

Immigrant women are particularly vulnerable to domestic violence and may feel trapped in abusive relationships because of immigration laws, language barriers, social isolation, and lack of financial resources.

Research on rates of domestic violence in immigrant communities is far from conclusive. The limited data that is available for a few immigrant groups cannot be combined due to essential differences among subgroups.

Research points to high rates of domestic violence in Asian homes. In a review of community-based studies, 41–61% of respondents reported experiencing intimate partner violence (physical and/or sexual) during their lifetime.

Immigrant status has been found to have an impact on survivors' help seeking behavior. A study found that Latino immigrants were less likely than non-immigrants to seek help for domestic violence from formal agencies (6.9% vs. 14.7%).

Some examples of immigration related abuse include:

Knowledge about the socio-economic, cultural, and political contexts within which immigrant women experience domestic violence is central to providing culturally competent services.

Services for immigrant survivors need to respond to their unique and specific needs. This may include services in survivors' local languages or access to skilled interpreters, shelters that respond to culturally specific needs, assistance with maintaining legal immigration status and child custody, and assistance with access to other services.

Inter-agency coordination and collaboration are crucial to increasing culturally competent services to immigrant women.

Victim service agencies play a key role in activating internal community resources, building community awareness, and educating informal networks, thus providing a pathway for information to reach battered immigrant women.

Examples of policies and practices in our program to increase access to services for immigrant survivors include:

What do we know about domestic violence within immigrant communities?

A variety of services and immigration relief are available to immigrant victims of domestic violence.

In the U.S., victims of crime, **regardless of their immigration or citizenship status**, can access help from law enforcement and the courts, as well as help provided by government or non-governmental agencies, which may include counseling, interpreters, safety planning, emergency housing and possibly monetary assistance.

The protections afforded to battered immigrant women under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), such as VAWA self-petition and the U and T visas, can help immigrant women have the means to escape a violent situation and protect the wellbeing of their children without the paralyzing fear of deportation.

Advocates and attorneys working with immigrant domestic violence survivors should consult an immigration legal expert who is experienced in working with immigrant victims and who can help identify complexities that exist in each client's case, as well as possible forms of immigration relief available to them.

Examples of public benefits and legal remedies available to immigrant survivors include:

Survivor story or anecdote to illustrate your point:

Program Information:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

What do we know about domestic violence within immigrant communities?

References and Citations

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Source: Runner, M., Yoshihama, M., & Novick, S. (2009, March). *Intimate Partner Violence in Immigrant and Refugee Communities: Challenges, Promising Practices and Recommendations*. Princeton, NJ: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Futures Without Violence.
- Research points to high rates of domestic violence in Asian homes. In a review of community-based studies, 41–61% of respondents reported experiencing intimate partner violence (physical and/or sexual) during their lifetime.
Source: Yoshihama, M., & Dabby, F. C. (2009, September). *Facts & Stats: Domestic Violence in Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Homes*. San Francisco, CA: The Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence.
- Immigrant status has been found to have an impact on survivors' help seeking behavior. A study found that Latino immigrants were less likely than non-immigrants to seek help for domestic violence from formal agencies (6.9% vs. 14.7%).
Source: Ingram, E. M. (2007). A comparison of help seeking between Latino and non-Latino victims of intimate partner violence. *Violence Against Women*, 13(2), 159-171.

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Source: Rana, S. (2012, February). *Addressing Domestic Violence in Immigrant Communities: Critical Issues for Culturally Competent Services*. Harrisburg, PA: VAWnet, a project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.
- Inter-agency coordination and collaboration are crucial to increasing culturally competent services to immigrant women.
Source: Rana, S. (2012, February). *Addressing Domestic Violence in Immigrant Communities: Critical Issues for Culturally Competent Services*. Harrisburg, PA: VAWnet, a project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.
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Source: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). (n.d.). *Information on the Legal Rights Available to Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence in the United States and Facts about Immigrating on a Marriage-Based Visa*. Washington, D.C.: Department of Homeland Security.
- The protections afforded to battered immigrant women under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), such as VAWA self-petition and the U and T visas, can help immigrant women have the means to escape a violent situation and protect the wellbeing of their children without the paralyzing fear of deportation.
Source: Ingram, M., McClelland, D. J., Martin, J., Caballero, M. F., Mayorga, M. T., & Gillespie, K. (2010). Experiences of immigrant women who self-petition under the Violence Against Women Act. *Violence Against Women*, 16(8), 858-880.
- Advocates and attorneys working with immigrant domestic violence survivors should consult an immigration legal expert who is experienced in working with immigrant victims and who can help identify complexities that exist in each client's case, as well as possible forms of immigration relief available to them.
Source: Sullivan, K. & Orloff, L. (Eds.). (2013, July). *Breaking Barriers: A Complete Guide to Legal Rights and Resources for Battered Immigrants*. Washington, DC: National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project at American University, Washington College of Law and Legal Momentum.

Additional information

- Organizations focusing on the issue of domestic violence within immigrant communities (abbreviated listing):

Asian and Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence

- *Directory of service programs serving Asian immigrant women*
- *Interpretation Technical Assistance & Resource Center (ITARC)*

ASISTA

Casa de Esperanza/National Latin@ Network

Futures Without Violence's Immigrant & Refugee Women's Rights Project

Legal Momentum's Immigrant Women Program (IWP)

National Immigrant Family Violence Institute (NIFVI)

The National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project (NIWAP)

Tahirih Justice Center