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of BRITISH COLUMBIA

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JIBC Study fosters Understanding of Immigrant Women who Experience Violence in Relationships

NEW WESTMINSTER –

As Prevention of Violence Against Women Week is celebrated across the province, The Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC) has released the findings of a research study designed to enhance understanding of the unique experiences of immigrant women who were victims of violence in their intimate relationships.

“A Statistics Canada study indicates that, of all the provinces, the second highest rate of violence was reported by women in B.C.”, says Shelley Rivkin, Director of the Centre for Leadership and Community Learning at the JIBC. “There have been a number of recent, high-profile incidents that suggest that the issue of violence against women may be particularly acute within immigrant communities.”

The study was conducted in partnership with Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society, MOSAIC and Elizabeth Fry Society of Prince George and funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Province of BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and The Vancouver Foundation.

The research, assessed what service delivery factors in the health care, social service, and justice systems are uniquely empowering and disempowering to immigrant women who are victims of violence in their relationships. The results were based on in-depth interviews with 75 women from four broad cultural groups (Asian, Filipina, Latina, and South Asian), who had been abused by their intimate partners. The findings from the face-to-face interviews were supplemented by focus group discussions with six groups of service providers.

Ninu Kang, Director of Family Programs for MOSAIC, states, " I am hopeful that the findings from this report will enhance service providers' ability to support and assist immigrant and refugee women seeking help to end the violence in their lives. Hearing from the women themselves about what is empowering is very powerful."

The study found that these women had much in common with abused Canadian-born women and the services they need are consistent with effective anti-violence services for all women. However, these women also experienced the violence in unique ways, and had specific needs, stemming directly from their experiences and status as immigrants.

Two primary themes emerged from their accounts. The first was the importance of addressing the multiplicity of needs that the women faced and the second was the importance of a comprehensive, caring service from one key agency or one key individual.

“The findings of the research will help decision makers, policy makers and service providers understand immigrant women's unique experience of violence and impact of policies that confine them in violent relationships,” says Shashi Assanand, Executive Director, Vancouver & Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services. “This would enable them to develop effective strategies for empowering and supporting immigrant women at their time of greatest need.”



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An Executive Summary of the report is available at
<http://www.jibc.ca/clcl/CustSol/AppliedResearch.html#Empowerment>

Every day everyone in BC benefits from the graduates of the JIBC who keep communities, businesses and homes safe. The JIBC is a dynamic, post-secondary learning organization recognized nationally and internationally for continuous improvement and innovative education in the areas of justice, public safety and human services. Each year, from a base of ten disciplines, we deliver programming in over 190 communities throughout the province, as well as across Canada and to students in or from 10 countries. Over 30,000 students enroll in our programs annually, 6,000 of who take courses on-line.

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