Family and Domestic Violence impacting CaLD women: Challenges and Complexities

Women’s Health Strategy and Programs
Women’s Health, Genetics and Mental Health Directorate

Dr Carol Kaplanian
Disclaimer

© Department of Health, State of Western Australia (2013)

Copyright to this material produced by the Western Australian Department of Health belongs to the State of Western Australia, under the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968 Commonwealth Australia). Apart from any fair dealing for personal, academic, research or non-commercial use, no part may be reproduced without written permission of the Women’s Policy and Projects Unit, Western Australian Department of Health. The Department of Health is under no obligation to grant this permission. Please acknowledge the WA Department of Health when reproducing or quoting material from this source.

Important Disclaimer:

All information and content in this material is provided in good faith by the WA Department of Health, and is based on sources believed to be reliable and accurate at the time of development. The State of Western Australia, the WA Department of Health and their respective officers, employees and agents, do not accept legal liability or responsibility for the material, or any consequences arising from its use.
Acknowledgement of country

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Noongar Whadjuk people, and pay my respects to their elders, past, present and future.
Acknowledgment of lived experience

Given the prevalence of family and domestic violence in the community, it is likely that someone here has been affected either directly or indirectly.

Please feel free to take a break if you need it.

Remember Employee Assistance Program Available & support from managers and HR.
FDV is now the biggest cause of death, disability, and ill health for women under 45yrs in Australia. (1)

1. VICHealth, 2003
Statistics based on 2016 Census data

WA Population

- Born outside of Australia: 30.6%
- Born in Australia: 62.9%

17.7% of Western Australians speak a language other than English at home

People from more than 200 different countries live, work and study in WA, speaking as many as 270 languages and identifying with more than 100 faiths

53.5% of Western Australians have one or both parents born overseas an increase from 51.7% in 2011.
Family and Domestic Violence

Family and Domestic Violence in CaLD communities

What’s The Difference?
Refugee Core Stressors

Core Stressors

- Social Support
- Environment
- Emotion Regulation
- Trauma
- Family Relationships
- Language Learning
- Acculturation
- Cultural Learning
- Discrimination
- Isolation
- Loneliness
- Alienation
- Resettlement
- Basic needs
- Legal
- Financial
- Healthcare
Social-Ecological Model

**Environmental & Society**
- Societal and cultural norms both of parent and adoptive community, health policies, economic and educational opportunities, local, state, and federal laws

**Community**
- Settings such as: housing, health care centers, media outputs, non-profits, schools, workplace, places of worship, support networks

**Interpersonal**
- Interpersonal interaction between: family, friends, schoolmates, co-workers. These interactions provide a social identity and a support system.

**Individual**
- Personal characteristics that influence behavior: age, mental status, biology, general knowledge, beliefs and perceptions, culture specific practices

*J. Nwando Olayiwola, 2016*
Some literature refers to these forms of violence as honour-based violence ... 

According to Gill (2011, p. 221), Honour-based violence:

“is usually differentiated from other forms of domestic violence on the grounds that it (a) occurs within the framework of collective family structures, communities and societies; (b) involves a premeditated act, designed to restore a societal construction of honour as a value system, norm or tradition, and (c) is based on men’s putative right to control women’s sexual and social choices, with a concomitant perception of women as the property of men”

• HBV encompasses any form of violence perpetrated against women within a framework of patriarchal family and social structures.

• It is imperative to understand the societal construct of ‘honour’ as a value system, norm and tradition. ‘Honour’ cultures are those that are considered ‘collective’ rather than ‘individual’.

For refugee women the intersecting factors that disadvantage or increase risk of domestic and family violence during resettlement can include:

- residency status
- restricted access to gender specific service and support
- culturally inappropriate service interventions
- racism
- domestic violence
- downward mobility
- unemployment and changed identities
GBV TREE

Examples of GBV
- Domestic violence
- Sexual abuse
- Dowry abuse
- Verbal abuse

Contributing factors
- Poverty
- Lack of education
- Conflict
- Sexual abuse
  - Physical
  - Emotional
  - Economic
  - Harmful practices

Root causes
- Abuse of power
- Disrespect for human rights
- Gender inequality
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Lack of police protection

Forced marriage
FGC/M
Isolation
Rape
Cultural constructs around:

• Shame
• Gender
• Family
• Violence
Research illustrates (Ostapej-Piatkowski & Anne, 2009) that cultural differences causes practitioners to not know how to respond to women and victims from CaLD backgrounds because of the practitioner’s desire to maintain cultural sensitivity.
When working with CaLD clients, it is imperative to abstain from attitudes that favour the Western way of life and implicitly judge others’ culture as ‘inferior’ or ‘cruel’. It should be recognised that the Western way of life and values on which is it predicated are just one way of framing the world and our behaviour.
The intersection of culture and mothering
Some Risks to Consider

• Violence can escalate as a result of migration and because of cultural change and the shift of gender roles
• CaLD women are less likely to leave a violent relationship as there is pressure to remain in a marriage because of their fear of bringing shame and dishonour to the family
• Fear that the family in the home country will experience repercussions
• Fear of isolation and lack of extended family support
• Religious belief that marriage is a sacred vow and cannot be broken
• Intra-familial issues
• Be aware that suggesting a partner leave the room in order to speak to the client alone can result in further violence against the client at a later point
Some Risks to Consider Continued

- It is imperative to remember that as health care professionals, we are trained to understand FDV through a Western lens.
- It is imperative to attempt to understand someone else’s perspective of FDV.
- Practitioners working with refugee women affected by domestic violence in countries of resettlement need to be aware of the likelihood of such histories.
- Practitioners must be cognisant of how the mental and physical effects of refugees’ pre-arrival experiences can impact on the wellbeing and opportunities for successful resettlement in a new country.

Pittaway E. From horror to hope: Addressing domestic violence in refugee families resettled in Australia. Sydney, Australia: Centre for Refugee Research, UNSW and Office for Women, NSW Premiers Department 2004.
Working With Refugee, Immigrant & Migrant Women

- Focus on her strengths, not her weaknesses.
- Develop a thorough understanding of issues involved. Take time to address her concerns.
- Who and where are her support systems.
- Provide information on remedies available.
- Provide access and referrals to agencies and professionals who can assist with legal and social service needs.
- Work to ensure that the institution/agency is responsive to the special needs of this population.
- Support legislation that addresses the needs of refugee, immigrant and migrant battered women.
Barriers in Accessing Support

• The failure to recognise domestic violence due to traditional expectations
• Physical and emotional isolation
• Cultural barriers such as spiritual beliefs, rituals and traditions
• Communication barriers
• The stigma associated with speaking out in relation to abuse
• Lack of knowledge relating to rights and access of information
• Racism and discrimination

Reference: Alliman A, Ostapiej-Piatkowski B. Supporting women from CALD backgrounds who are victims/survivors of sexual violence: Challenges and opportunities for practitioners. Australian Centre for the study of sexual assault 2011 Contract No.: 9.
Working with CaLD Communities
Thank you!!