

Addressing the Subjects of Family Abuse and Parenting in Canada to Newcomers

Segment # 3 (16:28)

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Types / Forms of Family Abuse

SCOPE OF PRACTICE (Working Boundaries)

- View Family Abuse as an integral part of the critical information provided to newcomers
- Recognize that Family Abuse can have negative impact on settlement process and family health
- Ensure Family Abuse is discussed and interwoven within orientation

DEFINITIONS

Family

- Opposite or same sex couples who are married or common law with or without children
- Single parent family: a mother or father with children
- Blended family – couple with children from current and/or previous relationships

Family Abuse

- Any form of **mistreatment, neglect or violence** that a child or adult experiences from a **family member**, or from someone with whom they have an **intimate relationship**

TYPES OF ABUSE

PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Pushing/slapping/punching/kicking strangulation → Homicide
- Weapons (guns, knives, or household objects)
- Bruises or marks may not be visible

SEXUAL VIOLENCE / ABUSE

- Sexual touching or sexual activity without consent or by force or coercion
- Minors / Children: no issue of consent; exposing to sexual content, exploitation
- Very difficult for survivors or victims to talk about (shame and responsibility)
- Female Genital Mutilation- FGM

EMOTIONAL / PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

- Verbal degrading, coercing, intimidating, isolating, threatening, destroying property/pets and other actions designed to demean or to restrict freedom and independence
- Survivors are isolated and become totally dependent on abuser
- Use religion or spirituality to control
- Criminal harassment / stalking (repeatedly following, communicating, watching or threatening that makes a person feel insecure and unsafe)

TYPES OF ABUSE

FINANCIAL VICTIMIZATION / ABUSE

- Control over money resulting in a family member not being able to support themselves
- Most often perpetrated against elderly but also those isolated because of language or culture
- Not allowing access to money or ability to support self (preventing someone from obtaining a job or education)
- Many forms of financial abuse are crimes, including theft and fraud even if victim and perpetrator are related

NEGLECT

- Failure to provide basic needs for someone who is unable to care for themselves
- Supervision, nourishment, medical care or other essential needs
- Victims are usually persons with disabilities, elders, dependent children and those new to the country with language/cultural barriers

VICTIM SPECIFIC AND OTHER TYPES OF ABUSE

Intimate Partner / Spousal Violence

- Any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship

Child Abuse

- Child protection legislation and definition of child abuse has evolved
- “Children at Risk”
 1. Children can be injured because they are present or try to get in the middle of violent episode.
 2. Studies indicate that growing up in a home where abuse occurs, whether the child witnesses it or not, has serious repercussions on their development.
- Children exposed to abuse suffer same long term effects as children being abused .
- Children believe they are to blame, live in fear and more likely to be abuse survivors (victims).
- Children exposed to abuse may complain of headaches, stomach aches, bed-wetting, suffer from depression, not feel well, be nervous, have a short attention span, engage in high-risk play, be self-abusive, use substances and contemplate suicide.
- Unborn children are affected by family abuse through changes in mother’s stress level and may effect brain development

VICTIM SPECIFIC AND OTHER TYPES OF ABUSE

Elder Abuse

- Defined as a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person
- Elder abuse is an emerging issue but statistics difficult to gather because of isolation/dependency
- Elderly brought to Canada to help with childcare but no longer needed and viewed as a burden
- Family members can become overwhelmed when older person requires high level of care
- Most common form of elder abuse is financial victimization

Forced or Under-Age Marriage

- Defined as one or both people do not, or are not able to, consent to the marriage.
- Family pressure to force someone to marry
- People taken abroad against their will to marry for monetary or immigration reasons
- Forced marriage is not same as arranged marriage, both people choose to marry their partner
- Strict laws in Canada about when someone can marry (no one under 16 is allowed to marry)
- Crime to take anyone 16 and under out of Canada for marriage, even if they want to marry

Human Trafficking

- Defined as involving the exploitation of people through force, coercion, threat, fraud or deception
- Women and girls most often victims representing 66% of all trafficking