality and freedom Canada has to offer. However, the shift in values can increase the potential for violence and conflict as immigrant men may seek to maintain their traditional authoritarian role and power. Ng's and Ramires' position that men use violence to gain power and control is supported by Bowker (1983) and by Straus and Hotaling (1980) in their work with mainstream populations.

The educational system may play an unplanned part in the erosion of the immigrant family. The school system exposes the immigrant family's children to the dominant culture. Through this exposure and peer pressure, the children begin to conform to the dominant culture and in the process may become alienated or distant from their parents. Children may feel a sense of shame about the non-English-speaking status of their parents, most often their mother. The mother, in time, may come to depend on her children for translation and linkages to the English-speaking world (Wiebe, 1985). The role reversal erodes the woman's self-esteem and the family structure.

These three aspects -- a struggle for identity, an immigrant's relationship to mainstream social systems and values, and problems with language and communication -- add to the multi-faceted problem of wife abuse.

The above assumptions formed the basis of our research questionnaire and guided our inquiry about the needs of immigrant women who are abused and the hurdles that must be overcome to provide meaningful services to the women and their families.



## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

As discussed earlier, women who experience abuse vary greatly in their education, economic status and family background. When we add the additional variable "immigrant women," then they also vary in ethnicity, culture and language. It is important to collect data without preconceived ideas about the nature of the problem and about possible interventions.

The usual practice of collecting data by using a survey was not used for the following reasons:

- (1) It would limit the information to the specific questions asked and not allow the subject to provide additional information.
- (2) It would not allow us to ask questions that would arise from the information being provided.

We adopted a qualitative approach, which builds upon the understanding of a subject's experiences and direct encounters with a phenomenon (Giorgi, 1970; Aanstoos, 1986). The approach also allowed us to "...value people's subjectivity, knowledge and capacity" (Shin, 1992, p. 3).

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with workers from immigrant serving agencies (ISAs) across Alberta formed the basis of this document. (See Appendix A for a list of the ISAs contacted.) The purpose of the interviews was as follows:

- (1) To elicit information about the role legal information could and does play in addressing the issue of wife abuse.
- (2) To seek information about the scope and type of wife abuse present in the immigrant community and the types of interventions an ISA was able to make on behalf of a woman who was abused.
- (3) To look at the experience and training of ISA workers who work with women who were abused.

As this was an exploratory study, not every service agency working with the immigrant and refugee population was contacted. The questions were designed to tap the experiential knowledge base of the workers, but not infringe on the confidentiality of individual clients.

## 2.1 Interview Schedule

A 25-question semi-structured interview was developed. The initial questions were developed by reviewing a similar type of schedule (Burton, 1988; Straus, 1979; MacLeod and Shin, 1990; MacLeod, 1987; Wiebe, 1985). The first draft of the interview was reviewed by Department of Justice Canada and by the Population Research Laboratory, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta. The revised survey was used to conduct a pre-test interview with two ISA workers in Edmonton. Based on their suggestions, the final draft was prepared (see Appendix D).

## 2.2 Selection of Agencies

Ideally, the survey results should have been based on information provided by the abused immigrant women themselves. Instead, we decided to interview the workers

- (1) because of the private and often dangerous nature of the problem
- (2) because women who have experienced abuse are usually unwilling to discuss their experiences with researchers
- (3) because we were concerned about exacerbating an already painful situation.

Through the Office of the Prevention of Family Violence, Department of Family and Social Services Alberta, we were informed that women's shelters across Alberta did not keep information on the ethnicity of women who are abused. The information from shelters focuses on demographic data, socioeconomic status and type and duration of abuse, but not on the nationality or ethnicity of the women. For the purposes of this study, it appeared more appropriate to interview ISA workers. An ISA is usually the first contact an immigrant has with a service agency, and an ISA worker is the first source of information and referral for an immigrant. By interviewing ISA workers, we were able to access the experience of more than one abused immigrant woman.

A list of ISAs was provided by the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies. The selection of specific agencies was guided by the focus of the agency, size of the agency, its experience in handling wife abuse incidence and the availability of the workers to be interviewed. Twenty agencies were initially contacted (see Appendix A) and 11 eventually participated. Seventeen workers were interviewed. Two interviews were used to pre-test the interview schedule; the data are based on 15 interviews. All interviews except three were taped and subsequently transcribed. Information from the three untaped interviews is based on notes taken by the researcher. The variation in data collection was a result of problems with equipment.



A letter (see Appendix C) introducing the study and the interviewer was sent to each agency director. A follow-up phone contact arranged for interviews. The selection of the specific workers to be interviewed was left to the discretion of the agency directors.

### **2.3 Selection of Interviewer and Researchers**

The interviewer was selected on the basis of her experience and qualifications. That the interviewer is an immigrant woman lent additional credibility to the process. The study is researched and written by two immigrant women.

### **2.4 Analysis of Data**

A qualitative approach was taken to analyze the data because the database of this report was derived from interviews. All responses to each question in the interview were amalgamated. The amalgamated interviews were then used as the raw database. The procedural steps used for analysis are those recommended by Colaizzi (1978):

- (1) Review all the subjects responses, from now on also referred to as "protocols," to a given question.
- (2) Extract from the protocols "phrases and sentences that directly pertained to the investigated phenomenon; this is known as extracting significant statements" (Colaizzi, 1978; p. 59).
- (3) Try to spell out the underlying meaning of a particular response. Colaizzi calls this "formulating meaning."
- (4) Organize the meanings derived from the protocols into clusters of themes.

### **2.5 Reliability and Validity of the Survey**

An essential question about any information collected by a survey is, "To what extent or degree is this information valid and reliable?" The concept of reliability and validity is crucial to the usefulness of any information as it deals with issues of credibility, trustworthiness and dependability. According to Lincoln and Guba (1987), some steps that ensure credibility, trustworthiness and dependability are as follows:

- (1) Participants have extensive exposure to the phenomenon about which the information is gathered.

(2) Informal checking, which can be accomplished by soliciting feedback from the respondents as the interview progresses.

(3) Formal checking, which can be achieved by formally asking for additional input beyond that which has been sought so far and by presenting the respondents with a summary of the findings.

This study sought credibility and dependability through:

(1) Collecting information on the problems about wife abuse in the immigrant population from well-informed and experienced workers. The participating agencies selected the workers to be interviewed on the basis of their experience with immigrant wife abuse incidents. Many workers interviewed had extensive exposure to the phenomenon.

(2) Information was collected in face-to-face interviews to establish personal contact with the informants and to allow the interviewer to respond to non-verbal communication. This personal effort provided a message that the researchers believed the study was a valuable and worthwhile endeavour. This effort, we believe, in turn elicited a greater commitment from the interviewees.

(3) The workers interviewed were encouraged to ask for clarification about the questions posed, which served to reduce the possibility of misinterpretation and distortion of the responses.

(4) At the end of the interview, feedback was formally solicited from each person interviewed.

## **2.6 Limitations of the Research Process**

There were two limitations to this research process:

(1) It essentially reports the perceptions of the service providers and not those of the women themselves. These perceptions may be different from the perceptions of the people directly experiencing the problem. Therefore, the understanding it can provide is limited. However, as an explanatory study it provides us with information and direction for further research questions.

(2) Although this study was conceived of as an Alberta study, it is essentially a study of communities based in Edmonton and in three centres in southern Alberta (Calgary, Red Deer and Lethbridge). This geographical limitation is the result of the



nature of ISAs: There is only one ISA north of Edmonton and, when contacted, they stated that they do not have extensive experience with wife abuse.

Although a single study cannot take into account all the diverse factors that may affect the lives of immigrant women who are abused, it can deepen our understanding of the issue and provide some markers and guides for further study or policy development.

### 3.0 FINDINGS

The following section is a synthesis of the concerns and suggestions provided by the key informants. We have highlighted the concerns and suggestions by extracting significant statements from the interviews. This process allows us to give voice to people who have direct experience of the phenomenon of wife abuse among immigrant women, and it verifies our understanding of the phenomenon. The findings are organized into four parts: 1) an overview of ISA's; 2) ISA's definition of immigrant; 3) role of ISA's in addressing wife abuse in the immigrant community; 4) role of legal information and legal services in addressing wife abuse. Each part contains statements taken directly from the protocols as well as our interpretation of these statements. The final part of the findings consists of the underlying themes that emerge from the data. These themes speak to the experience of the immigrant women who have experienced abuse.

#### 3.1 Immigrant Serving Agencies (ISAs)

The mandate of ISAs is to facilitate an immigrant's transition into mainstream Canadian society. ISAs offer a variety of services, which vary with each agency. The goals of these agencies range from "help[ing] immigrant women to participate in Canadian society" to "the empower[ing] of immigrant women." ISAs provide "ESL [English as a Second Language] classes, employment, settlement and integration services" and a "multicultural education program to help educate the community." They sometimes provide programs to help immigrant youth integrate into Canadian society. They offer host programs with Canadian volunteers matched to new immigrants to befriend them and to assist them with integration issues. ISAs provide information about the "health care system, family law, tax law and education." The services are geared towards ensuring that "individuals and families achieve the better life, and provide and facilitate their well being. Basically and mainly, we are dealing with families and relationship issues." ISA workers come from a variety of skill backgrounds, ranging from community workers to nurses and teachers. Given the broad mandate of ISAs, this diversity appears to serve them well.

Most immigrants find out about the services offered by ISAs through word of mouth and from friends, interpreters, physicians and ESL teachers. "I did a survey and, based on a random sample, 70 percent of the clients were referred by a friend." Staff members of ISAs try to reach the immigrant community in various ways. They "go to different schools and talk to ESL teachers, use the media, go to the apartment buildings and drop off flyers." In addition, an effort is made to inform the immigrant community through posters in "Safeways, Co-ops, malls and ethno-cultural stores."

Often, ISAs act as referring agencies, which involves contact with social services, police and therapists. In some cases, smaller ISAs refer to bigger ISAs or to mainstream services. However, because of language and cultural barriers, referrals are often a problem.



ISA workers express concern that mainstream services are often not culturally appropriate for immigrants. Although "one option is to refer people to some mainstream providers like the women's shelter or an agency that provides counselling ... quite often for immigrant women these may not be realistic." Furthermore, "There are a lot of agencies, but some of them do not apply to immigrant women, because these women are not used to our social service system." One key informant states that "Because of language problems and because counselling is not a common concept, I do not often make referrals to another agency. Instead, I will use a member of the community who has taken on the role of pseudo family member." Another key informant notes that immigrant wife abuse cases are referred to mainstream professionals because "I'm not an expert, and you know every case is different. If I can't handle it, or it's going to take long-term counselling I refer...."

### **3.2 Immigrants and the ISAs**

Most key informants use the term "immigrant" to include not only recent newcomers to Canada, but also people who may have arrived many years ago. Canadian-born visible minorities are sometimes included in this definition. The key informants' definition of "immigrant" is more in keeping with Wiebe's (1985) definition rather than that of the federal government which includes people whose culture and/or language make it difficult for them to adapt to Canadian society. This understanding is reflected in the following statement: "If she had come from somewhere else and she is not born in Canada, she might have been here for ten years, but she is an immigrant."

The definition also includes people who are in some way not integrated into mainstream society because they have "...special needs and those special needs are legal, cultural and social needs...." Sometimes the term "immigrant" refers to a visible minority: "We will also work with visible minorities, not born outside of Canada." This approach reflects a recognition that there are people who find themselves outside the mainstream society for linguistic, racial or cultural reasons, and these people, although born and raised in Canada, have needs similar to those of immigrants.

This broad definition of immigrants gets restricted when individuals try to access government-funded services: not all immigrants are eligible for the same government programs or benefits. "If a program is funded by the federal government, we must use their criteria of an immigrant, and then not all people can be served. Other programs not directly funded by the government are open to all." Despite the limitations placed by government policy, the working definition used by ISAs of an immigrant person appears to be rather broad. Although the types of services offered by ISAs may vary because of legislation, it seems that ISAs respond to immigrant needs beyond those recognized by the federal or provincial governments.

### 3.3 Wife Abuse in the Immigrant Community and the ISAs

The scope of wife abuse in the immigrant community is difficult to assess. A similar difficulty with assessing wife abuse in the mainstream society has been noted by Strauss and Gelles (1986) and by MacLeod (1983, 1987).

In general, the key informants are uncomfortable about giving an estimate on the extent of wife abuse incidents. This is because:

- (1) There are no commonly used criteria for defining abuse.
- (2) Since there is no systematic policy to check for this problem, disclosure depends primarily on rapport.
- (3) Disclosure depends on the immigrant woman's understanding of what comprises abuse.

In the immigrant community, the problem of getting accurate data is complicated by the women's fears of "being ostracize[d] by their own community; because in the country they come from, there is no separation, there is no divorce and the whole community will look down on them."

Incidents of wife abuse are seldom disclosed to the ISA workers in the initial visits. Key informants note that such incidents most often were discussed after a trusting relationship has been established. None of the key informants routinely ask about wife abuse as part of their standard intake, which reflects their belief that the disclosure of wife abuse incidents only takes place in an atmosphere of established trust. Intake questions are usually concerned with demographic data: "...It depends on why they have been referred to initial intake. They would be asked what is the nature of the problem and some immigrant women might not figure out right at the beginning to say it is this [wife abuse] but they will think of other family problems and in the course of the services, it might come out." Another key informant notes: "People never tell me right away. It takes a few meetings, a few sessions for it to come, but when we get this hint or message coming from them, we then ask indirectly." Sometimes "women will come in and present a different issue and it takes a little bit of time and trust, some investment in the relationship, before they start opening up about the topic." It is a matter of "...earn[ing] their trust so they can tell us anything." It could be that "in her cultural background, it is a shame to talk about it. She will talk to her extended family -- her mother, her sister -- but not a stranger. Maybe I'll go to her house and that will make her feel comfortable."

The issue of wife abuse is seen as something that crosses cultural and ethnic barriers. One key informant notes: "I just want to tell you that abuse is not something cultural. I would not be surprised if the percentage of abused is the same as Canadian



women. I can't say that immigrants are more or less violent." Another key informant states: "My personal experience is that violence is not mainly in one special ethnic group. It's all in the general public, in the mainstream Canadian society too. I don't see any bigger proportion in one community only. I think it is everywhere."

Although wife abuse is not seen as an immigrant phenomenon, ISA workers note that there are some variables of the immigrant experience that add a unique dimension to wife abuse. Based on the information provided by the ISA workers, we have categorized these variables as follows:

- (1) Effects of immigration
- (2) Factors related to being an immigrant woman
- (3) Racism.

The statements of key informants reflect some of the variables that are specific to immigrants and have an effect on wife abuse. The process of immigration puts a strain on individual and family resources. "Coping mechanisms get overloaded as the stress increases and this leads to violence." "Frustration about the financial situation, the changes in their lifestyle, changes in their economic situation, you know all this contributes to the family disfunction."

In the case of an immigrant family, both the process of immigration and the subsequent integration into mainstream Canadian society appear to affect abuse. Often, part of the immigration process results in "men not finding jobs. They are really depressed. There are financial problems and child-related problems." "Most of the time, because of the economical position, there is a feeling that you are no longer in control. You can't speak the language. It frustrates a lot of people and then especially a man will take it out on (his) family, because who do you take it out on?" The stresses of immigration are compounded because "life isn't nearly as successful as they think it is going to be when they leave their home country, and then all sorts of problems crop up."

ISA workers seem to believe that as the immigrant family becomes more stable, abuse brought about by external stressors decreases. There is no mention of the specific time period wherein wife abuse incidents start to decrease. The general perception is that "there can be change because they no longer feel frustrated or feel more secure economically, their language is progressing or they know better (not to) ... or the wife is going to work and she is more independent...." "But after they have integrated, and they know how to go to counselling, I think abuse will be reduced."

Although the stresses of immigration may exacerbate abuse, the overall opinion seems to be that abusive behaviour begins prior to immigrating and on the whole tends to decrease in Canada "because here the police can be called and when they're called they will

intervene. Often in Latin America the police won't get involved. Here the police will lay charges and prosecute ... the men are more careful and scared." "When they move, the violence decreases. This, I think, is because of the laws in Canada." Besides the law offering protection, there are often support services and a different attitude towards a marital relationship. These services offer the couples involved in an abusive relationship different options. "If you have to leave your husband or wife, there is some kind of counselling or help you can get. Maybe in their country, they would like to get out of their abusive relationship, but they don't have any way of getting out." Key informants note that one type of abuse appears to lead to other forms. Abuse seems to begin as "verbal abuse...." The type of wife abuse that the workers deal with most frequently is physical, which could be because "physical abuse is more noticeable and harder to hide."

The physical, verbal and emotional abuse is compounded by additional dimensions that are unique to immigrant women:

- (1) Isolation, which is experienced by most women who are abused, takes on an even more debilitating form for immigrant women. "The wife often does not speak English and this leads to her isolation."
- (2) There is the fear of being ostracized by her community. Because "tradition supports men, the women do not speak out about abuse."
- (3) There is the fear of deportation. "Deportation is the big thing which immigrant women really fear about it." The fear seems to work two ways: the woman fears deportation for herself, or "the wife thinks I am going to report her husband and he will be deported."

Racism, although not directly related to wife abuse, is seen to be a complicating factor for immigrant women who experience abuse. One key informant noted that the "mainstream population doesn't have problems with racism. Racism plays a role with just about everything connected to immigrants."

The ISAs offer services in counselling, mediation and referrals, and help with "parenting, accommodations, legal guidance." The key informants believe that often "by addressing their [the women's] other issues, I am addressing the issue of abuse." The services provided by an ISA has cross-overs with many areas, so an ISA worker needs to be familiar with a variety of issues including legal, health, education and vocational.

Overall, ISA workers do not seem to be adequately recognized for the vast scope of interventions and services they provide. The lack of recognition is reflected in the lack of adequate funding, which in turn prevents ISAs from recruiting workers with specialized skills. ISAs need recognition by mainstream agencies and funding bodies about their role in preventing wife abuse and in offering supportive counselling to women who are battered.



The range of services that ISA workers are required to provide is vast in scope and often they would benefit from "speakers, so that key informants can give good information." There needs to be greater dialogue between ISAs and mainstream agencies if women who are abused are to receive comprehensive services.

There appears to be consensus on the importance of ISAs having immigrant staff members with required skills and training: "It is important to have immigrants on the staff because of issues around culture, language, role modelling, as well as client comfort level." At the same time, there is concern about not becoming isolated or insulated: "...We are working together in a larger community, we don't like our women to become ghettoised." In addition, there is concern that skills and qualifications not be compromised in the push to have immigrants on staff: "...If they are qualified, I think it is good because clients would feel they belong to the agency. Otherwise they are all white....[with all] English-speaking counsellors, they [the women] don't feel they belong to the agency."

There is also support for the benefits to the staff in general of an ethnic mixture. "I think a mixture is good because we teach each other ... and I consider it to be a rich environment to work in, knowing that many of my co-workers have gone through the immigration experience and I draw on them often."

Overall, key informants seem to prefer to have a mixture of immigrants and mainstream Canadians on staff; that such a mixture, as long as qualifications and skills are not compromised, is the ideal solution and response to immigrant needs.

ISA workers do not view wife abuse as an immigrant issue, i.e., wife abuse is not seen as an immigrant phenomenon. There is consensus among the key informants that the needs of immigrant women who are abused are the same as their non-immigrant counterparts. However, it is also recognized that because the women are immigrants, their needs have some unique aspects. Issues that need additional attention are language, the sense of lack of control and power, and the lack of financial independence.

What gives the immigrant woman's needs a heightened urgency is that her sense of helplessness and isolation are often compounded by her being an immigrant. Her sense of isolation owing to abuse is intensified because often she is also isolated by not being able to speak the language: "They need a safe place, but at the same time one that does not isolate them, a place where food and language are not strange." Another key informant notes: "They need services in their first language, whether it be a woman's group, or an interpreter or a counsellor." Immigrant women who are abused need access to supportive networks that will serve to reduce this sense of aloneness and contribute to their sense of well being. They need a supportive milieu where they can talk about and explore their experience with abuse, their understanding of abuse and their experience of being an immigrant woman. "They need to be aware about violence in general." "The underlying condition would be giving them support, moral support and encouraging them."

It is not just the woman who experiences this sense of isolation, but her whole family. "Suddenly the family has got no supports. They have lost family connections and friends. A lot of losses; and now they are faced with incredible problems. They feel isolated." The loss the entire family experiences intensifies the sense of powerless and helplessness that an abused, immigrant woman experiences. The reduced options that an immigrant family experiences, in turn, reduces the perceived options for an immigrant woman who is abused.

There is also a need to support immigrant women towards "economic independence; financial independence is very important to achieve but there should be changes in their psychological thinking. In an ethnic community, leaving your husband might mean leaving that community too."

Besides recognizing that immigrant women who are abused may require some specialized services, ISA workers feel that the families of these women also need interventions. Again, although the immigrant families' needs are essentially the same as those of the non-immigrant families under similar circumstances, services need to be modified to meet the unique needs of the immigrant family.

In many ways, the needs and experiences of the immigrant family where wife abuse is taking place are similar to the needs of the abused women themselves. The family experiences isolation. "The family needs to find a substitute family system. The immigrant family is very lonely here." The family members need training so "they don't end up washing dishes." In many ways, providing for the family unit's needs is seen as meeting the needs of the woman: "that is all they [the family] have here. They haven't got the rest of their family here. They depend upon the family unit quite a bit." Leaving an abusive husband might mean a loss of not just a relationship but a whole community, which has an implication not just for the woman but for the whole family. For instance, there needs to be a recognition of the effect an abusive relationship has on the children. "We don't want children becoming abusive, there should be family counselling or individual counselling for children."

In summary, according to the ISA workers there is a definite problem with wife abuse in the immigrant community. It does not appear to be significantly different in scope and nature from wife abuse in the mainstream community. What sets wife abuse apart in the immigrant community is that abuse takes place within the context of being an immigrant, which means that all the problems and challenges of being an immigrant are added to the problems of wife abuse.

### **3.4 Role of Legal Information and Legal Services**

Immigrants are given general information on Canadian law during orientation classes for new immigrants. "When we give orientation to the new arrivals, we talk about Canadian



law, talk about the Child Welfare Act, talk about family law but it's not really intensive, it's just initial information." For the immigrants, orientation classes are the first formal channel of acquiring information about living in the Canadian society. At this point of the immigration process, they tend to be more interested in daily survival issues such as employment, housing, transportation, education and health services. "When they are going through this process and are given a deluge of information, I don't know how much of it they retain."

Some ISAs provide general information to immigrant communities about wife abuse. Different delivery mechanisms are used by different agencies. As part of the orientation process, one organization offered "information on health care, safety, family violence and wife abuse." Other agencies have tried "seminars and discussion groups and guest speakers...." Pamphlets or brochures have also been used.

Immigrant women on the whole are not informed about the laws affecting wife abuse because of their lack of fluency in English and often because of being isolated. "It seems often we don't reach the people that need it the most. I think it is through this channel [individual support and counselling] that we can reach people that need the assistance." Most key informants worked in a crisis intervention mode. They come in contact with immigrant women when the problem of wife abuse has been disclosed and/or when intervention is being sought. Even then, when the key informants explain the legal protection that is available to the victim, it takes some time for the victim to accept the concept and to take action. "This is partly due to the fact that many immigrant women have problems accepting this aspect of the Canadian culture and partly due to their concerns about their husbands' immigration status." They are afraid that if they report the incidence to the police, their husband might be deported. There is "... the myth that okay they go and complain to the RCMP, they might be deported. Or their husband will be put in jail right away." Being told that they can go to the police for help is not enough to assist them in making the decision to do so.

Since the key informants have generally not worked directly with abusers, their understanding about men who abuse is indirect. It is based on their work with women who have experienced abuse. Among those interviewed, there is a difference of opinion about the scope of immigrant men's knowledge about the laws regarding wife abuse. Some think that "they [the men] don't realise how exactly it is here." Others think that "men are aware but most, especially the ones who are abusing, would not want their wives to know about this" or that "they [the men] think they can do anything and they cannot be charged." Though these key informants seem to differ on immigrant men's understanding of wife abuse their statements do reflect one commonality - that the immigrant men do not understand Canadian law and how the law is enforced. Therefore, it is important to educate immigrant men about the legal consequences associated with abusive behaviour. This position also has direct implications for legal information services which will be addressed in the conclusion and recommendations section of this report. Informing only the women about their rights and available services will not be enough to prevent wife abuse incidents. Taking the approach



of only educating the women puts the onus on women to take action when she is not at fault. Besides, the available services are usually designed for mainstream Canadian society and when immigrant women access the services, they risk being further victimized because of lack of cultural understanding. We need "support systems for the women and education for the husbands."

Members of the extended family, e.g., parents of the married couple, are not informed about the law either. It is necessary to provide legal education to the whole family to provide a common understanding for them to support the victim. "Often grandparents are babysitting, so they need to understand about the system ... and family violence." Sometimes, the extended family is a contributing factor to the problem of wife abuse by supporting the husband's behaviour. "...Sometimes the in-laws are there encouraging the husband." Even if the parents do not endorse the husband's behaviour, the parents bring their "old values from back home" of keeping the family together. They tend to "force her [the wife] to stay with the relationship." If legal information is provided to members of the extended family, they will better understand the legal system and may be able to use it to effect change. The children need to understand that abusive behaviour towards spouse and family members is unacceptable and punishable by Canadian laws, and this understanding might mediate their adult relationships.

The key informants also raise the issue of the role law plays in influencing the abuser's behaviour. "Some men may know about the laws and still abuse." Clearly, knowledge of law does not guarantee lawful behaviour or action. As well, there is a sense that laws about wife abuse reflect the Canadian culture and values, which are not necessarily the same for the immigrant communities. "They hear the information but it probably takes awhile to incorporate it into their value system and the framework that they have grown up with in their country of origin." It is therefore important to provide legal information in as many settings as possible, "...upon arrival...initial orientation, may be after six months or a year, it should be reinforced." With the increased awareness of family violence in mainstream Canadian society, most ISAs are including the issue of family violence and the legal consequences of abusive behaviour in their orientation and ESL classes.

It is important to note that the immigration process changes the life of the immigrants. During the process of change, anything that is viewed as threatening to their existing identity will be rejected until such time as a process for developing a new identity begins. Even then, they may choose to retain the old values. "We are Canadians but we have to keep our values." Immigrant men whose culture viewed them as the head of household and who control their wives as they see fit consider Canadian laws as giving preference to women. This perception may play a role in their rejecting and ignoring the laws that protect women from wife abuse. "They [men] believe there is too much favouritism for women, because from their perspective women are often unfaithful or provocative." The statement, "women are getting all the support," is a prime example of some immigrant men's perception of the law.



The Canadian laws may sometimes be seen as breaking up the old tradition, and in the case of wife abuse, breaking up the family unit. "The law is good but its effect on the community and the family is not good." Often, a given policy is directly contrary to cultural norms: "In x culture, women traditionally handle the money. Here the welfare cheque goes to the man." These changes in the traditional roles of men and women contribute to the problems in the family and a distrust of formal systems. There is a need to assist immigrant men in reconciling Canadian culture with the culture of their country of origin. Telling them that wife abuse is not acceptable and is against the law in Canada is not enough to deter them. They need to accept that violence against women is not acceptable in any culture whether it is legislated by law or not and that what is different about Canada is that here there are legislated consequences when a woman is abused.

The process by which immigrant's become informed "... depends on their length of stay in Canada, their language skills and their support network." The awareness of the legal system and individual rights in the area of wife abuse varies from group to group. It also depends on the amount of effort ISA has devoted to informing the community about the legal consequences of wife abuse and the available services. One Edmonton agency, which has been working with a particular ethnic community on this issue, believes that "The incidence of wife abuse has changed in the x community. In the 80s, there was a higher incidence of family violence than there is now."

Generally, awareness about the law is a gradual process, "it's hard to put a time frame on it. I would say that if they are attending regular programming, whether it is ESL or any orientation programming that occurs at agencies like ours, then they will be exposed to that information hopefully within their first years in Canada, but there will certainly be people who miss out on this." So the process of being legally informed depends upon their language skills and their ability to access services.

Another variable that plays a role in how information is disseminated is the number of people that need to be informed. The size of the city and the size of the immigrant community tend to influence the amount of information the immigrant community has about the issue of abuse. "Because we are such a small community, the word, it gets passed around. Things spread in a community right away and they know."

The ISAs are often unable to be involved in the entire intervention process. They tend to make referrals to mainstream services. The immigrant women are unable to fully access the services because "Often women cannot speak English, therefore, it is important to have trained immigrant professionals." "In addition, services are usually provided during the day and friends cannot come to help them out due to work constraints." Even if a friend can come to interpret, it may not be effective to have an impartial translator who may try to influence the immigrant women in making decisions. Families need someone "who can act as an advocate and as an interpreter. Having professional interpreters would help the family



because the interpreter would be non-partisan, not a friend of either the husband or the wife."

The legal system itself "needs to recognize that families need someone they can trust. Often families feel disenfranchised with little or no voice. Once the immigrant women decide to involve the legal system, they don't "have enough legal assistance in terms of having lawyers explain to them and there are problems with language when communicating." Information about the legal process and about family issues such as custody and alimony can assist immigrant women in deciding whether to stay or leave the relationship. There should also be a recognition that many immigrant women would be "... more comfortable with a lawyer of their own gender."

Information on law and legal services needs to be provided in different languages using a variety of media at a variety of places in the ethnic community. In addition, there is a need to inform the mainstream social policies developer about the needs of the different cultures. Information should focus on a variety of issues and the language of delivery needs to be simple and clear. "... Women should have more recognition or awareness for themselves about the rights and laws." "They [women] need information about what kinds of alternatives are available. They need assurance that if they leave this situation they are not going to starve to death on the street." This information should be available in a simplified format and "at the same time it should be translated into their first language." "There could be some kind of public education. There should be verbal information. You could do it all. Translation, public information and then deliver it in groups orally." "If possible [help] should be available in the first language." Legal information can play a role here because at present women "...have trouble accessing it [legal services]. First of all, they don't understand what is there in the legal system for them." There is also the problem that Canadian legal procedures and systems are unfamiliar to many immigrants: "they don't understand what is going on, and I don't think the attorneys they see give them enough time. When they go into court they are lost." Legal services providers, therefore, need to be culturally sensitive and to be able to spend more time with their immigrant clients in order to ensure that they understand and are familiar with the procedures. Although Canadian procedures and the legal system are different from those of an immigrant's homeland, "...there is no official education program or intervention group for women to teach them about the new guidelines in Canada. Unless a friend or an agency counsellor or somebody would think of that for them and explain their rights to them, they wouldn't know."

Suggestions for education focus around giving information sessions and presentations in ESL classes, and having pamphlets or brochures in different languages. Opinions vary as to when this legal information should be given. Some workers questioned the impact and scope of information currently being provided. "Upon arrival, they are given some initial orientation, but how adequate is that? It's initial information and when violence does occur they don't know where to go." "You can have initial orientation, but maybe after six months or a year, [we] should be reinforcing it with a follow-up. That is very important. That is



what is lacking." There could also be "an information session given by immigration authorities right at the beginning of an immigrant's arrival in Canada. Information about the law in Canada is very important both for a man and a woman."

In addition, the language in which this information is disseminated needs to be considered "because a lot of the people that we are targeting will not speak English. So we need to look at the language." This information could be disseminated by various agencies -- "immigration, employment centres, social services, ... many agencies that deal with people could hand out information." There was also a recognition that "mainstream organizations and organizations like ours [ISAs] will have to work together with their ethnic communities, get their support and get them actively involved. We can't do it without them, or without their cooperation."

In reviewing the protocols for the role legal information can play in preventing wife abuse it became apparent that ISA workers viewed legal services and legal information as one entity. This confusion of roles points to the fact that service providers need to be provided with better information on these two topics. On the whole, staff of the ISAs are performing a commendable job as the first contact and link for the immigrants to mainstream services. But they are not in a position to effectively address the psychological and legal issues on wife abuse. They need a working knowledge on the laws affecting wife abuse, immigration and family, and a general understanding of the legal system and legal process as well as good access to mainstream services. They can play a crucial role in working with the mainstream agencies in addressing the legal and cultural issues that will ensure the accessibility of their services to immigrants.

### **3.5 Recurring Themes: A Summary**

During the interviews, certain themes recurred that reflect the experiences of immigrant women.

#### **3.5.1 Isolation**

Many key informants pointed out that the experience of immigration complicates and exaggerates the already complex problems related to wife abuse. The isolation experienced by all abused women is compounded for an immigrant woman in that her spouse and family experience isolation as well. The immigrant families often lack the social support network they had in their own country and are therefore alone. They are unable to build their social network because of language and cultural barriers. For the immigrant women who have been abused, the abusive relationship exists in a known environment whereas the outside world is foreign and unknown. It may seem safer to them to stay in the known abusive environment than to risk venturing into the unknown world without any support.

### 3.5.2 Disenfranchisement

Immigrant women do not understand Canadian laws and policies. This lack of understanding, complicated by lack of translators and the women's limited understanding of English, feeds their sense of powerlessness. They do not understand the justice system. They perceive the system as having the power to deport either them or their spouse should the abuse come to official or public awareness. They also fear that custody of the children will be awarded to their husbands.

### 3.5.3 Distrust of Political and Legal Institutions

Many immigrants come from political regimes where the legal system was used as an arm of the government to oppress people. These immigrants may distrust political and legal institutions. Often, this distrust gets transferred to Canadian systems. Such immigrants are reluctant to access the available services and resources provided by the system.

### 3.5.4 Cultural Constraints

An additional factor that exerts control over immigrant women is fear of ostracism from their ethnic community. In many cultures, there is great stigma attached to a woman who leaves her husband. She brings shame to her family and community and, within her community infrastructure, jeopardizes the opportunities for her children.

### 3.5.5 Racism

The experiences of an immigrant woman who is abused take on an extra and unique layer of complexity when racism enters the picture. Many visible minority groups have experienced racism and stereotyping. Ethnic communities do not want to acknowledge wife abuse as a problem because they do not want to lose status in the mainstream community. Being identified as an ethnic group that has a high incidence of wife abuse would fuel existing racism and stereotyping.

### 3.5.6 Language Training

Often, immigrant women do not have adequate access to language training classes. Access is limited by lack of child care arrangements and funding. Although ISAs provide language training courses and, in many cases, also have on-site day care, they are not able to provide training allowances for the women. Thus, immigrant women attending a language class continue to depend on their husbands. This dependency makes it difficult for them to consider leaving their husbands, no matter how abusive.

In addition, lack of language skills is related to lack of access to the open job market. This lack again contributes to the dependent status of the immigrant woman. Often, women



with job skills are unable to find employment as they lack language skills in English. As a consequence, immigrant women often work in low paying, unskilled jobs.

### 3.5.7 Cross-cultural Training

There is a great need for workers in mainstream services, such as social services, women's shelters, health and legal services, to understand the issues confronting the immigrant women who are abused. Immigrant women need culturally sensitized workers in mainstream service agencies to assist them in moving out of the isolation and in solving their problems.

### 3.5.8 Spectrum of Violence

Many immigrant women's experiences of violence extend beyond wife abuse. Often these experiences are related to political or economic oppression and extend to their husbands and children. The immigrant families have often experienced great physical and economic hardships. These hardships, endured by both women and men, colour the women's understanding and perceptions about violence and abuse. Often, when women seek services and relief, it is not just for themselves but also for their husbands.

### 3.5.9 The Search for Identity

Being in a new environment and being different highlights the need to maintain the original cultural identity. During time of change, holding on to what is familiar provides a much needed sense of control. Thus, for immigrant families the family relationship and the roles of husband and wife often remain very traditional, especially if the husband feels threatened by what he views as the "independence" of the wife and support provided by Canadian laws and services.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions are drawn from the results of the interviews and reflect the perceptions of the key informants. These perceptions came from their experiences of working with the immigrant women who experience wife abuse. Most key informants are involved in providing some form of intervention to immigrant women who experience abuse.

Many different factors contribute to immigrant wife abuse. The most commonly cited causes were lack of community and family support, stress, frustrations about the financial situation, and changes in lifestyle. Although these factors appear to be the same as in the mainstream community, the impact of these factors in the case of an immigrant woman is complicated by a number of additional factors including the immigrant's culture and tradition, her place in the mainstream society, racism, her uncertainty about her immigration status and her dependency.

Cultural perspectives colour the immigrants' view of the legal and political systems. Most immigrants view the legal system and the law as establishments to avoid. Bringing in the law and the legal system to resolve family problems is a foreign concept and brings shame and dishonour to the family. **A public education program that can modify some of these cultural barriers towards the use of the legal system is recommended.**

A peculiar dilemma for immigrant women who are abused is the very real possibility that they will be mistreated by the systems that supposedly are there to support them. As our findings indicate, immigrant women are marginalized economically and linguistically. Therefore, if they were to leave their abusive husbands, they would be totally dependent on the legal and the welfare systems. However, as the key informants pointed out, these systems often fail to recognize the special needs of immigrant women. **It is recommended that training in the primary job sectors be provided to immigrant women and that English as a Second Language programs be made more accessible to them.** This would allow them to move from marginalized jobs into the competitive jobs market and give them economic independence. As well, the mainstream system needs to adapt their policies to reflect a broader cultural perspective.

Adding to the immigrant women's reluctance to depend on the legal and social welfare systems is her experience with racism. The women are fearful that police may brutalize their husbands if they report the abuse (Godin, 1993). "Systematic racism in Canadian society and in the institutions of justice place racial minority women between a rock and a hard place..." (Simms, cited in Shin, 1992, p. 53). **It is recommended that ISAs work with mainstream services towards developing a better cross-cultural understanding of the existing barriers that immigrant women face in accessing these services.**



The immigrant woman who is abused needs emotional support as well as legal and counselling services. Most often, ISAs are the first contacts for these women. Since the ISAs often provide limited services, they refer these immigrant women to mainstream services. As such, they are the bridge connecting immigrant women and the Canadian society at large. To be effective, it is crucial that ISA workers are cognizant of the available mainstream services and the laws affecting wife abuse, the family and the immigration process. In light of this role, **it is recommended that ISA workers be trained in the area of legal information affecting wife abuse.** The training should include information on the law, legal procedures and protocols. It can take the form of a series of short workshops, each dealing with a specific topic such as the overview of the Canadian legal system, law on wife abuse, immigration law and procedures, court procedure, laws affecting marital relationships, family disputes and custody. Materials written in plain language need to be developed and distributed at these workshops. Such materials will serve as future reference for the ISA workers, and should be written from their perspective. As well, ISA workers could be offered training in counselling techniques, which would increase their effectiveness when working with women who are abused. This training in counselling needs to address cultural and religious differences within the immigrant women population. For example, applying the North American cultural assumption that women should be independent and free to make their own decision in an immigrant wife abuse situation would confuse the immigrant women and may immobilize her because this assumption is contrary to her upbringing and may bring shame to the family (Jang, Lee & Morello-Frosch, 1991). Ideas that produce cognitive dissonance need to be introduced with care.

Throughout the process of intervention, the abused woman needs impartial translation, i.e., translators who understand enough about the legal process and will respect her need to make her own decision. This service should be most easily available through ISAs. But with the number of languages that are being spoken by the immigrants, non-ISA translators need to be used. As well, the legal knowledge of the translators is limited and varies with individual translators. **It is recommended that a training program on the laws and legal issues affecting wife abuse be developed for translators.** If the job market for "legal" translators on wife abuse is too limited, then one needs to look at the general court translator training program to see if translators are being trained to handle wife abuse issues.

For many immigrant women, an ISA is not available. This unforeseen problem became evident during our process of agency selection. We found that most ISAs were concentrated in larger urban centres. Northern communities, which generally have few social service resources, had no resources for immigrant women who had been abused. This finding is similar to the finding of Shin (1992). **Therefore, funding to establish ISAs in communities where they do not exist needs to be considered.**

Mainstream approaches cannot be superimposed if meaningful intervention is to take place. The needs of immigrant women who are abused must be understood within a political, cultural, social and economic context.

**Mainstream agencies will need to adapt their services to meet the needs of immigrant women who are abused.** This need for adaptation, to account for the unique needs of immigrant women, is recognized by Shin (1992) and by Jang, Lee and Morello-Frosch (1991). Adaptation could take a number of forms:

- (1) An ethnically diversified staff would be able to meet needs of language and culture.
- (2) In conjunction with ISAs, women who can speak a variety of languages and dialects could be trained on the social and legal issues on wife abuse. These women can then serve as advocates on a need basis.
- (3) Innovative outreach strategies would allow awareness of services to reach a greater number of women. Shin (1992) has documented resources and alternative strategies developed by immigrant community agencies.

The needs of an immigrant woman who is abused cross into many delivery systems. To effectively meet her needs there will have to be significant co-ordination between legal, social welfare and immigration policies. **It is recommended that a committee be established between organizations such as the ISAs, the legal system, Employment and Immigration Canada, ethnic associations, and the mainstream public and non-profit social services agencies and shelters to work towards an integrated approach.** Unless an integrative approach is developed, services will continue to be fragmented and possibly of minimal benefit to immigrant women. One of the first tasks for the committee could be on sharing the existing protocols in dealing with wife abuse and working towards comparable protocol so as to streamline the process for the abused immigrant woman.

Immigrants are generally not familiar with the Canadian legal system and the laws affecting wife abuse. Applying the concept that information needs to be repeated and reinforced, **it is therefore recommended that:**

- 1) A public awareness campaign in basic English and in different languages be launched.** The message for this campaign is that wife abuse is unacceptable and that there are legal consequences. It should include information on how and where to get help. In order to reach all immigrants including those who do not access ISAs, the campaign should take the form of posters and ads in ethnic newspapers, ethnic radios and television. Based on Godin's (1993) survey of public legal education materials on wife abuse, this type of campaign does not exist.



**2) Public legal education materials on wife abuse be developed and distributed to assist immigrants in understanding and accepting the Canadian view of wife abuse, the legal consequences of wife abuse, and the use of the laws as one alternative in resolving this problem.** The emphasis should be on the legal consequences and legal issues such as immigration, custody and other family matters. Such public legal information materials should also discuss how the culture of a country of origin may differ from that of Canada. This type of discussion will enable the immigrants to reconcile the newly acquired legal information and to incorporate it into their existing knowledge about husband and wife relationships. The ongoing educational program should be designed in basic English, and possibly in different languages. Information should be designed in "bite sizes" and relate to life situations. It should also be reinforced in different contexts. This requires the design and development of materials that can serve as independent modules to be used in informal social settings or as part of an established or educational curriculum such as English as a Second Language or orientation program.

The materials in first languages other than English need to be developed through a collaborative effort of ethnic communities and a public legal education organization. The ethnic community can articulate the needs of the community, ensure the quality of the language and provide the necessary field testing, while the public legal education organization can provide the legal content and its expertise in developing public legal education materials. This collaboration contributes to the quality of the materials.

**It is recommended that further research on the role of legal information in the prevention of wife abuse in the immigrant community be conducted involving the abused women.** Researchers would then understand these women's perceived needs and their willingness to involve the law in wife abuse matters.

This research has been exploratory in nature. It has identified the needs of immigrant women who are abused as well as the systemic barriers faced by them in accessing mainstream services. The challenge before us is to develop culturally relevant and accessible services to meet the unique needs of immigrant women.

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MacLeod, Linda and Maria Shin. (1990) *Isolated afraid and forgotten: The service delivery needs and realities of immigrant and refugee women who are battered*. Ottawa, ON: National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Health and Welfare Canada.

MacLeod, Linda. (1987) *Preventing wife battering in Canada*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

MacLeod, Linda. (1980) *Wife battering in Canada: The vicious cycle*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

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## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

**NOTE:** This is selected bibliography focuses on wife abuse in the immigrant community and on the cross-cultural nature of the problem. It does not include training manuals or informational pamphlets developed for the immigrant community. A more comprehensive bibliography on the general topic of wife abuse is available through the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Health and Welfare Canada (Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, ON K1A 1B5).

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A.R.A. Consultants. (1985) *Wife battering among rural, native and immigrant women*. N.p.: A.R.A. Consultants.

This study aimed firstly to identify and examine the criminal justice services that are available to native, immigrant and rural women who are victims of battering. Secondly, it aimed to identify what action can be taken to ensure that these victims are able to access appropriate criminal justice services to meet their needs. The study found that native women are reluctant to call the police when they have been beaten because they believe that nothing will be done and that their children may be taken from the home. It was also revealed that the women are unaware of the legal and social services available to help them. Among the many recommendations made in the study was that reports of wife assault made to the police should be tracked to see what action, if any, was taken. It was also recommended that information should be provided to the women in native communities about their legal rights and the services available to them. (Source: National Clearinghouse on Family Violence.)

Bodnar, A., D. Majury and M. Riutort. (1989) *Workshop 10: Working with immigrant women*. Family Violence Prevention/Wife Assault - An Interdisciplinary Seminar for Professionals. Toronto, ON: Family Violence and Prevention Program, March 27-28.

Proceedings from the seminar sponsored by the Ministry of Community & Social Services.



Burns, Maryviolet C. (1986) *The Speaking Profits Us: Violence in the lives of women of color*. Seattle, Wash.: Centre for Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence.

Contains essays featuring concerns about violence towards ethnic and native women. The articles discuss the unique situation and problems of American Indian, Asian, black and Latin women victims. The goals are to develop an analysis of the causes of gender-based violence in communities of women of colour; to critique the role of indigenous religions in their lives as well as the historical role of predominantly white religious institutions vis-a-vis violence; and to discuss prevention and treatment strategies. This book has alternate pages in Spanish. Translation by Maria E. Lindsey. (Source: National Clearinghouse on Family Violence.)

Burton, D. (1988) *Family violence and immigrant communities in Edmonton*. Edmonton, AB: Edmonton Mennonite Society for the Assistance of Newcomers.

This exploratory study reviews the perceptions that workers and clients of ethno-cultural and settlement service agencies have about family violence. It addresses the issues of accessibility of services and concludes by offering suggestions for improving these services. It provides specific criticism of various systems such as law enforcement, healthcare and social services and makes recommendations for improvement. Finally, it provides an annotated bibliography as well as a list of other projects across the country, that deal with family violence in the immigrant community.

Campbell, Jacquelyn C. (1985) "Beating of wives: A cross-cultural perspective," in *Victimology: An international journal*. 10(1-4): 174-185.

This study was a preliminary cross-cultural analysis of wife beating using data from ethnographies written by women using women as primary informants. Eleven ethnographies that met this female orientation criteria were used. The cultures considered in the study represented both ends of the continuum of the incidence of wife beating and industrial development. Campbell examined these cultures for relationships between 15 identified variables in addition to the frequency and severity of wife beating. Campbell suggests that existing cross-cultural research and/or existing theoretical models were not supported by her analysis. The study, however, did more to illuminate pattern variations of wife beating than it did to explain what may increase the frequency and severity of wife beating in a given culture. (Source: Calgary Immigrant Women's Centre.)

Ciurak, Irene. (Publication date not available) *Problems facing migrant women in domestic violence*. South Australia: Woodville Migrant Resource Centre.

After consulting with welfare workers from mainstream and ethnic-specific organizations, Ciurak concluded that women from non-English-speaking backgrounds did not use shelters or other mainstream welfare or health services. The predominant reason was the women's lack of knowledge, information and understanding concerning available resources. Women who did know about the shelters were reluctant to use them, afraid to leave their home and familiar environment and lacking knowledge and understanding of the language and the differing cultural needs of these women. (Source: Calgary Immigrant Women's Centre.)

Coley, Soraya M. and Joyce O. Beckett. (1988) "Black battered women: A review of empirical literature," in *Journal of counselling and development*. 66(6): 266-270.

Reviews five areas of empirical research on black battered women: incidence, social support networks, psychological profile, responses to battering, and use of services. It is suggested that the literature destroys the myth that black and other minority women are more likely to be victims of spouse assault, revealing that (1) domestic violence crosses racial and socioeconomic boundaries and (2) regardless of race, battered women share the psychological pain of guilt, emotional and economic insecurities, and fear of reprisals from their mates if they seek help. At the same time, some data suggest that there are dissimilarities between blacks and whites. (PsycLIT Database Copyright 1993 American Psychological Assn, all rights reserved.)

Counts, Dorothy-A. (1987) "Female suicide and wife abuse: A cross-cultural perspective," in *Suicide-and-life-threatening-behavior*. 17(3): 194-204.

Presents case studies to improve the understanding of the dynamics that exist between wife abuse and female suicide. Anthropological analysis indicates that in some societies female suicide is a culturally recognized behaviour that enables the weak to influence the strong and/or take revenge on those who oppress them. Data suggest that if a woman's support group (e.g., her family) does not defend her when she is the victim of violence, the bounds of normative behaviour are passed and her suicide may be revenge suicide, intended to force others to take vengeance on the abusive husband. (PsycLIT Database Copyright 1993 American Psychological Assn, all rights reserved.)



Crites, Laura. (1991) "Cross-cultural counselling in wife beating cases," in *Response-to-the-victimization-of-women-and-children*. 13(4): 8-12.

Provides a framework for understanding wife beating across cultures and for responding to the problem with Asian/Pacific clients. While shame may inhibit the Asian/Pacific wife from leaving an abusive relationship, the obligation she feels to protect her children from a violent environment can be underscored to justify her behaviour and make it acceptable in the eyes of her family and the community. The cultural emphasis on the vertical relationship between parent and child rather than the horizontal relationship between husband and wife can facilitate and support this decision. The therapist who understands and works within the context of Asian/Pacific cultural values is in a better position to successfully intervene in spouse abuse. (PsycLIT Database Copyright 1993 American Psychological Assn, all rights reserved.)

Dutton, Donald-G. (1988) "Profiling of wife assaulters: Preliminary evidence for a trimodal analysis," in *Violence and victims*. 3(1): 5-29.

Discusses differing profiles of wife assaulters (WAs) developed by different research strategies. Profiles based on interviews with victims suggest a tyrannical, personality-disordered type of WA. Clinical assessments reveal several profiles, only one of which is consistent with this view. Other types of WAs are dependent and unassertive. By comparing the emerging data with initial clinical descriptions, an assessment is made of empirical studies to date. While the potential for a major contribution to understanding WAs exists through use of systematic empirical methods, it is concluded that this potential has not yet been fulfilled. A more thorough assessment of early trauma as a major causative factor affecting a large subcategory of WAs and greater attention to the self-selection of WA samples are suggested. (PsycLIT Database Copyright 1993 American Psychological Assn, all rights reserved.)

Follingstad, Diane R., Ann P. Neckerman and Julia Vormbrock. (1988) "Reactions to victimization and coping strategies of battered women: The ties that bind," in *Clinical psychology review*. 8(4): 373-390.

Reviews the literature on the reactions of battered women to the victimization they experience and the coping strategies they employ to handle the abusive relationship. The reactions and coping strategies are explored in light of their paradoxical effects that actually serve to make it more difficult for the battered woman to leave the abusive relationship. Articles are discussed in terms of their contribution to the theories of victimization of battered women and theories regarding their coping styles. (PsycLIT Database Copyright 1993 American Psychological Assn, all rights reserved.)

Frisbie, W. Parker. (1986) "Variation in patterns of marital instability among Hispanics," in *Journal of marriage and the family*. 48 (February 1986): 99-106.

This research extends the study of marital disruption to include the three largest Hispanic populations, based on a nationwide sample including non-Hispanic whites and non-Hispanic blacks, to broaden the comparative scope of the analysis. The aims are to determine the degree to which the low prevalence of marital instability observed among Mexican Americans in earlier studies that are more limited geographically is characteristic of other Hispanic groups, and to assess the extent to which the effects of conventional determinants of marital dissolution vary by race and ethnicity. The results support in a general way the conclusions from earlier research. However, there is a substantial amount of variation across the racial/ethnic groups, and the emergence of a number of important interaction effects suggests that the sharpness of marital-instability contrasts must be interpreted through the joint effects of certain demographic and socioeconomic factors. (Source: Calgary Immigrant Women's Centre.)

Godin, Joanne. (1993) *More than a crime: A report on the lack of public legal information materials for immigrant women who are subject to wife assault*. Ottawa, ON: Department of Justice Canada.

This report is based on a literature review of materials on legal information for the immigrant women and suggests strategies in developing other materials. It presents an outline for a pamphlet to provide legal information that could be adapted into different languages. The Literature Review section provides listing of annotated materials for victims/survivors, service providers and background information and research on wife assault.

Gondolf, Edward W., Ellen Fisher and Richard McFerson. (1988) "Racial differences among shelter residents: A comparison of Anglo, black, and Hispanic battered women," in *Journal of family violence*. 3(1): 39-57.

This study uses shelter intake and exit interviews to determine the most influential variables in differentiating Anglo, black and Hispanic women. The groups appear to be differentiated primarily by income- and marital-related variables, and very little by abuse and help-seeking variables. The authors found, however, that Hispanic women are more likely to tolerate abuse, which is reflected in less help-seeking. The findings suggest that the greatest differences overall are between Anglo and Hispanic women, and that additional economic and educational supports need to be directed to the Hispanic groups. (Source: Calgary Immigrant Women's Centre.)



Ho, Christine K. (1990) "An analysis of domestic violence in Asian American communities: A multicultural approach to counselling," in *Women and therapy*. 9(1-2): 129-150.

Examines domestic violence in Asian American communities and reports the results of a focus group study (C.K. Ho et al., 1987) on domestic violence with Southeast Asians. Issues examined include the influence of traditional Asian values, the assimilation process into U.S. culture, and the impact of sexism and racism on the oppression of Asian women. Traditional Asian values of close family ties, harmony and order may not discourage physical and verbal abuse, but may encourage the minimization and hiding of such problems. The cultural values of fatalism, perseverance and self-restraint reduce the incentive of the women to change their oppressive situations. (PsycLIT Database Copyright 1993 American Psychological Assn, all rights reserved.)

Iorres, Sara. (1987) "Hispanic-American battered women: Why consider cultural differences?" in *Response-to-the-victimization-of-women-and-children*. 10(3): 20-21.

Interviewed 25 Hispanic-American and 25 Anglo-American women residing in shelters for battered women on their attitudes toward wife abuse; their perception of wife abuse; the nature, severity and frequency of abuse; and their response to the abuse. Data show similarities among the women, but there were differences. Implications for treatment and other interventions are discussed. (PsycLIT Database Copyright 1993 American Psychological Assn, all rights reserved.)

Jang, Deean, Debbie Lee and Rachel Morello-Frosch. (1991) "Domestic violence in the immigrant and refugee community: Responding to the needs of immigrant women," in *Response-to-the-victimization-of-the-women-and-children*. 13(4): 2-7.

Discusses factors that combine to make immigrant women feel isolated and powerless to escape the cycle of domestic violence. The nature of domestic violence in the immigrant and refugee community is described, and ways are suggested for increasing program accessibility to serve this changing refugee community agencies and domestic violence projects. The criminal justice system and civil remedies are explored and strategies for legislative action are discussed. (PsycLIT Database Copyright 1993 American Psychological Assn, all rights reserved.)

Kohli, Rita. (1991) "Living on the edge: Wife assault," in *DIVA: A quarterly journal of South Asian women*. Special Edition: 16-22.

Begins with a review of commonly held misconceptions about wife battering and then discusses some peculiarities of South Asian assaulted women in Canada. It reviews the socialization of South Asian women in terms of a patriarchal family system and in terms of religion. It then goes on to discuss the added dimension of racism and lack of cultural sensitivity that South Asian assaulted women experience.

Lee, Christine. (1988) *Report on the 1987 community workshops with visible minority and immigrant women*. Toronto, ON: Ontario Women's Directorate.

The workshops were to provide information about government programs, services and available funding; to identify structural barriers that prevent full participation in the equal access to government services; and to develop a mechanism to ensure government is more responsive and proactive. Workshop themes were family violence, employment equity, skills training, child care, language training and housing. (Source: National Clearinghouse on Family Violence.)

Lester, David. (1980) "A cross-culture study of wife abuse," in *Aggressive behavior*. 6(1): 361-364.

Based on ratings of the incidence of wife beating in 71 societies. Ratings ranged from low to high incidence. Findings suggest that wife beating was more common in societies where brutality and cruelty were common. In addition, wife beating was more frequent in societies where the status of women was considerably inferior to that of men. (Source: Calgary Immigrant Women's Centre.)

Lockhart, Lettie L. (1985) "Methodological issues in comparative racial analysis: The case of wife abuse," in *Social work research and abstracts*. 21(1): 35-41.

Methodological problems in comparative analysis have prevented a clear conceptualization of differences in the incidence of wife abuse among the races. This article analyzes these problems and proposes an alternative method for conducting comparative racial analyses. It also presents the findings of a study on husband-to-wife violence experienced by 307 black women and white women that showed no significant differences between the races, which reaffirms the importance of using careful procedures in cross-cultural research. (Source: Calgary Immigrant Women's Centre.)



Lockhart, L. and B.W. White. (1989) "Understanding marital violence in the black community," in *Journal of interpersonal violence*. 4(4): 421-436.

A comparative study that examines the role of social class in the frequency and patterns of marital violence in the black community in metropolitan U.S. The findings suggest social class is a significant factor in understanding the frequency and patterns of marital violence in black relationships. The study has implications for doing research in the area of race-by-class differences to the incidences of marital violence.

MacLeod, Linda and Maria Shin. (1990) *Isolated, afraid and forgotten: The service delivery needs and realities of Immigrant and refugee women who are battered*. Ottawa, ON: National Clearinghouse on Family Violence.

This monograph provides a brief overview of the needs of immigrant women who are battered and describes services currently available. These services include settlement services, immigrant women's programs, immigrant family counselling services, mainstream family counselling services as well as other mainstream services. It goes on to discuss the barriers service providers experience in providing effective intervention to immigrant women who are abused. It also addresses the issue of developing alternative approaches to meeting

the needs of immigrant/cultural minority women who experience abuse and provides examples of programs that respond in an innovative and culturally appropriate manner to the special needs of these women.

Maglizza, Eloise. (Publication date not available) "Migrant women and domestic violence: The dilemma of whether to stay or leave," in *Women's health care house, West Perth*.

Outlines several factors that influence a migrant women's decision to stay or leave an abusive relationship as (1) the women's family will not support her decision to leave; (2) her feelings of hopelessness and isolation will be exacerbated if she cannot speak English; (3) she is often unfamiliar with the law and her legal rights; (4) she is unaware of the community services that could assist her; (5) she often sees her husband as her sole means of support (emotional and financial) in a culture whose language, ways and values she does not yet understand; and (6) she is afraid of losing her own or her children's lives if she leaves. (Source: Calgary Immigrant Women's Centre.)

Mushanga, Tibamanya Mwene. (1977-78) "Wife victimization in East and Central Africa," in *Victimology: An international journal*. 2(3-4): 479-485.

Examines patterns of wife victimization in East and Central African communities. Data collected by different researchers (including the author) from different African societies were used and summarized. The author examines cultural values that legitimize spouse abuse as a way of resolving conflicts within the family. Victim precipitation or provocation are also discussed. The role of change in creating or exacerbating existing conflicts is highlighted. (Source: Calgary Immigrant Women's Centre.)

RESPONSE Staff (1985) "Responses to wife abuse in four western countries," *Response-to-the-victimization-of-women-and-children*. 8(2): 15-18.

Discusses societal responses to violence against women in Australia, New Zealand, Denmark and Finland. In the past 20 years, Western countries have begun to treat violence against women as a crime with unique characteristics and implications.

Reichort, Elisabeth. (1991) "Perceptions of domestic violence against women: A cross-cultural survey of international students," in *Response-in-the-victimization-of-women-and-children*. 14(1): 13-18.

Examined the perceptions of family violence in the home countries of 120 foreign students studying in the US. The majority of Ss agreed about the general definition of physical abuse, that its effects are detrimental and that society should do something about it, including establishing greater socio-economic equality between men and women. Ss from countries with industrialized market economics believed the frequency of physical, emotional and verbal abuse to be greater than Ss from less developed countries and agreed more than the others that abuse has serious effects on the physical and mental health of victims and their children. (PsycLIT Database Copyright 1993 American Psychological Assn, all rights reserved.)

Riutort, Monica and Shirley Endicott Small. (1985) *Working with assaulted immigrant women: A handbook for lay counsellors*. Toronto, ON: Education Wife Assault.

Describes a step-by-step approach to offering support and information to assaulted immigrant women. Keeping the lay counsellor and paraprofessional in mind, it offers a conceptual framework within which to understand violence against women. It dispels common myths about wife assault and addresses the needs of assaulted immigrant women, especially around immigration and sponsorship. It provides a detailed guideline for running a support group for assaulted immigrant women.



Russell, Mary. (1988) "Wife assault theory, research, and treatment: A literature review," in *Journal of family violence*. 3(3): 193-208.

Treatments for wife assaulters and their victims based on psychological and sociological theories are reviewed. Treatment programs for remediation of wife assault or its effects involve police intervention and arrest, voluntary and court-mandated group programs for assaultive males, supportive programs for battered women, and couple counselling services. It notes tests of theory based on investigation of assailant and victim characteristics and divorce results. It appears that development of assailant typologies based on extent of psychopathology, severity of violence, and context of violence have potential utility in guiding future treatment decisions for assaulters. Also, population screening and matching programs to individual characteristics could improve clinical outcomes. (PsycLIT Database Copyright 1993 American Psychological Assn, all rights reserved.)

Shin, Maria. (1992) *Violence against immigrant and racial minority women: Speaking with our voice, organizing from our experience*. Ottawa, ON: National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada.

This report provides a survey of the literature and resource materials written by visible minority women. These writings, materials and programs describe alternative strategies used by immigrants and visible minorities working in the field of violence against women in the immigrant communities. It makes a strong case for using the experiences and voices of the women who experience assault to develop alternative interventions.

Silva, Nanette M. and Mary C. Howard. (1991) "Woman battering: The forgotten problem in alcohol abuse treatment," in *Family dynamics of addiction quarterly*. 1(2): 8-19.

Disputes the widely held assumption that alcohol abuse causes woman battering and that once sobriety is achieved, battering behaviour will cease. It is argued that both alcohol abuse and battering must be considered public health problems, not just sociological, psychological or criminal justice problems. Both are life-threatening disorders that are preventable by changing societal norms through changes in individual lifestyle behaviours.

Straus, Murray A. (1976) "Sexual inequality, cultural norms, and wife-beating" in *Victimology: An international journal*. 1(1): 54-70.

The high frequency with which physical violence is used by married couples, and especially the disproportionate frequency with which wives are the victims, reflects the structure of contemporary Euro-American societies in the form of cultural norms, which implicitly make the marriage licence a hitting licence in the sexist organization of both society and the legal system. Cultural norms legitimizing marital violence are found in the legal system, in literary works and in everyday discourse, and in sociological and psychological experiments and surveys. The author concludes that both women's liberation and male liberation are necessary to effect a substantial reduction in wife-beating. This paper outlines how sexism contributes to the frequency of wife-beating. (Source: Calgary Immigrant Women's Centre.)

Widom, Cathy S. (1989) "Does violence beget violence? A critical examination of the literature," in *Psychological bulletin* 106(1): 3-28.

Critically examines the "violence breeds violence" hypothesis broadly defined. Organized into seven sections, the literature review includes (1) the abuse breeds abuse hypothesis; (2) reports of small numbers of violent/homicidal offenders; (3) studies examining the relationship of abuse and neglect to delinquency; (4) to violent behaviour, and (5) to aggressive behaviour in infants and young children; (6) abuse, withdrawal, and self-destructive behaviour; and (7) studies of the impact of witnessing or observing violent behaviour. A detailed discussion of methodological considerations and shortcomings precedes the review. The author concludes that existing knowledge of the long-term consequences of abusive home environments is limited and suggests that conclusions about the strength of the cycle of violence be tempered by the dearth of convincing empirical evidence. Recommendations are made for further research. (PsycLIT Database Copyright 1993 American Psychological Assn, all rights reserved.)

Wiebe, K. (1985) *Violence against immigrant women and children: An overview for community workers. Women against violence against women*. Vancouver, BC: Rape Crisis Centre.

This manual is for service providers who deal with wife abuse in ethnic community. Its aim is to provide information about violence against women and children. It is divided into four sections: (1) the problems experienced by immigrant women and children as they undergo the integration process; (2) wife battery; (3) child abuse; and (4) sexual violence. The appendices contain information about rights and restrictions based on immigrant status and or criminal injuries compensation. It also has a community resource list for the Vancouver area.



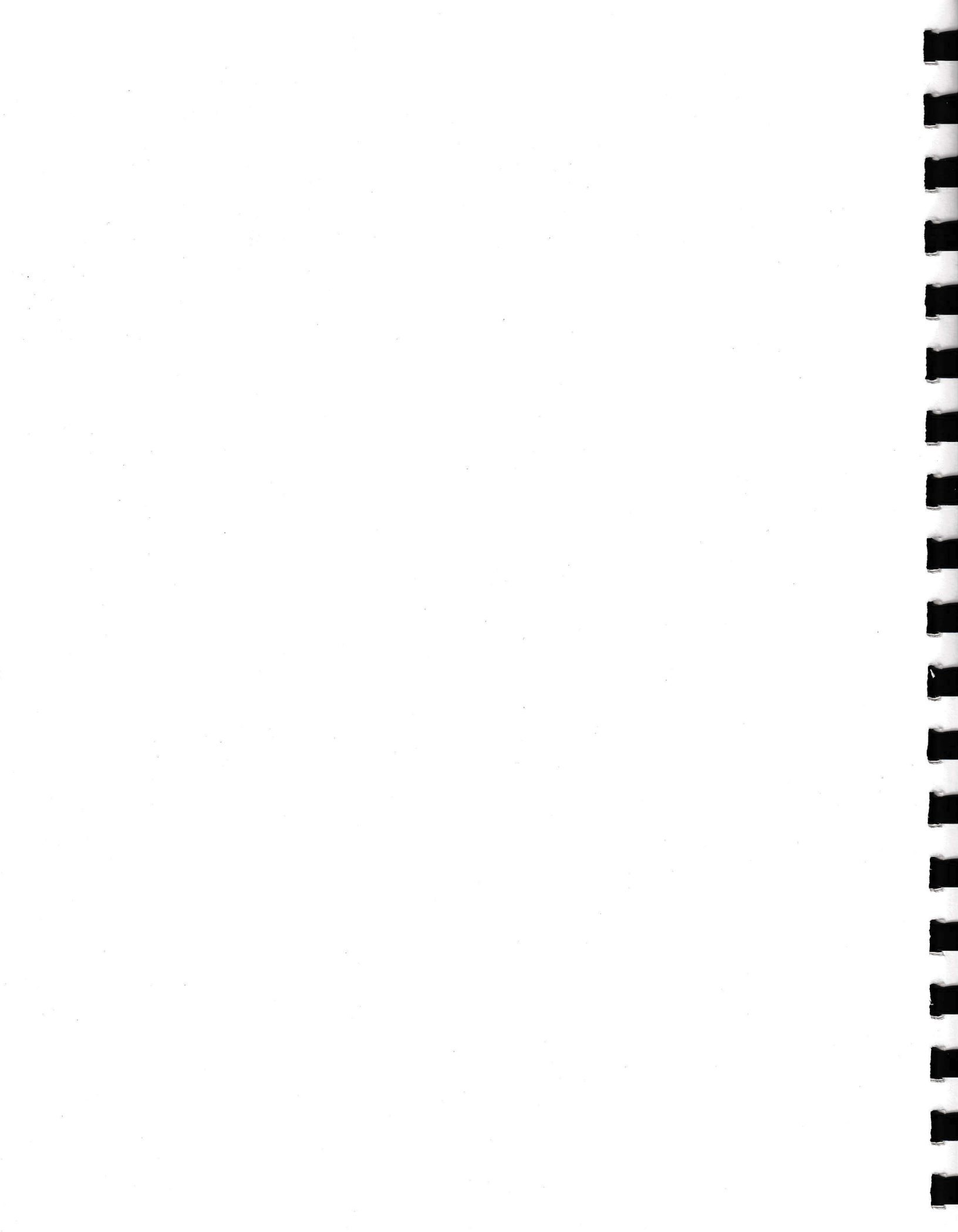


**APPENDIX A**

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**Immigrant Serving Agencies in Alberta  
Contacted by the Researchers**





**APPENDIX A**  
**Immigrant Serving Agencies in Alberta**  
**Contacted by the Researchers**

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) #400, 1400 First St S.W. Calgary AB T2R 0V8	Tel: (403) 262-2006 Fax: (403) 262-2033
Calgary Immigrant Aid Society (CIAS) 900A Western Centre 825 - 8th Ave S.W. Calgary AB T2P 2T3	Tel: (403) 265-1120 Fax: (403) 266-2486
Calgary Immigrant Women's Centre (CIWC) 230, 1035 - 7th Ave S.W. Calgary AB T2P 3E9	Tel: (403) 263-4414 Fax: (403) 228-3193
Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers #200, 3517 - 17 Ave S.E. Calgary AB T2A 0R5	Tel: (403) 569-0409 Fax: (403) 248-5041
Catholic Social Services (CSS) Immigration and Settlement Service 10709 - 105 St Edmonton AB T5H 2X3	Tel: (403) 424-3545 Fax: (403) 425-6627
Catholic Social Services #202, 5000 Gaetz Ave Red Deer AB T4N 4B2	Tel: (403) 346-7055
Central Alberta Refugee Effort (C.A.R.E.) Committee #202, 5000 Gaetz Ave Red Deer AB T5N 6C2	Tel: (403) 346-8818 (403) 346-8819 Fax: (403) 347-5220
Changing Together Centre for Immigrant Women #209, 10010 - 107A Ave Edmonton AB T5H 4H8	Tel: (403) 421-0175 Fax: (403) 426-2225



Edmonton Immigrant Services Association (EISA) Cromdale School 11240 - 79 St Edmonton AB T5B 2K1	Tel: (403) 474-8445 Fax: (403) 477-0883
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN) 10125 - 107 Ave Edmonton AB T5H 0V4	Tel: (403) 424-7709 Fax: (403) 424-7736
Family Centre #20, 9912 - 106 St Edmonton AB T5K 1C5	Tel: (403) 423-2831 Fax: (403) 426-4918
Harbour House YWCA 604 - 8 Street Lethbridge AB T1J 2K1	Tel: (403) 329-0088
Lethbridge Immigrant Woman Association #122, 4818 Gaetz Ave. Red Deer AB T4N 4A3	Tel: (403) 341-3553
Lethbridge Immigrant Settlement Association (LISA) 506 - 4th Ave South Lethbridge AB T1J 0N3	Tel: (403) 327-5333 Fax: (403) 327-6521
Millwoods Centre for Immigrants #106, 2024 - 57 St. Edmonton AB T6L 2Z3	Tel: (403) 490-0477
Multicultural Women's Centre 2B, 740 - 4th Ave South Lethbridge AB T1J 0N9	Tel: (403) 320-6834
Odyssey House 10123 - 107 Ave. Grande Prairie AB T8V 1M1	Tel: (403) 532-2672
Peace Area Settlement Services Society for Immigrants (PASS) #201, 10404 - 102 St Grande Prairie AB T8V 2W3	Tel: (403) 538-3232 Fax: (403) 532-8325

SAAMIS Immigration Services Association  
422 - 6th St S.E.  
Medicine Hat AB T1A 1H5

Tel: (403) 529-1986  
Fax: (403) 526-3566

St. Barnabas Refugee Society  
#400, 10136 - 100 St  
Edmonton AB T5J 0P1

Tel: (403) 429-1986  
Fax: (403) 526-3566





**APPENDIX B**

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**Schedule of Interviews**



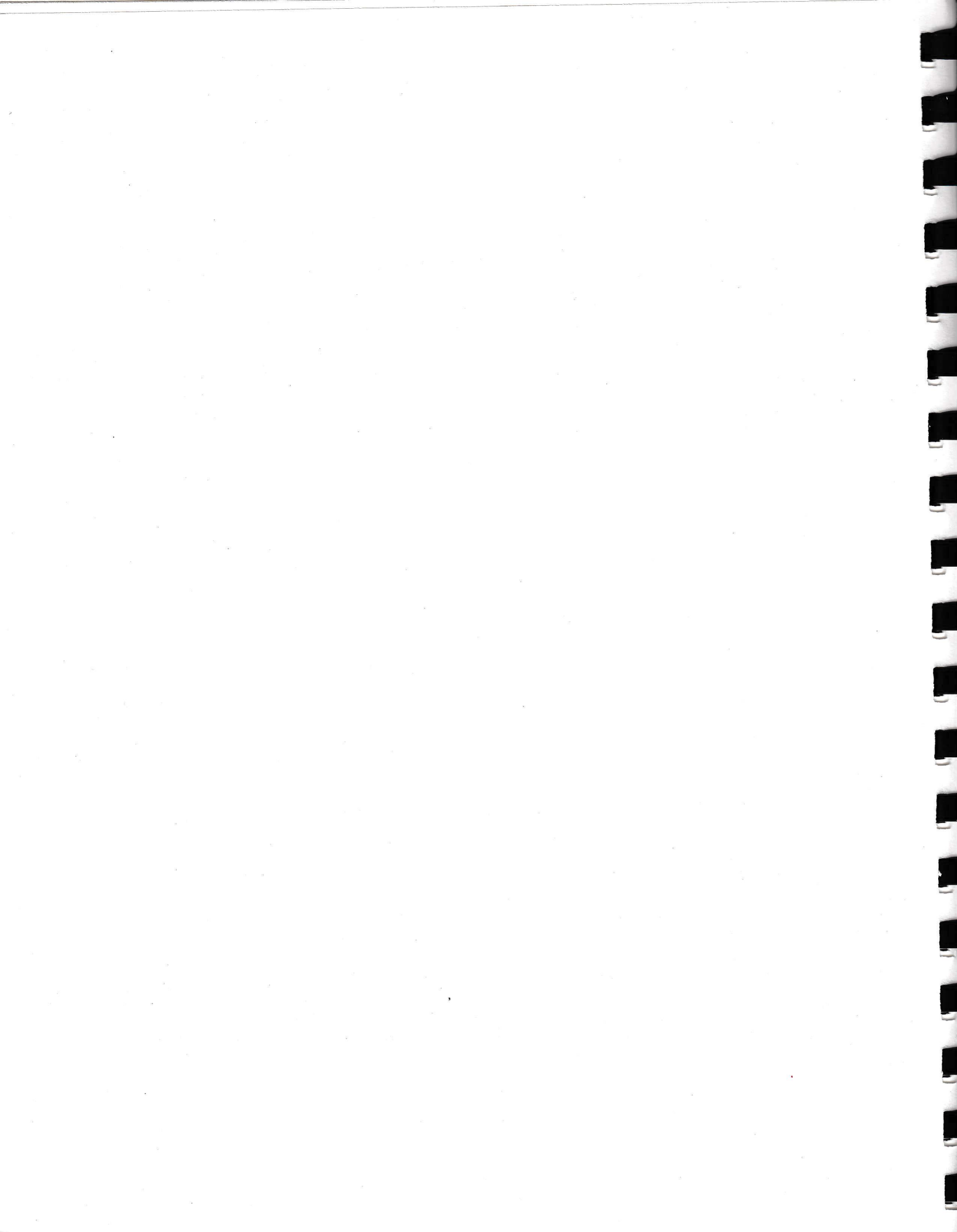


**APPENDIX B**  
**Schedule of Interviews**

AGENCY	LOCATION	# INTER-VIEWED	DATE OF INTERVIEW	FORMAT OF INTERVIEW
Changing Together	10010-107A Ave. Edmonton	1	18/02/93	taped
Edmonton Immigrant Services Association	11240-79 St. Edmonton	2	18/02/93	taped*
Catholic Social Services	10709-105 St. Edmonton	1	22/02/93	notes taken during session
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers	10125-107 Ave. Edmonton	2	23/02/93 & 24/02/93	notes taken during session
Lethbridge Immigrant Services Association	506-4 Ave. South Lethbridge	1	01/03/93	taped
Multicultural Women's Centre	2B, 740-4 Ave. South Lethbridge	1	01/03/93	taped
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society	#400, 1400 First Ave. S.W. Calgary	2	02/02/93	taped
Catholic Family Services	#250, 707-10 Ave. S.W. Calgary	1	02/03/93	taped
Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers	#200, 3517-17 Ave. S.E. Calgary	2	03/03/93	taped
Calgary Immigrant Women's Centre	#203, 1035-7 Ave. S.W. Calgary	2	03/03/93	taped
Central Alberta Refugee Effort	#202, 5000 Gaetz Ave. Red Deer	2	05/03/93	taped

**NOTE:** The session with Edmonton Immigrant Services Association was lost because of problems with equipment.



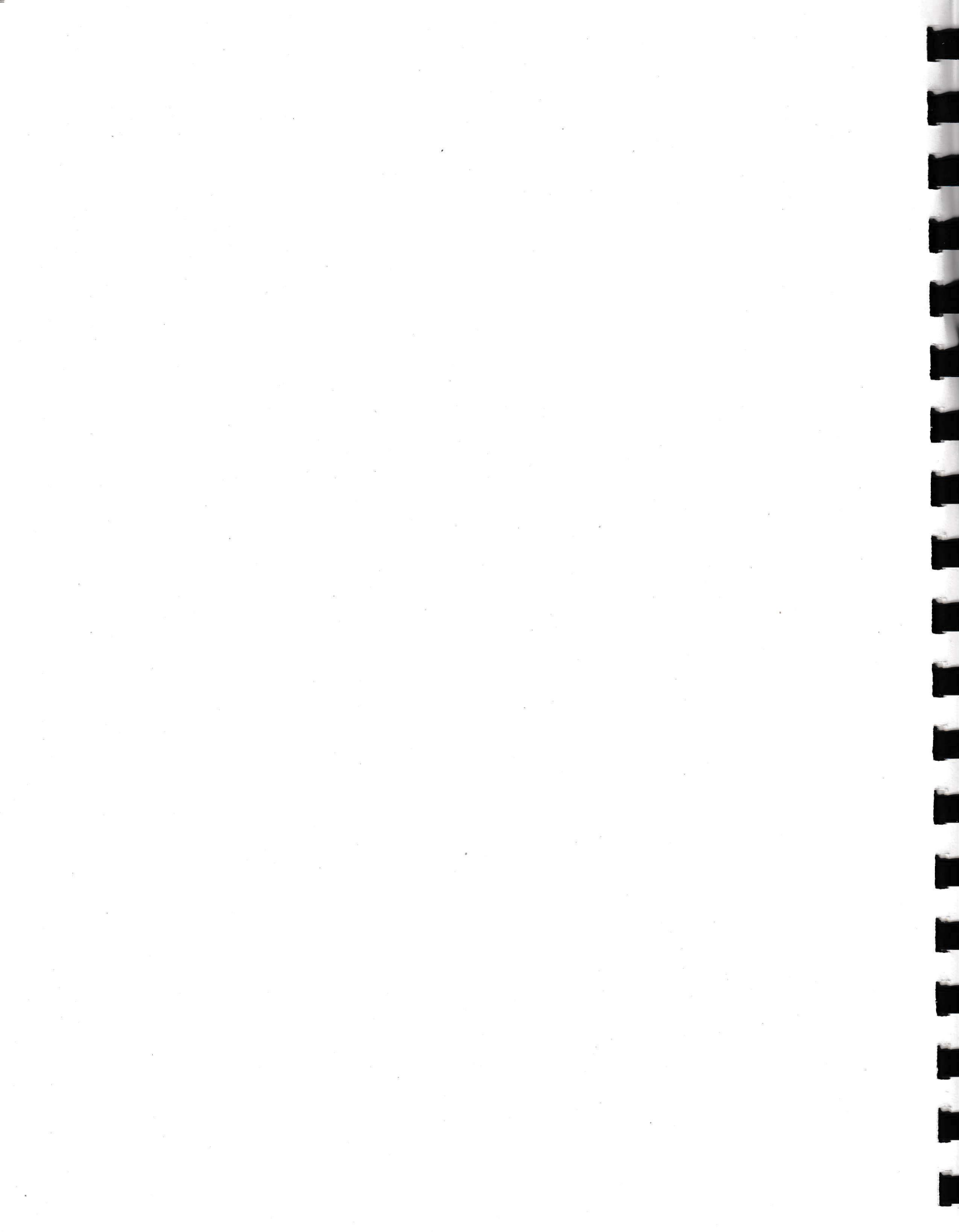


**APPENDIX C**

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**Sample Letter**





**APPENDIX C**  
**Sample Letter**

February 3, 1993

Dear :

**Re: Legal Information and Wife Abuse in Immigrant Families Project**

Further to our telephone conversation, I am writing to confirm your interest in assisting us with our research into the incidence and prevalence of various forms of wife abuse among immigrant groups in Alberta. Through structured interviews, the study will focus on the knowledge and experience of counsellors or service workers who are providing services to immigrant women in major centres in Alberta.

*Purpose of the Study*

- 1) to document the extent and forms of wife abuse among immigrant groups;
- 2) to determine the relationship between the stages of immigrant integration and the occurrence of wife abuse in immigrant families;
- 3) to identify what avenues are used by victims to gain legal and other services and information; and,
- 4) to determine how, when, and with what purpose legal information should be delivered to immigrants.

This project is funded by the Department of Justice Canada. It is our hope that this small scale research will provide us and the funder with some preliminary evidence upon which policy, programs, and further research may be developed.

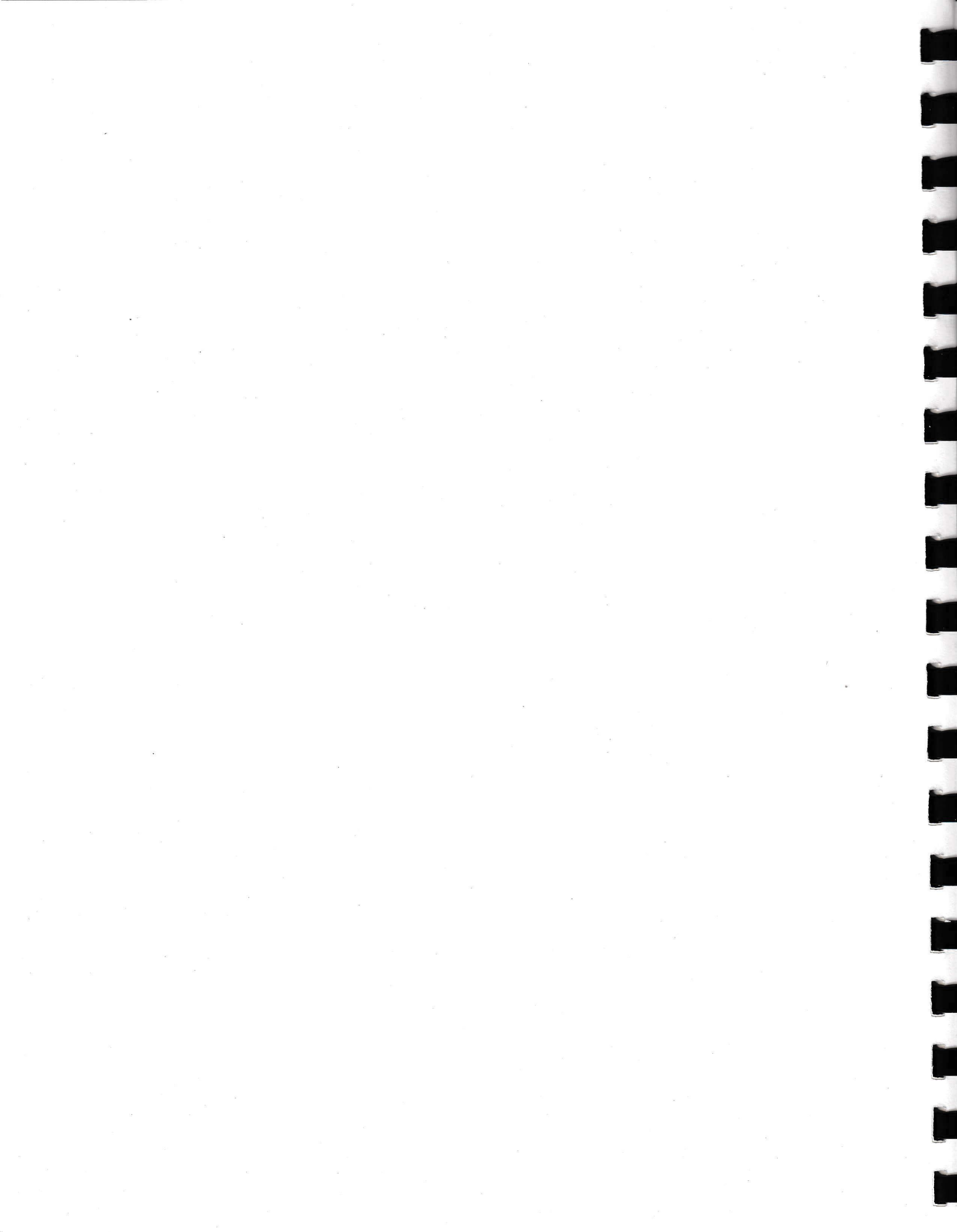
Thank you for your assistance and cooperation. Ms. Sudha Choldin, the researcher of this project, will be contacting you in the next two weeks to set an appointment for the interview.

Yours truly,

San San Sy  
Research Coordinator

Enclosure



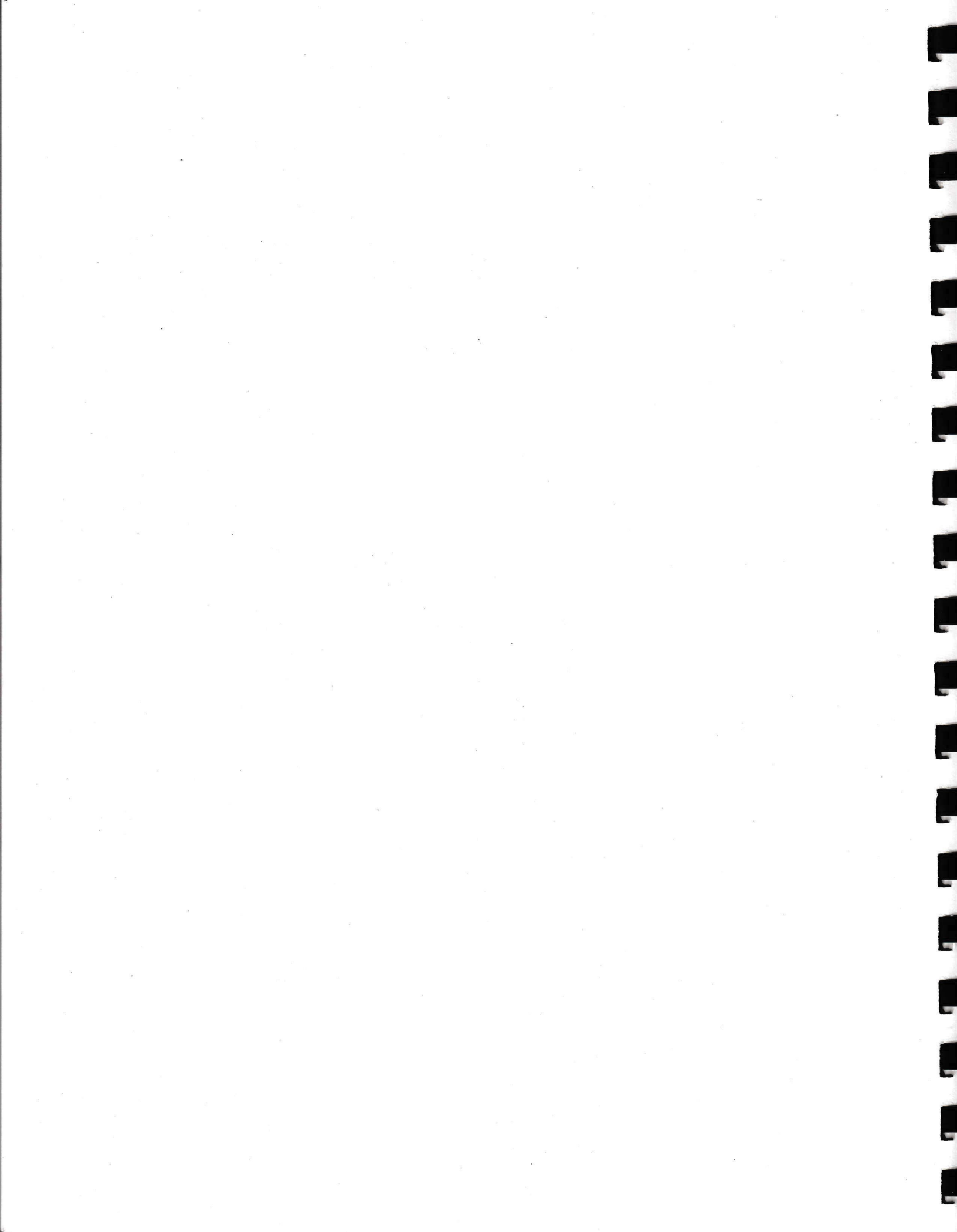


**APPENDIX D**

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**Structured Interview  
Schedule for Workers**





## APPENDIX D

### Structured Interview Schedule for Workers

#### Introduction (paraphrase)

We are trying to collect information about immigrant women who are abused by their husbands or partners. As part of this process we would like to know about your agency and your clients and their needs. Everything you say will remain confidential. The research report will not identify you as an individual.

1. Please tell me about your agency: What is your mandate? Who are your clients? How many staff members do you have?
2. How does your agency define "immigrant," that is, who are your clients?
3. Do you think there are some immigrants being excluded by this definition?
4. In your opinion, how do the immigrant women find out about your services?
5. Does your agency provide women with information about wife abuse or family violence?
6. To what agencies do you make referrals?
7. Does your agency provide information on wife abuse to the immigrant communities?

At this point I would like to ask you about the general procedures your agency follows when working with clients, such as issues of confidentiality.

9. Do you have guidelines about receiving or releasing information about clients?
  - 9a. If so what are they?
  - 9b. How do you make your clients aware of these guidelines?
10. Does your agency have a standardized intake procedure?
11. Does this procedure routinely ask about abuse?  
If no, how do you become aware that the woman you are working with has been abused?
12. What services does your agency offer women who are battered?
13. Do you think immigrant women are aware of the protection offered them by Canadian law in regard to wife abuse?

14. Do you think immigrant men are aware of how Canadian laws apply to wife abuse?
15. How do you think awareness of laws and services in regard to wife abuse could be heightened in the immigrant community?
16. Please estimate what proportion of the women you see experience wife abuse, as understood by the women themselves.
17. Please look at the checklist (attached) and identify the most recurring or common form of wife abuse that you deal with.
18. What are the differences in wife abuse incidence in different ethnic communities?
19. Do you think the incidence of wife abuse changes as the immigrant couple becomes more integrated into Canadian society? Could you explain?  
Note: "integration" is understood as the ability to use the language and access mainstream services and job markets.
20. Do you know think the abused women you see here were abused in their homeland? If yes, explain. If not, why do you think they are being abused here?
21. In your opinion, what are some of the causes of wife abuse in the immigrant community? Do you think some of them are unique to the immigrant population?
22. What do you see as the most important needs of immigrant women experiencing wife abuse?
23. Can legal information address some of these needs?
24. What are the most important needs of the families of these women?
25. Can legal information address some of these needs?
26. From what you know of these women's families, how do they typically react to the abuse?
27. In your opinion, should programs be focused to include the families of these women?
28. What aspect of these needs do you think your agency is able to meet?
29. At this point, I would like to know a little bit more about you. Please tell me a little about your training and experience.



30. Have you had any training around the issue of family violence or wife abuse?  
If yes, please explain.
31. Have you had any cross-cultural training?  
If yes, please explain.
32. Do you speak any languages other than English?
33. Do other staff members speak languages other than English?
34. Do you think your agency should be staffed by immigrants? Explain.
35. Please share with us anything else you feel important for us to know about wife abuse in the immigrant community.

## Checklist

### Physical

slapped/punched

kicked

pulled hair

pushed or slammed

forced sexual activity

used a weapon (knife, gun, other)

restricted movement (tied up, locked up)

other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### Verbal

threatened with a weapon

threatened to hit

threatened to murder

threatened to harm loved ones

threatened with deportation

other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### Psychological

sleep deprivation

financial deprivation

denigrating remarks

threatening suicide

other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_



