



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services

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## Understanding Children, Immigration, and Family Violence: A National Examination of the Issues

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# UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN, IMMIGRATION, AND FAMILY VIOLENCE: A NATIONAL EXAMINATION OF THE ISSUES

**Family Violence  
Prevention Fund**



**Learning Systems Group**

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## INTRODUCTION

The number of people in the United States affected by domestic violence is staggering. One in four women is abused by a partner at some point in her lifetime.<sup>1</sup> The adult victim often suffers severe emotional, as well as physical, effects. When children are present in the home, their safety, development, and overall well-being are also threatened. Immigrants to the United States are by no means immune to this problem. In fact, immigrants face the complexities of adjusting to a new community, the loss of traditional family supports, barriers to connecting to community resources, and a lack of available culturally and linguistically relevant services that can compound the impact of domestic violence on both adults and children.

Organizations and communities as a whole have, in recent years, attempted to improve their responses to domestic violence. In the early 1990's, researchers examined the effects of domestic violence on children and since then several collaborative efforts across the country have attempted to address the needs of these children. At the same time, communities have experienced dramatic shifts in immigration patterns and have struggled to address the needs of diverse community members in culturally competent ways. The National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women was founded in 1992 as a broad-based coalition of organizations and individuals that advocate, provide services, and offer assistance to immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking. While these efforts have made tremendous strides in eradicating domestic violence, the unique needs of immigrant children affected by domestic violence have not typically been addressed.

Researchers, service providers, and families need to come together to identify the unique strengths and needs of immigrant children affected by domestic violence and identify the most effective strategies for supporting them.

The Understanding Children, Immigration, and Family Violence project, a collaboration between Learning Systems Group (LSG) and Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) funded by the Family

Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, seeks to enhance services for immigrant children and their families affected by domestic violence. With a special focus on building partnerships, this project aims to help States and communities improve current policy and practice efforts.

The issues and recommendations articulated in this document are the result of a multi-level process used by LSG and FVPPF to identify challenges and opportunities in reaching out to and delivering services to immigrant children and families affected by domestic violence, best practices in serving them, and policy implications for the work. This process included:

- Reviewing related literature in the areas of family violence prevention and services, child trauma, and immigration;
- Conducting a national telephone survey of experts and practitioners in the fields of domestic violence, children's services, and immigration services;
- Convening a National Workgroup to discuss the above.

## BACKGROUND

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

While accurate statistics about the extent of domestic violence are difficult to obtain due to underreporting, it is estimated that as many as three million instances of domestic abuse against women occur annually in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women and, according to the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 25 percent of surveyed women and 8 percent of surveyed men said they were raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, or date at some time in their lifetime.<sup>3</sup>

Domestic violence crosses all racial, class, and cultural lines. The biggest risk factor for becoming a

"Violence is a failure in any culture."  
—Julianne Duncan, Washington, DC

victim of domestic violence is being a woman.<sup>4</sup> Socially learned attitudes and beliefs that men should have authority over women and that violence is an acceptable way to gain control promote domestic violence in every culture, including the dominant culture in this country. Many feel that a history of oppression, along with generational abuse and cultural beliefs that advocate traditional gender roles, also supports the perpetuation of domestic violence.

Research on domestic violence in immigrant populations indicates that the prevalence is quite high and that immigration itself might affect the frequency and severity of the abuse. One study reported that 48 percent of Latina immigrants reported an increase in their partner's violence against them since they immigrated to the United States.<sup>5</sup> In addition, low-income and immigrant groups experience barriers to accessing appropriate services and resources, which creates additional risks for these populations.

## IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE FAMILIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Many communities in the United States have experienced shifts in immigration trends. As these shifts occur, it often takes time for helping systems within the community to recognize the changes in the populations they serve, identify shifts in needs, and adapt to meet these new needs in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.

Immigrants constitute an incredibly diverse group, with differences in:

- ▶ Country of origin
- ▶ Immigration status
- ▶ Reason for emigrating
- ▶ Language
- ▶ Cultural, ethnic, religious, and tribal affiliation
- ▶ History of trauma
- ▶ Educational and health status

"This population is in real need. We need to preserve their dignity and not penalize them for their status."

—Catherine Olde, Grand Prairie, TX

- ▶ Traditional and existing sources of social support
- ▶ Time and migration history within the United States
- ▶ Experiences with adjustment

While we talk about immigrants as a group, it is important to recognize the many complex differences within this group and remember that each family is unique.

The number of immigrants admitted for lawful permanent residence in the United States in 2002 was 1,063,732.<sup>7</sup> Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of all legal immigrants live in the primary destination states of California, New York, Florida, Texas, New Jersey, and Illinois. When broken down by region and selected country of last residence, the 2002 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics shows that 45 percent of the United States' legal immigrants are from the Americas, 30.7 are from Asia, and 16 percent are from Europe, mostly from former Soviet Union countries.<sup>8</sup>

Accurate information on undocumented immigration is not available, but the projected unauthorized resident population in January of 2000 was estimated to be about 7 million, twice the size of the population of 3.5 million estimated in January 1990.<sup>9</sup> That estimated 7 million constituted 2.5 percent of the total United States population.

Because Latinos and Asian Americans make up the majority of immigrants to this country, these two groups are described further below.

### Latinos

Making up 13.7 percent of the general population and representing over 20 countries, Latino Americans are the largest ethnic minority group in the United States.<sup>10</sup> While they share similarities in language and culture, Latinos differ considerably in their immigration history and cultural experiences. The three major Latino ethnic groups in the United States are Mexicans, Puerto Ricans<sup>11</sup>, and Cubans. Latino families are two to five times more likely than non-Latino White families in the U.S. to live in poverty.<sup>12</sup> In terms of domestic violence, there are

## TYPES OF IMMIGRATION STATUS

An individual's immigration status reflects that person's legal status, which can influence their eligibility for services. When we use the term "immigrant families" in this document, we are referring to any family in which one of the members immigrated to the United States from another country. This might include any of the following immigration categories: <sup>6</sup>

**Lawful Permanent Residents ("Green Card" Holders).** Immigrants who have "lawful permanent resident" status have been granted permission by the United States government to reside and work in the United States permanently. They are still citizens of their home country, but possess many of the same rights as United States citizens. One difference between lawful permanent residents and U.S. citizens is that, in some cases, lawful permanent residents can be deported or denied permission to reenter the country. An immigrant domestic violence victim may have become or be eligible to become a lawful permanent resident through the Violence Against Woman Act (VAWA). Other typical routes to status are through family members or employers.

**Refugees.** The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has the authority to grant legal refugee status to someone who is outside of his or her country of origin and cannot return due to fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Refugee status is granted before resettlement in the U.S.

**Asylees.** An asylum seeker is someone who has come to the U.S seeking protection. In contrast to refugees, who receive this status before they enter the United States, asylees request asylum after they enter the United States. Asylum is granted by either the Bureau for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or by the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) of the U.S. Department of Justice. Like refugees, asylees must be found "unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of origin because of past persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on the person's race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."

**Visa Holders.** People with employment, student, or tourist visas are in the United States legally for a fixed period of time and for a specific purpose. They are generally ineligible for public benefits.

**Immigrant Domestic Violence Survivors.** VAWA enables battered spouses and children to obtain lawful immigration status without the abuser's knowledge or permission. In order to be eligible, the batterer either must be a U.S. citizen or a lawful permanent resident. Unfortunately, no relief is available under these laws if the abuser is neither a U.S. citizen nor a legal permanent resident.

**U & T Visas.** In 2000, Congress created two new routes to status for immigrant crime victims. U visas are for noncitizen victims of child abuse, domestic violence sexual assault, trafficking and other crimes; the T visa is specifically for immigrants trafficked into the US for commercial sex or labor. The perpetrator's status and relationship to the victim are irrelevant for both, but both visas require cooperation with the criminal system.

**Parolees.** Parolees enter the country lawfully while the U.S. Government decides what status to give them. Some persons are "paroled indefinitely," which is also a lawful status.

**Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.** In some cases, unmarried, documented or undocumented immigrants under 21 are able to become lawful permanent residents. An example of this is when a young person is placed by the family court in long-term foster care or guardianship.

**Undocumented Immigrants.** Undocumented immigrants are individuals who entered the United States unlawfully or people whose legal immigrant or visitor status has expired or has been cancelled by the U.S. Government.

*Continued on next page.*



**Naturalized United States Citizens.** Immigrants are generally eligible to apply for United States citizenship five years after they receive lawful permanent residence, but some are eligible after only three years through marriage to a U.S. citizen. Those who become naturalized citizens possess the same rights and responsibilities as native-born citizens and cannot be deported. In some cases, lawful permanent resident children can become citizens automatically if their parents naturalize before the children turn 18.

**United States Citizens.** Anyone born in the United States, its territories and certain possessions (Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands, for instance) are US citizens. This includes people born of undocumented parents. Children of US citizens who

are born while their parents are in another country also may be US citizens. Everyone else must “naturalize” to become a citizen, usually after a required period of lawful permanent residence.

**Multiple Statuses in One Family.** It is very common for one household to have members with different immigration statuses. For example, an undocumented mother or father may have children who were born in the United States (and who are, thus, citizens). They may live with recently arrived relatives who have lawful permanent residence, and receive visits from family members who are in the country on tourist visas.

significant differences among Latino groups, with Puerto Ricans reporting the highest incidence of domestic violence and Cubans reporting the lowest.<sup>13</sup> According to Puerto Rican Law 54: Prevention and Intervention for Domestic Violence, researchers estimate that 60 percent of women in Puerto Rico have experienced domestic violence.<sup>14</sup>

### Asian Americans

In 2000, there were 2.5 million Asian American and Pacific Islander families in the United States.<sup>15</sup> Asian American and Pacific Islanders are a diverse ethnic group, representing over fifty distinct ethnic sub-groups.<sup>16</sup> The experience of Asian Americans differs greatly by immigration and generational status.<sup>17</sup> While as a group, Asian Americans have achieved relatively high levels of educational and economic success compared to other minority groups,<sup>18</sup> more recent Asian immigrants experience poverty at twice the rate of Caucasians in the United States.<sup>19</sup>

In the National Violence Against Women Survey conducted by the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 12.8 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander women surveyed reported experiencing physical assault by an intimate partner at least once during their lifetime, less than any other ethnic group.<sup>20</sup> The low rate for Asian and Pacific Islander women may be attributed

to underreporting. Other studies with specific ethnic groups showed a much higher prevalence of domestic violence. For example, in a survey of women of Japanese origin, 52 percent reported having experienced physical violence during their lifetime.<sup>21</sup> A study of South Asian women found that 40.8 percent of the participants reported they had been physically and/or sexually abused in some way by their current male partners in their lifetime.<sup>22</sup> One study found that Asian women tend to be less likely to categorize various interactions as domestic violence than women of other ethnic groups.<sup>23</sup>

### IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON ADULT AND CHILD VICTIMS

Domestic violence affects everyone: the adult victims, their children, the perpetrators themselves, and other families in the community. Abused women are more likely to experience depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and drug or alcohol abuse than are women who are not abused.<sup>24</sup> These are normal responses to the trauma of abuse. The community suffers as violence learned in the home can spill into the community, leading to other crime and delinquency.

Several studies have documented significant problems exhibited by many of the children who experience domestic violence, including a greater likelihood of aggressive and antisocial behavior among

boys, and depression and anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and slower development of cognitive skills among children of both genders. The short- and long-term effects on a child depend on a variety of factors, including the frequency and severity of the abuse and the developmental age of the child. Infants may develop attachment disorders. Preschoolers may regress and suffer from sleep disturbances and social-emotional problems. School-age children may struggle with attention, learning, and peer relationships. Adolescents are at risk for repeating the abusive patterns they have witnessed.<sup>25</sup> Young children, who are disproportionately represented in households where there is domestic violence, are particularly vulnerable because they do not have the cognitive resources to understand what is happening. Children living in a home with domestic violence are also at a much higher risk for child maltreatment. Research indicates a 30 to 60 percent co-occurrence rate of domestic violence and child abuse.<sup>26</sup>

The effects of domestic violence can be compounded by additional risk factors that immigrant children and families may experience. For example, a history of persecution and trauma, loss of an extended family network, the stress of adapting to a new culture, isolation from the broader community due to language and other barriers, lack of available resources, and so forth, can reduce the protective factors that help children and families cope.

On the other hand, many children and youth from immigrant families possess significant strengths that can serve to protect them in the face of the trauma of domestic violence. An emphasis on extended family and community ties often results in children having a network of consistent caring adults to nurture and support them. This community network can also support development of a strong cultural identity. A connection to a faith community, important to many immigrant families, has also been found to be a protective factor for children. In addition, many immigrant parents have high expectations for their children's achievement, which also supports success.

## THE RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence, sometimes referred to as intimate partner violence or family violence, is a type of violence against women caused by learned behavior that is promoted by sexism and other forms of oppression. The movement to eradicate domestic violence is closely tied to the women's movement. Since the 1960s, advocates against domestic violence have worked for social change that promotes equality and shared power, as well as for responses that hold batterers responsible and keep women safe. That advocacy has resulted in changes in laws and communities' responses to domestic violence, as well as a general increase in awareness about this issue.

With the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, services for battered women have become more widely available, with substantial growth in domestic violence hotlines and shelters. However, despite their wider availability, most battered women do not use shelter services.

"Any policy that pits moms against kids hurts everyone."

—Julia Perilla, Georgia State University

Since the early 1990s, there has been a substantial body of research that has examined the effects of domestic violence on children. As our awareness about these effects has increased, many national, State, and local groups have considered the needs of children and debated how to best address them. Many of those debates have centered on how to keep children safe without endangering or re-victimizing their mothers and have focused on the child welfare system's response to domestic violence. There has been general recognition that concern for children's well-being in homes where domestic violence exists is valid; however, ensuring the safety of the mother is the most effective way to reduce risk for the child.

In the last decade or so, communities have made strong efforts to form coordinated responses that involve the criminal justice system, domestic violence

service providers, the child welfare system, and other service systems in an effort to respond effectively to domestic violence. In more recent years, some communities have developed strong collaborations that also involve faith-based organizations, cultural organizations, schools, health care systems, and businesses.<sup>27</sup> For example, the Family Violence Prevention Fund, with support from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, has worked to bridge domestic violence and child welfare systems by developing innovative policies, practices, and collaborative service delivery systems that promote safety for women and children in their homes. The Center for Community Partnerships in Child Welfare at the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) has worked with a variety of communities to implement an approach to child welfare that brings together public child protection agencies with domestic violence service providers, neighborhood leaders, faith communities, and local organizations to enhance safety and well-being for all families. The Greenbook Initiative is also helping child welfare agencies, domestic violence agencies, and family court systems work together more effectively to help families experiencing violence. Some of these promising partnership models go beyond the historical criminal justice response and reach traditionally underserved populations that are perhaps less likely to seek help for domestic violence from a shelter or the police. In addition, they work to consider the needs of everyone in the family, including the children.

As agencies and communities have worked to respond more effectively to domestic violence, they have recognized that attempts to reach immigrant families present additional challenges. The impact of domestic violence on immigrant families might be compounded by the stresses of immigration and belief systems that discourage seeking outside help for family problems. In addition to the multiple barriers to leaving an abuser experienced by U.S.-born victims, immigrants often cannot access culturally relevant services, do not speak the language of service providers, mistrust the legal system and social service agencies, and fear being deported. This group is less likely to reach out to traditional domestic violence

service providers and requires a conscious effort on the part of communities to use alternative methods to respond to their unique situations and needs. Even if they do reach out, some domestic violence shelters do not have the capacity to meet the needs of immigrant families and may not even accept undocumented immigrants.

While many researchers, advocates and practitioners serving victims of domestic violence have increased their awareness of the needs of children and immigrants, many communities still struggle to provide a comprehensive, culturally-relevant response that considers the needs of immigrant children. Some existing practices, such as placing children in foster care, deporting abusers, and using children as translators, can cause additional trauma for immigrant children. In addition, service gaps, such as lack of culturally appropriate mental health and primary prevention services, mean that immigrant children often do not receive the support they need to recover from witnessing domestic violence. The promising collaborative approaches being implemented in select communities across the country can serve as models which can be built on to include the voices of immigrant children, youth, and families and offer services that promote protective factors and reduce risk factors for immigrant children and youth.

## **STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITIES THAT SERVE THEM**

Through telephone surveys and the National Workgroup meeting, the Understanding Children, Immigration, and Family Violence project identified strengths and challenges of many immigrant families. While no generalizations about a large diverse group can truly describe the individual experiences and culture of any family within it, the following trends can be helpful in beginning to identify some of the specific needs and challenges faced by these communities. However, it is important to remember

that each community must consider its own strengths and challenges and individualize services for families, all of whom are unique.

## STRENGTHS

- ▶ **Strong Sense of Family.** Family is frequently the only constant for immigrants. Everything else is changing—language, culture, community, friends, economic situation, and so on. Many immigrants feel very connected to both their nuclear and extended families and work hard to keep them together. Strong values related to respecting elders and keeping marriages together also are common in many immigrant groups. However, the immigration process sometimes means long separations from family members and often causes additional stress on the family. For a victim of domestic violence, the idea of leaving the perpetrator of the violence can be particularly challenging when the community and other family members reinforce her duty to stay in the relationship. For children, this strong sense of family can be a powerful protective factor, although it might be challenged by mainstream values of independence.
- ▶ **Strong Sense of Community.** Immigrant families often recreate a strong, close-knit community in the United States. Where available, this community is often made up of other immigrants from the same country or ethnic group who share similar experiences. This can be a tremendous source of support in the acculturation process and frequently is where immigrant families will turn for support. The community network also can be a source of additional caring adults for children and youth and promote a sense of cultural identity, both of which help to promote resiliency. However, there is sometimes a fear that sharing family information, such as the existence of domestic violence, will be talked about and lead to shame in the community.
- ▶ **Strong Sense of Faith.** Many immigrant families have a strong sense of faith and a connection to a community of worship or a faith leader. Even when families are not themselves religious, there is often a sense of trust and respect for religious

institutions or faith-based organizations. A connection to a faith community and a system of values and beliefs has also been found to be a protective factor for children.

- ▶ **Desire To Do Well and Be Lawful.** Oftentimes, the dream of a better life is what brings people to a new country. Many immigrant families work very hard to improve their economic situation and perceived status in the community. Survey respondents indicated that while they may lack information about U.S. laws and services related to domestic violence, immigrants usually want to obey the law and be seen as law-abiding. They often respond well to legal information. For example, immigrants may not be aware of child abuse and neglect laws and may respond positively to respectful information and alternative discipline tools to promote their children's success.
- ▶ **Desire for Children To Do Well.** Immigrants frequently want a better life for their children and are willing to make great sacrifices to achieve this. Often, their child's educational achievement is seen as a high priority. Many respondents reported that both perpetrators and adult victims of domestic violence are very concerned about the potential effects of domestic violence on their children and find this to be an important motivator in seeking help. High, but realistic, expectations for children and youth can contribute to their success.
- ▶ **Resourcefulness and Resiliency.** Going through the immigration process takes a great deal of resourcefulness and resiliency. As immigrant families learn to adjust to a new culture and new systems, they often draw on these strengths. This model of problem solving and looking toward a better future can be a positive influence on children's healthy development.

## CHALLENGES

Immigrant victims of domestic violence experience similar challenges to U.S.-born victims but sometimes face additional challenges and barriers to receiving services.

▶ **Loss of Traditional Systems of Support.**

Immigrants are often cut off from their family, friends, and community resources they might have turned to in their country of origin. Separation from parents and other extended family members can be particularly isolating and the loss of a familiar environment can cause additional stress. Turning to legal or human services systems for help with family matters might be a foreign idea to many immigrants; in addition, in many communities, some services may not be available to undocumented immigrants. Children also may feel this loss or recognize the effects of this loss on their parents.

▶ **Language Barriers.** Many services are not available in immigrants' home languages. In some instances, people may feel uncomfortable having members of the same cultural group translate for them, fearing that information about their family will be spread to other members of the community. Using a neighbor or child to interpret, while a common solution to the language barrier, is inappropriate when seeking services for domestic violence.

▶ **Cultural Barriers.** Even when services and interpretation can be secured, culturally relevant services may not be available. Shifts in migration patterns may mean that existing service providers do not yet have the capacity to appropriately serve new immigrant populations. In addition, domestic violence service providers may not have connections to the immigrant community, while organizations that are connected to the immigrant community may not have knowledge or expertise about domestic violence. This can lead to difficulty in outreach and the potential for practice that is not culturally appropriate. For example, the concept of talking about family problems in a mental health setting with children present might feel inappropriate to people from some cultures. Working with a counselor who is significantly younger might also be challenging for some immigrants. Not having familiar or religiously appropriate foods available could be another barrier for some. Solutions centered on leaving a spouse may feel unresponsive to people who want to make the relationship work. While children and

youth tend to adapt quickly to a new dominant culture, they typically struggle to be comfortable in both their home culture and that of the surrounding community, and may have difficulty clarifying what that means for their own cultural identity.

“Fundamentally, we have to change the Domestic Violence model. We can't reach immigrants or other minorities through shelters and the legal system.”

—Patti Grogan, Tallahassee, FL

▶ **Structural Access Barriers.** In some communities, domestic violence shelters and other services may require a car or the use of public transportation, which some immigrant women might not have access to. Even entering a neighborhood where most people are not from the same ethnic group may feel uncomfortable for some. Depending on their status, some immigrants may not be eligible for certain public benefits and may face severe economic hardships, including homelessness, with no safety net. Undocumented immigrants face particular difficulties obtaining needed services. Legal advocacy to help navigate complicated immigration laws may be particularly challenging to obtain. These service gaps and resulting family stressors may result in additional risk factors for children of immigrant families.

▶ **Juggling Many Challenges.** Domestic violence can sometimes be lost in the shuffle of a host of other issues for immigrant families. For example, they may be struggling with health, housing, legal status, and job crises. Addressing domestic violence may be lower on the priority list for some families, as well as some helping organizations serving immigrant communities. As families and service providers focus on resolving these very real challenges, children's needs may be overlooked.

▶ **Use of Immigration Status as Strategy for Power and Control.** When there is domestic violence, survivors and practitioners report that the batterer often uses immigration status as a strategy to gain power and control. For example, he may

refuse to sign necessary documents, threaten to call immigration authorities or threaten to return the children to the country of origin.

- ▶ **Anti-immigrant Attitudes.** Many immigrants report discrimination and prejudice, based on ethnicity, race, and immigration status. Some say this has increased since 9/11. Some victims are reluctant to report abuse because it may add to a perception that their ethnic group or that immigrants in general are violent. Others face discrimination in the helping systems they encounter. Children and youth also experience these attitudes in school and in the community.
- ▶ **Conflicts Between Parents and Children.** Children, especially those attending school, tend to adjust quickly to a new culture and language and often live a life “with one foot in each culture.” This can be scary for immigrant parents who are afraid that their children might be corrupted by American values that they do not share. It can also put children in the place of interpreter, which disrupts the traditional parent/child dynamic by putting the child in the role of expert. As children try to negotiate two cultures and parents try to guide and protect their children, conflicts often arise. Without extended family and community to reinforce traditional values, parents might depend on corporal punishment and be surprised to learn that this practice is not accepted widely in this culture.
- ▶ **Past Trauma.** Immigrants and refugees who have fled a war-torn country or oppressive government may still be recovering from past trauma. This can compound the effects of domestic violence for both children and adults.
- ▶ **Literacy Issues.** Information about domestic violence is often provided in written form. Some immigrants may not read English and some may not be literate in their own language. Again, this sometimes puts children in the role of interpreter.
- ▶ **Threat of Deportation.** In some immigrant communities, especially those with a high percentage of undocumented immigrants, there is a pervasive fear of being deported. This can lead to a reluctance to seek help from law enforcement, the

courts, or any government system. Even private community-based organizations are often viewed as part of the government system and, therefore, might be avoided. In addition, our surveys found that many victims of domestic violence want the violence to stop but do not want their partners deported. If an immigrant is arrested, they are at risk for deportation, which discourages many victims from calling law enforcement officials. Separation from a parent, even an abusive one, is almost always traumatic for a child.

- ▶ **Not Knowing the Law.** Some immigrants may not be familiar with their rights and responsibilities under Federal and State laws. Immigration laws are complicated, but under VAWA they may provide opportunities for victims of domestic violence, depending on the situation. Other laws that might be applicable to families experiencing domestic violence include those related to restraining orders, child custody, child abuse and neglect, and visitation. Criminal, civil, and family courts may all be involved in one way or another. The policies and procedures may differ from State to State. Lack of understanding of the law and how to obtain appropriate legal advocacy may put both child and adult victims of domestic violence at greater risk.
- ▶ **Invisibility.** In some communities, especially those that may not traditionally have had a large immigrant population, immigrants can feel invisible. They may not see themselves or their culture reflected in schools, services, or advertising. For victims of domestic violence, this could increase an existing sense of isolation. For children, it can negatively influence the healthy development of their cultural identity as they begin to recognize that their culture is not valued.

## BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

To meet the needs of immigrant children and families affected by domestic violence, communities need to embrace a community partnership model that focuses on prevention and intervention services and responds to the specific strengths and needs of the immigrant population. This model needs to be cul-

turally relevant, which may mean enhancing the capacity of existing service providers and/or implementing alternative strategies to traditional approaches. Services should be empowerment-based, embedded in the community, and involve immigrant youth and families in the planning and leadership. When planning for services to support immigrant children and youth, communities must consider how to support the adult victim, address the possible effects of witnessing domestic violence on children, and identify the unique strengths and needs of immigrant children in order to promote protective factors, while reducing risk. The following best practice recommendations were developed with input from the Understanding Children, Immigration, and Family Violence National Workgroup.

- **Involve Immigrant Youth and Families in Planning and Leadership.** Empowering youth and adults by listening to their expertise about how to best reach those in their community is a valuable tool in combating violence. Many practitioners report that having elders and other leaders from the community speak out against domestic violence is incredibly powerful for immigrant youth and families. Begin by identifying who the important leaders in the community are and partner with them to complete a community assessment. Empower women and youth by inviting them to participate in advisory committees or coalitions and eliciting their support in planning and implementation. Hire and train staff from within the community. Respond to the ideas of children and youth and involve the adults from the community. This helps to promote positive cultural identity and self-esteem while avoiding cultural pitfalls, identifying important partners, and developing creative strategies.
- **Partner and Share Resources.** Traditionally, there has been a lack of coordination between

“We need to expand capacity within communities—create resources within communities.”  
—David Adams, Cambridge, MA

domestic violence service providers, immigration and refugee service providers, and those who serve children. Attempts by first responders such as law enforcement officials, child welfare agencies, and domestic violence crisis intervention services to coordinate domestic violence interventions often have not included those organizations that have regular contact with immigrant children and have primary prevention experience such as Head Start, schools, and afterschool programs. Partnering between these various community stakeholders is time consuming and often complicated by different agency missions, value systems, and funding streams; however, the result could be a more comprehensive, seamless system of service delivery. Successful efforts identify partners that bring to the table primary prevention capacity, intimate knowledge of and connection to the immigrant community, experience in promoting child wellness, and expertise in domestic violence prevention and services. It is important to share resources with all partners, rather than to replicate an imbalanced power system by having one organization hold all of the money and expect in-kind services from the others. This partnering takes time and patience as the collaboration process explores meaningful assessment, planning, and implementation strategies. Recognition that all partners come with good will and want the best for children and families, can help during the challenging conflicts that might arise over values and beliefs.

There are many resources available to involve in the collaborative effort, including:

- \* Domestic violence shelters and services
- \* Early care and education providers (including Head Start and Early Head Start), schools, and afterschool programs
- \* Healthcare providers, including mental health, pediatric, and family care providers
- \* Child welfare system
- \* Children’s advocates
- \* Immigrant and refugee servicing agencies, including resettlement and mutual assistance associations
- \* Legal advocates

- \* Criminal justice system, including law enforcement and family, juvenile, civil, and criminal courts
- \* Ethnically-based organizations
- \* Places of worship and faith-based organizations
- \* English as a Second Language (ESL) programs
- \* Foreign language media (radio, television, and newspapers)
- \* Consulates
- \* Community leaders
- \* Businesses (such as local restaurants, hair salons, and grocery stores)

In partnering efforts, organizations may find sharing staff (for example, having a domestic violence advocate work out of an immigration services provider's office) and cross training valuable.

- ▶ **Promote Cultural Competency, Language Diversity, and Gender Sensitivity.** Service providers are challenged to ensure that all materials and services are provided in the family's home language. Programs must plan for the added costs that interpretation and staffing require. Caseloads may need to be reduced to manage the extra time it may take (due to the need to obtain legal advocacy and eligibility) to work with immigrant families. The level of diversity in a particular community might create additional challenges. For example, some communities might have to have the capacity to serve immigrant families from many countries and who speak a variety of languages. All services and approaches need to be responsive to the family's culture, offered in the home language, and sensitive to gender issues. Ongoing training on cultural competency and the impact of gender bias is critical.
- ▶ **Implement a Community Organizing Prevention Model.** Advocates for the elimination of domestic violence should work with immigrant leaders to explore strategies for preventing domestic violence. Cultural and religious leaders can be powerful and influential voices who can help spread culturally relevant messages about healthy relationships, equality, peaceful resolution of conflict, and the elimination of domestic violence. Immigrant youth and other members of the com-

munity can help plan the most effective ways to reach the intended audience. Because domestic violence is perpetuated by social learning, creating social change is necessary to its prevention. Work with the community to address gender, racial, and ethnic oppression through activities such as demonstrations, exhibitions, educational materials, celebrations, public awareness building, and workshops. Promote positive relationship models for children and youth in early childhood programs, schools, and recreational and mentoring programs.

- ▶ **Provide Family-centered, Strengths-based Services.** Many immigrant victims may hold traditional views of gender roles and strong commitments to maintaining the family unit. These beliefs may conflict with those held by advocates that domestic violence is perpetuated by beliefs related to men's authority over women. Services that are responsive to immigrant families must recognize and respect the differences in values and beliefs while educating about women's rights to safety and equality. Family-centered, strengths-based practices are important service options for families and their children. Services need to focus on families' strengths and goals and empower adult victims to pursue their own plans for safety for themselves and their children. Communities need access to a variety of resources to help families, including adequate and accessible services for adult victims of domestic violence, those who perpetrate abuse, and children at all stages of their development. Collaborative, empowerment approaches are promising because they draw upon resources already established within the family and community. Many immigrant cultures rely heavily on extended family and community support. By engaging extended family and community members in an exploration of service options, the community may be able to facilitate a creative and fruitful process that will allow the family to be served in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.
- ▶ **Ensure that Services are Embedded in the Community.** What many programs have discovered is that the vast majority of immigrant victims



of domestic violence do not use the services that have been a part of traditional responses to domestic violence. They may be reluctant to disclose domestic violence, disinclined to leave an abusive relationship, and mistrusting of an approach that centers on law enforcement, separating the batterer from the victim, or mental health services. Services should go to where immigrant children and families are, and not require them to come to the services. Communities can assess where children and families are already connected and partner to provide the expertise to eradicate domestic violence within those existing safe spaces. For example, some model programs provide services within churches, immigration service organizations, schools, or afterschool programs.

- ▶ **Provide a Full Range of Services.** Services need to address the needs of all immigrant children, as well as those suspected of or identified as having witnessed domestic violence. The approach should consider prevention activities that promote protective factors in children that will help them cope, crisis intervention services that respond to children and families in immediate need, and services designed to help children and families heal. In addition, public education campaigns and social change efforts should work towards the elimination of domestic violence on a broader scale. With immigrant children and families, services must also include legal advocacy around immigration issues, information about social service systems, interpretation services, and concrete services around such needs as housing and economic development. Culturally competent mental health services should consider not only the current family situation and past domestic violence, but also the immigration experience and any trauma endured in the country of origin.
- ▶ **Include Services for Men.** Some immigrant survivors have requested that services be provided not just for them, but for their partners as well. Focus groups with mothers of color, both U.S. born and immigrant, revealed that many wanted men to have more opportunities for healing and renouncing violence.<sup>28</sup> Some model programs,

such as Caminar Latino in Atlanta, Georgia, have found safe ways to respond to these requests, providing batterers' intervention programs and parenting support connected to victim's and children's services. Although keeping women's and children's safety should always be our priority, offering increased opportunity for men to take responsibility for their violence and the impact it has on their children could become a viable prevention strategy. The fears about this work, such as that men will use fatherhood as a means to retain custody, must be understood and guarded against. At the same time, we must attend to the needs of all family members, especially in cases where relationships endure.

- ▶ **Offer Fun, Safe Experiences for Children and Youth.** The needs of children should not be overlooked; they should be an integral part of a comprehensive approach. A range of services is most effective, with preventive programming geared to all children that promote protective factors, as well as specific interventions that promote healing for traumatized children. Staff for the latter must have thorough understanding of the child's culture, child development, child trauma, and the dynamics of domestic violence. Many model programs incorporate creative, recreational experiences for children and youth that reflect culturally relevant art and encourage expression in a safe environment. Theater, poetry writing, music, dance, and the visual arts have all been used in both prevention and therapeutic settings. For young children, creative play in child witness to violence programs has been valuable in the healing process. For older children and young adults, create a one-stop shop for children where they can "hang out" and receive services without it feeling like a social service agency. When youth experience domestic violence in their homes, they may not go to a counselor to talk about domestic violence, but may be more likely to go to a recreational program to play sports or spend time with friends. Another key partner is the school system. Youth will often go to school even when they are not living at home. For this reason, outreach through the schools can be effective to reach these children. Mentoring pro-

grams that pair a child with an adult mentor from the same immigrant community can also be very effective in building resiliency. Important to these experiences is having a safe space where there are trusted adults who are knowledgeable about and respectful of the child's home culture.

- ▶ **Integrate Parenting Issues.** As immigrants want their children to do well, they often respond to respectful information about the effects of violence on children and parenting tools to support children's success in school and life. In addition, some immigrant parents may not understand the child abuse and neglect laws in this country and may need discipline tools other than corporal punishment to help guide their children through the stressful transitions of gaining bi-cultural competency and recovering from domestic violence. Parenting education and support is best received when it is offered from a strengths-based perspective, valuing the parents' existing expertise and providing an opportunity to explore additional information and options. Approaches that work with the non-abusing parent and child together to support the child's healing can be successful as long as the parent's role is respected.
- ▶ **Engage in a Public Awareness Campaign.** Many who work with immigrant families recognize that immigrants may not be aware of their rights or of services available related to domestic violence. A public awareness campaign that works to educate all immigrants on domestic violence laws and services, as well as child abuse and neglect laws, would decrease barriers to helping caused by misinformation. Some public health campaigns, such as those to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, have successfully reached underserved populations and are models that domestic violence advocates could build on.
- ▶ **Provide Follow-up.** Domestic violence prevention efforts sometimes provide brief educational opportunities in schools or other settings. It is important to provide follow-up to these activities. Otherwise, children and youth can find themselves facing a realization of domestic violence without support. A domestic violence advocate or a trained and

trusted teacher, social worker, or counselor needs to be available onsite for children and youth to address issues raised by educational programs.

- ▶ **Plan Carefully for Screening, Assessment, and Documentation.** Community efforts need to consider who will screen for domestic violence, how it will be assessed, and where it will be documented. While screening is useful in identifying children and families affected by domestic violence, it is critical that it be done in a safe way with adequate follow-up systems in place.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Training and technical assistance on best practices without corresponding systemic and policy changes can lead to frustration by frontline advocates and service providers. To ensure the development and replication of model approaches are supported, policy makers and administrators need to come together to evaluate existing systems and make changes that will support immigrant children and their families who are affected by domestic violence.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations from the National Workgroup concerning policy implications for this effort:

- ▶ **Place a Priority on Domestic Violence Prevention Across Service Systems that Reach Immigrant Children.** Information about domestic violence, including the law and available response systems, should be provided to immigrants upon entry to the country. Immigrants are often confronted with a barrage of information during this transition time, and education about domestic violence needs to be offered again during various natural opportunities, for example, during health visits, during school enrollment, upon documentation application and renewal, and so on. This could be a part of a public health campaign, similar to that done for HIV/AIDS. Prevention messages should be developed with various service providers and immigrant leaders and youth. Immigration, health, and school services providers

have opportunities to identify domestic violence and work with domestic violence prevention and services advocates to intervene safely. Communities should be provided with guidelines for safe screening, documentation, and assessment practices.

- ▶ **Encourage Partnerships between Family Violence Prevention and Services Agencies, Organizations that Serve Immigrant Children and Families, and Leaders within the Immigrant Community.** These partnerships need to occur at the Federal, State, and local levels, and include the voices of immigrant youth and adult survivors in planning efforts. As a part of these partnerships, agencies that serve immigrants need to increase their capacity to address domestic violence, while domestic violence services agencies need to increase their capacity to address the needs of immigrant children and their families.
- ▶ **Promote Policies that Reflect an Understanding of the Unique Needs of Immigrant Children and Families.** Securing housing, navigating legal issues, and obtaining economic independence can be complicated for immigrant families. Agencies may need to be flexible on lengths of shelter stays or offer services to undocumented victims. In addition, policies should be reviewed for those that might be perceived as anti-immigrant. Immigrant children and families affected by domestic violence need improved access to benefits. Additional funding may be needed for smaller caseloads and interpretation services. This must be done without taking away resources from other groups. Agencies should be encouraged to develop partnerships and culturally relevant programs that promote resiliency in children.
- ▶ **Require All Grantees to Submit a Plan for How They Will Address the Needs of Immigrant Children and Families to Receive Funding.** Immigrant children and families can be “invisible” to many systems. If grantees and contractors are required to include plans that address the needs of immigrant children and youth in all proposals, it will raise awareness of the issue, begin to facilitate an examination of immigrant needs, and encourage partnering.

“Build *real* collaborations that are culturally competent where there is cross-fertilization across systems.” —Charlotte Watson, Albany, NY

## EVALUATION

A good evaluation ensures that desired outcomes are achieved and provides feedback for funders as well as service providers. Evaluation can identify and describe model approaches that can be replicated elsewhere and indicate areas that may need improvement. However, evaluating programs that attempt to support immigrant children and families affected by domestic violence can be challenging and must be designed to be safe and culturally appropriate. The following recommendations should be taken into account:

- ▶ **Exercise Caution When Defining Goals and Measures of Success.** Communities and administrators need to be careful as they define their goals and measures of success. In a community organizing partnership model that focuses on prevention, measures of success may be different than in traditional approaches to service delivery. Logic models can help connect the service outputs with the intended outcomes. Immigrant children and families being served should be included in the planning, and therefore should help to define successful outcome measures.
- ▶ **Factor in Time for Partnership Development.** Community collaborations should be encouraged to not expect overnight change and set themselves up for failure. Evaluation design should take into account the time it takes to establish meaningful partnerships and track the outcomes of those efforts. Evaluation should also describe policy changes that lead to increased capacity within staff, programs, and communities.
- ▶ **Plan Data Gathering Activities Carefully, with Safety in Mind.** The process of gathering data has the potential to scare some immigrant families away from services and could possibly put victims of domestic violence at risk. The evaluation design should be carefully planned with experts in domestic violence who understand immigrant issues and the potential risks of data gathering. Careful consid-

eration should be given to what information is collected, who collects it, and where and how it is stored. While data gathering methods need to be safe and culturally appropriate, it is the immigrant children and families themselves who should have a strong voice in evaluating the success of a program.

- ▶ **Consider Providing Separate Funds for Evaluation.** It is important to note that many service organizations do not have the in-house capability to evaluate their own program and it may be more appropriate for an outside agency to conduct the evaluation. However, strict guidelines for confidentiality and safety must be adhered. The need for translation of evaluation tools and documents must be considered.

### **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FVPSA STATE ADMINISTRATORS**

FVPSA State Administrators are in a strategic position to influence policy, provide funding opportunities, and bring multiple State and local stakeholders together to build partnerships that will lead to better services for immigrant children and families affected by domestic violence. The Understanding Children, Immigration, and Family Violence National Workgroup made the following recommendations for FVPSA State Administrators:

- ▶ **Convene Stakeholders with an Interest in Immigrant Children and Domestic Violence at the State and National Levels.** Many systems could have a valuable impact on the prevention and elimination of domestic violence in immigrant communities and the support of immigrant children affected by it. FVPSA State Administrators could partner with other State systems in domestic violence, health, mental health, education, early childhood programs (such as Head Start), criminal justice, and immigration and refugee services. To build on these partnerships at the State levels, FVPSA State Administrators could convene meetings or conferences that also include researchers, practitioners, and immigrant children and families to explore model programs, share information across systems, and encourage local partnerships. Including the topic of supporting immigrant children at national meetings of

FVPSA State Administrators could ensure that lessons learned in one State could be shared with others and build awareness of the needs of immigrant children affected by domestic violence.

- ▶ **Encourage Outreach to Immigrants at the State and Local Levels.** Finding a way to include the voices of immigrant children, youth, and families in State policy making and local service planning, implementation, and evaluation is another important role for FVPSA State Administrators. This could be encouraged through funding opportunities, as well as through communication with other State stakeholders, State coalitions, and grantees.
- ▶ **Build Awareness that Translated Materials are a Legal Right.** Executive Order 13166, reprinted at 65 FR 50121 (August 16, 2000), requires that recipients of federal financial assistance provide meaningful access to services for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP), under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d. Requests for proposals need to specify that interpretation and translation of materials must be included in grantees' plans. Encouraging agencies to propose how they will comply will reinforce this legal responsibility.

**"Don't assume.** Don't assume that you know people's needs. Don't assume that your culture is less violent. Don't assume that you have more resources to deal with these issues. Don't assume that you know more." —Barbara Paradiso, Denver, CO

- ▶ **Connect Local Programs with Information on Model Demonstration Projects.** Several programs across the country have engaged in exciting and successful strategies to support immigrant children affected by domestic violence. While it is important that local communities respond to the unique strengths and needs in their area, they can learn a great deal from other communities who have been doing this work for some time. Selected model programs and resources can be found in the Resources section of this document.

## RESOURCES

The following are selected organizations, training resources, and programs serving immigrant children and families.

### NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

**Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence** is a national network of advocates; community members; professionals from health, mental health, law, education, and social services; survivors; scholars; researchers; and activists from public policy, community organizations, youth programs, immigrants' rights networks, communities of color, women's groups, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender communities, and other social justice organizations. It serves as a forum for and clearinghouse on information, research, resources, and critical issues about violence against women in Asian and Pacific Islander communities. The API Institute is part of the Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum. [www.apiahf.org/apidvinstitute/default.htm](http://www.apiahf.org/apidvinstitute/default.htm)

**Community Partnership for Protecting Children initiative at the Center for the Study of Social Policy** has made concerted efforts to change fundamental thinking about how society protects children and to reform our nation's child welfare system since 1996. The community partnership approach starts from the premise that no single factor is responsible for child abuse and neglect, and therefore that no one public agency can safeguard children. Children's safety depends on strong families, and strong families depend on connections with a broad range of people, organizations, and community institutions. [www.cssp.org/center/community\\_partnership2.html](http://www.cssp.org/center/community_partnership2.html)

**Family Support America** promotes family support as the nationally recognized movement to strengthen and support families and places the principles of family support at the heart of every setting in which children and families are present. The Family Support America Learning Center offers articles and publications on domestic violence. [www.familysupportamerica.org](http://www.familysupportamerica.org)

**Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF)** works to prevent violence within the home and in the community to help those whose lives are devastated by violence because everyone has the right to live free of violence. Instrumental in developing the landmark Violence Against Women Act passed by Congress in 1994, the FVPPF has continued to break new ground by reaching new audiences including men and youth, promoting leadership within communities to ensure that violence prevention efforts become self-sustaining, and transforming the way health care providers, police, judges, employers, and others address violence. <http://endabuse.org>

**The Greenbook Initiative** began in the 1990s when the Family Violence Department of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges convened leading family court judges and experts on child maltreatment and domestic violence. Together they developed a groundbreaking publication, the "Greenbook." Released in 1999 and formally titled, "Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence & Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice," it offers a comprehensive set of responses designed to eliminate or decrease the enormous risks that battered mothers, caseworkers and judges must take on behalf of children. The Greenbook has spawned activities in states and localities across the country, as well as a Federal initiative spearheaded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Justice. The Federal initiative selected six demonstration sites from among 100 candidates to be a part of this unique project. A copy of the Greenbook is available on this site. [www.thegreenbook.info](http://www.thegreenbook.info)

The **National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information** and the **National Adoption Information Clearinghouse** are services of the Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The mission of the Clearinghouses is to connect professionals and concerned citizens to practical, timely, and essential information on programs, research, legislation, and statistics to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families. <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/index.cfm>

**National Coalition Against Domestic Violence's (NCADV)** mission is to organize for collective power by advancing transformative work, thinking, and leadership of communities and individuals working to end the violence in our lives. NCADV's work includes coalition building at the local, State, regional and national levels; support for the provision of community-based, non-violent alternatives—such as safe home and shelter programs—for battered women and their children; public education and technical assistance; policy development and innovative legislation; focus on the leadership of NCADV's caucuses and task forces developed to represent the concerns of organizationally underrepresented groups; and efforts to eradicate social conditions which contribute to violence against women and children.  
<http://www.ncadv.org>

**National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence (Alianza)** is part of a national effort to address the domestic violence needs and concerns of underserved populations. It represents a growing network of Latina and Latino advocates, practitioners, researchers, community activists, and survivors of domestic violence. Alianza's mission is to promote understanding, initiate and sustain dialogue, and generate solutions that move toward the elimination of domestic violence affecting Latino communities, with an understanding of the sacredness of all relations and communities.  
[www.dvalianza.org](http://www.dvalianza.org)

**National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women** is a coalition of survivors, immigrant women, advocates, activists, attorneys, educators and other professionals that seeks to challenge and eliminate all forms of oppression and discrimination against immigrant women facing violence by empowering them to build better lives of their choice. The Network, co-chaired by Legal Momentum, Family Violence Prevention Fund, and Asista Immigration Technical Assistance Project, organizes an semi-annual national conference, provides training and technical assistance, advocates with government officials, and develops materials and projects to enhance access to services.  
[www.immigrantwomennetwork.org](http://www.immigrantwomennetwork.org)

**Violence Against Women Online Resources** is a cooperative project between the Minnesota Center Against Violence & Abuse and the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Violence Against Women Office. This site provides law, criminal justice, and social service professionals with current information on intervention to stop violence against women.  
[www.vaw.umn.edu](http://www.vaw.umn.edu)

**WomensLaw.org.** The mission of WomensLaw.org is to provide free and easy access to legal information, empowering victims of domestic violence and sexual assault with knowledge to change their lives. For all 50 states, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the site publishes state-specific legal information, including links to legal assistance and other domestic violence resources in the State or territory. WomensLaw.org also provides anonymous support, referrals for local assistance, and answers to specific legal questions through a free e-mail Legal Helpline that can be accessed through the Web site.  
[www.womenslaw.org](http://www.womenslaw.org)

## TRAINING RESOURCES

**Safe Futures: Supporting Children and Families Affected by Domestic Violence** was funded by the Head Start Bureau to help Head Start and Early Head Start programs respond to the needs of children and families affected by domestic violence. The training consists of six modules:

- Domestic Violence: It's Everybody's Business
- Supporting Children
- Supporting Families
- Supporting Communities
- Supporting Staff
- Legal Issues

[www.safefutures.com](http://www.safefutures.com)

**Domestic Violence: A National Curriculum for Child Protective Services**, by Anne L. Ganley, Ph.D. and Susan Schechter, M.S.W., available through Family Violence Prevention Fund, outlines a two-day training program to teach child protective services workers how best to protect children living with domestic violence. The curriculum covers the relationship between domestic violence and child

abuse, the dynamics of domestic violence, identifying domestic violence, and assessment and interventions in domestic violence.

<http://endabuse.org/programs/display.php3?DocID=88>

**FaithTrust Institute** offers a wide range of services and resources, including training, consultation and educational materials to provide communities and advocates with the tools and knowledge they need to address the religious and cultural issues related to abuse. Faithtrust is an international, multi-faith organization working with many communities, including Asian and Pacific Islander, Buddhist, Jewish, Latino, Muslim, Black, Anglo, Indigenous, Protestant and Roman Catholic. [www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org)

**The Safe Havens Training Project** is a three-part, video-based training program, developed by Family Communications, Inc., to provide caregivers with the support they need to help children feel safe. The videos are mini-documentaries about children and violence. The workshops teach about children's responses to violence and offer practical strategies for supporting children and co-workers. [www.fci.org/early\\_care/violence\\_main.asp](http://www.fci.org/early_care/violence_main.asp)

**Shelter from the Storm: Clinical Intervention with Children Affected by Domestic Violence** is a manual developed by the Child Witness to Violence Project for training mental health providers who work with children and families affected by domestic violence. This manual includes workshop materials for 13 hours of training, slides for use in training, a complete bibliography, and fully reproducible handouts. The Child Witness to Violence Project at the Boston Medical Center also offers training on working with children affected by domestic violence. [www.childwitnessstoviolence.org/resources.html](http://www.childwitnessstoviolence.org/resources.html)

### **SELECTED PROGRAMS SERVING IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

There are many programs throughout the country doing innovative work with children from immigrant families who have experienced domestic violence. The programs listed below are not meant to make up an

exhaustive list, but are instead selected as examples of culturally specific services for immigrant children who have witnessed domestic violence.

#### **Caminar Latino, Inc.**

P.O. Box 48623  
Doraville, GA 30362  
Phone: 404-651-1375  
[www.caminarlatino.org](http://www.caminarlatino.org)

Caminar Latino is a certified domestic violence intervention program whose mission is to provide transformative educational groups for the entire family and to create equality, justice, participation, and peace through the acquisition of critical consciousness of individuals and communities. It regards domestic violence as human rights issue and a social malaise, and operates within the Latino cultural perspective.

#### **The Child Witness to Violence Project (CWVP)**

Department of Pediatrics  
Boston Medical Center  
91 East Concord Street, 5th Floor  
Boston, MA 02118  
(617) 414-4244  
[www.childwitnessstoviolence.org](http://www.childwitnessstoviolence.org)

The Child Witness to Violence Project is a counseling, advocacy, and outreach project that focuses on the growing number of young children who are hidden victims of violence: children who are bystanders to community and domestic violence. The project began in 1992 and currently counsels over 200 children and their families each year, in addition to implementing both national and State-focused training for health care professionals, police, educators, and many other social service professionals who confront issues of children witnessing violence.

#### **CONNECT**

P.O. Box 20217, Greeley Square Station  
New York, NY 10001-0006  
Phone: 212.683.0015  
Fax: 212.683.0016  
Email: [connect@connectnyc.org](mailto:connect@connectnyc.org)  
[www.connectnyc.org](http://www.connectnyc.org)

Dedicated to the prevention and elimination of family and gender violence and to the creation of safe families and peaceful communities, CONNECT transforms the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that perpetuate family and gender violence and addresses these complex issues through prevention, early intervention services, and community empowerment. Through community organizing, education, and capacity building, CONNECT facilitates the development of community-focused responses to violence in the family.

### **Dominican Women Development Center**

519 West 189th Street, Ground Floor  
New York, NY 10040  
Phone: (212) 994-6060  
Fax: (212) 994-6065

Founded in 1988, the Dominican Women's Development Center was created to contribute to the empowerment of Dominican and other Latina women to seek solutions to the problems affecting them in their daily lives. The Center also promotes the active participation of women in the empowerment of their communities and in questioning issues of gender subordination. The Center has four fundamental program components: educational development, personal development, economic development, and health promotion.

### **Sanctuary for Families**

P.O. Box 1406  
Wall Street Station  
New York, NY 10268  
Phone: 212-349-6009  
[www.sanctuaryforfamilies.org](http://www.sanctuaryforfamilies.org)

Sanctuary for Families envisions a society in which freedom from domestic violence is a basic human right. The group is dedicated to the safety, healing, and self-sufficiency of battered women and their children. To that end, it offers a broad range of high-quality services including shelter, legal assistance, and counseling. It works to end domestic violence and its far-reaching impact through out-

reach, education, and advocacy, and to create a world where every woman and child lives with dignity.

### **United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS)**

802 West Mitchell  
Milwaukee, WI 53204  
Phone: 414-389-6500  
[www.umos.org](http://www.umos.org)

The mission of the UMOS Latina Resource Center is to encourage women and their families to explore their personal strengths and hopes, and achieve a life free of violence. The UMOS Latina Resource Center provides onsite, comprehensive, bilingual, bicultural services to victims of domestic violence in the Latina community through education, intervention, client advocacy, case management, and supportive services.

### **Voices for Change: Immigrant Women and State Policy**

Center for Women in Government & Civil Society  
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The Center for Women in Government & Civil Society has developed a new, multi-year initiative to strengthen the voices of immigrant women in New York State's public policy arena. This program is based on the Center's commitment to equity, access, diversity, and women's leadership development. Immigrant women's wisdom and experience is helping the State create policies responsive to the complex and often interrelated barriers of gender, race, and xenophobia. The Center links immigrant women with other advocates for women in the nonprofit world, government and academia. Its Web site has an article on creating programs for immigrant youth.



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence: Findings from the national violence against women survey research report*. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<sup>2</sup>The Commonwealth Fund, Health Concerns Across a Woman's Lifespan: 1998 Survey of Women's Health, May 1999.

<sup>3</sup>Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (1998). *Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<sup>4</sup>Domestic violence happens in all kinds of families: across different cultures, different socio-economic groups, and different types of relationships. Sometimes, the one perpetrating the violence is a man and sometimes it is a woman. Sometimes the victim is a woman and sometimes it is a man. This paper focuses on domestic violence perpetrated against women because of its predominance in the statistics and in the research to date.

<sup>5</sup>Dutton, M., Orloff, L., & Hass, G.A (2000). Characteristics of Help-Seeking Behaviors, Resources, and Services Needs of Battered Immigrant Latinas: Legal and Policy Implications. *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law and Policy*, 7(2).

<sup>6</sup>Adapted from New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2005). *Immigration and language guidelines for child welfare staff (2nd Edition)*. Retrieved September 2, 2005, from [http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/pdf/immigration\\_language\\_guide.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/pdf/immigration_language_guide.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics (2003), *2002 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*. Retrieved October 2003.2004, from <http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/aboutus/statistics/Yearbook2002.pdf>

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>U.S. Census Bureau. (July, 2003). National Population Estimates. Retrieved October 2004, from [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

<sup>11</sup>Although people born in Puerto Rico are US citizens, they often experience the same attitudes and system barriers faced by immigrants to the United States.

<sup>12</sup>Kaufman Kantor, G., Jasinski, J., & Aldorondo, E. (1994). *Sociocultural status and incidence of marital violence in Hispanic families*. *Violence and Victims*, 9(3), 207-222.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>*Puerto Rico Law 54: Prevention and Intervention for Domestic Violence*, August 1989.

<sup>15</sup>U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). U.S. Census 2000. Retrieved October 2004, from [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>West, C.M. (1997). Partner violence in ethnic minority families. In *Partner violence: a 20 year literature review and synthesis*. Supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the University of Missouri, and the U.S. Air Force. Retrieved October 2004, from [http://www.agnr.umd.edu/nnfr/research/pv/pv\\_ch7.html](http://www.agnr.umd.edu/nnfr/research/pv/pv_ch7.html).

<sup>18</sup>Okamura, A., Heras, P., & Wong-Kerberg, L. (1995). Asian, Pacific Island, and Filipino Americans and sexual child abuse. In L.A. Fontes (Ed.), *Sexual abuse in nine north american cultures: Treatment and prevention* (pp. 67-96). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

<sup>19</sup>West, C.M. (1997). Partner violence in ethnic minority families. In *Partner violence: a 20 year literature review and synthesis*. Supported by United States Department of Agriculture, the University of Missouri, and the United States Air Force. Retrieved October 2004, from [http://www.agnr.umd.edu/nnfr/research/pv/pv\\_ch7.html](http://www.agnr.umd.edu/nnfr/research/pv/pv_ch7.html).

<sup>20</sup>Tjaden P, Thoennes N. (2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence: research report*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<sup>21</sup>Yoshihama M. (1999). Domestic violence against women of Japanese descent in Los Angeles: two methods of estimating prevalence. *Violence Against Women*, 5(8): 869-897.

<sup>22</sup>Raj A, & Silverman J. (2002) Intimate partner violence against South-Asian women in Greater Boston. *Journal of American Medical Women's Association*, 57(2): 111-114.

<sup>23</sup>Klein E, Campbell J, Soler E, Ghez M, eds. (1997). *Ending domestic violence: changing public perceptions/halting the epidemic*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

<sup>24</sup>Gleason, WJ. (1993). Mental disorders in battered women: An empirical study. *Violence and Victims*, 8(1), 53-68.

<sup>25</sup>Schechter, S. & Carter, J. (1997). *Child abuse and domestic violence: creating community partnerships for safe families*. Family Violence Prevention Fund.

<sup>26</sup>Schechter, S. & Knitzer, J. (2004). *Early childhood, domestic violence, and poverty: helping young children and their families*. Iowa City, IA: School of Social Work, The University of Iowa.

<sup>27</sup>Clark, S., Burt, M., Schulte, M., & Maguire, K. (1996). *Coordinated community responses to domestic violence in six communities: beyond the justice system*. Urban Institute for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation.

<sup>28</sup>Atchison, G., Autry, A., Davis, L. & Mitchell-Clark, K. (2002). *Conversations with women of color who have experienced domestic violence regarding working with men to end violence*. San Francisco, CA: Family Violence Prevention Fund.