ETHNICITY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

“My fear of losing custody of my children, deportation or loss of residency status makes me stay in abusive relationships for years”.

*(Connecting Voices, 2007)*

**Prevalence**

- Significant data gaps exist regarding the prevalence of violence experienced by immigrant and visible minority women.

- According to General Social Survey data, approximately 11% of immigrant and visible minority women experience emotional or financial violence, and 4% experience physical or sexual violence.

**Who are the Perpetrators?**

- Approximately 52% of violent incidents committed against visible minorities are perpetrated by a family member, friend, or acquaintance. Conversely, 48% of violent offences are perpetrated by a stranger.

- Approximately 70% of reported violent incidents committed against visible minorities occur within a public place. Only 24% of reported violent incidents occur within the home.

**Social and Economic Barriers**

- Immigrant and refugee women who experience violence face many unique social and economic barriers to accessing services. Some of these barriers include:
  - Most immigrant communities still view wife assault as a taboo;
  - Inability to communicate in Canada’s national languages;
  - Unaware of their rights in Canada;
  - Unaware of how law enforcement and court systems operate;
  - Fear of deportation by immigration authorities if they report violence;
  - Unavailability of interpreters when violence is reported. Often information is gathered by law enforcement officials through conversations with the abusive partner. This may lead to distortions in relevant case information;
  - Unaware that they are eligible for child support and other state financial assistance if they leave the abusive relationship;
  - Lack of social networks which could have a profound impact on self-esteem.
Hate Crime

- In Canada, race and ethnicity is the most common motivation for committing a hate crime.
- In 2006, approximately 56% of all hate crimes reported to police were motivated by race and ethnicity.
- Approximately 81% of these police reported hate crimes were committed against racial and ethnic minorities.
- Approximately half of these racially motivated hate crimes were property related offences and 38% were violent crimes.