

# Changing Attitudes and Responses to Sexual Violence:

*Using a Community based arts project to change Perceptions of Sexual Violence*



## **Presenters:**

Krittika Ghosh, MSc, Senior Coordinator, Violence Against Women's Program

Siham Chakrouni, Bilingual Coordinator, Violence Against Women's Program

# Meet Your Presenters!



## **Siham Chakrouni- Bilingual Coordinator, VAW Program**

Since her arrival to Canada in 2008, Siham has been active in women's agencies in the Francophone community. She is the Bilingual VAW Coordinator at OCASI. Siham is also the co-creator and co-founder of an app called "Par Ici" to help Francophone community access information quickly on their phone. In her spare time she does boxing and salsa dancing!

## **Krittika Ghosh- Senior Coordinator, VAW Program**

Krittika has been doing VAW work in the immigrant and refugee sector in New York City and Toronto for the past 18 years. She manages the Prevention of Sexual Violence & Harassment Project and the Gender Based Violence Project at OCASI and represents OCASI at the Provincial VAW roundtable. She is a queer, immigrant woman and an avid Bollywood buff in her spare time!

# PRESENTATION OUTLINE



1. Overview of Development of Graphic Novel
2. Review themes of the 4 stories in the graphic novel
3. Utilizing the graphic novel as a tool for community education on VAW and Sexual Violence
4. Q & A

# Introduction to Project



The Prevention of Sexual Violence and Harassment Project is a bilingual Project, funded by the MCI- Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. The goal of the Prevention of Sexual Violence and Harassment Project is to raise awareness on sexual violence and harassment through outreach and public education effort and improve support for victims by increasing the capacity of service providers to serve immigrant and refugee women who are victims of sexual violence. We will accomplish this goal through the following activities:

- 1. Newcomer Outreach**
- 2. Service Provider Training**
  - a. Access training at : <http://learnatwork.ca/>**

# Introduction to the Graphic Novel “Telling Our Stories”

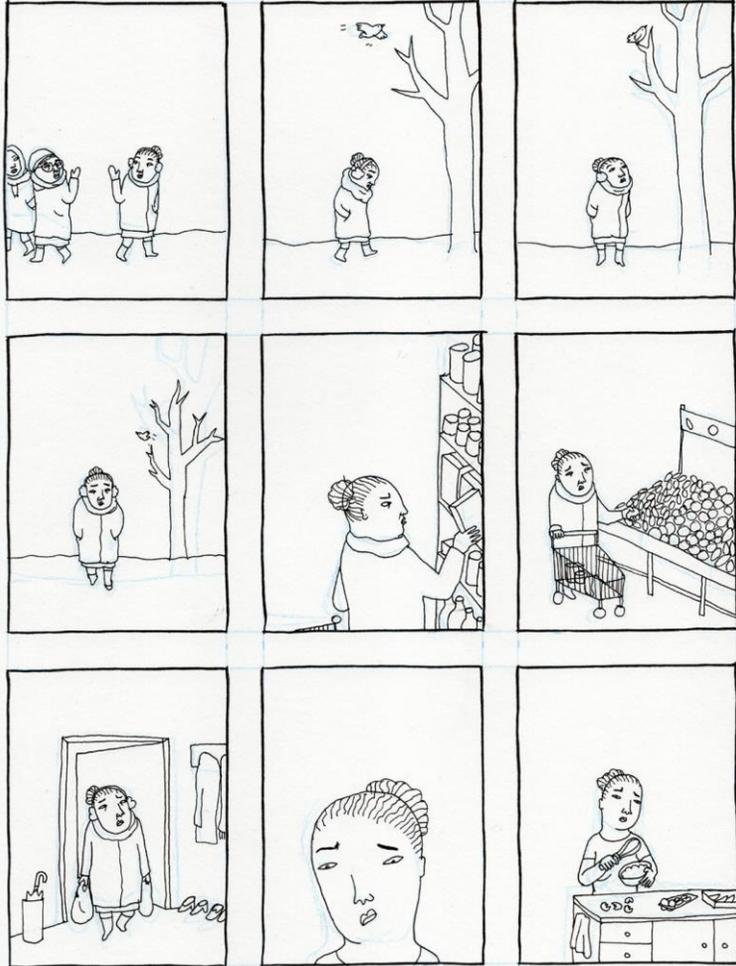
“Telling Our Stories” is part of the Ontario’s Action Plan to stop Sexual Violence and Harassment public education campaign.

The graphic novel is designed to help start conversations about recognizing, countering and changing attitudes about sexual violence and harassment in refugee and immigrant communities.

The novel is available free of charge in 11 languages



# ARTS BASED APPROACH



# THE GRAPHIC NOVEL



- 4 stories, 8 to 10 pages each
- 4 workshops in 3 different cities
- 4 themes and 4 characters



Immigrant Women Services Ottawa  
Services pour femmes immigrantes d'Ottawa



# Introduction to the Graphic Novel

The novel features discussion questions for educators and focuses on important themes that:

- Challenge perceptions of victim blaming;
- Enhance knowledge about consent culture;
- Highlight the importance of supporting survivors; and
- Respond to workplace sexual harassment.



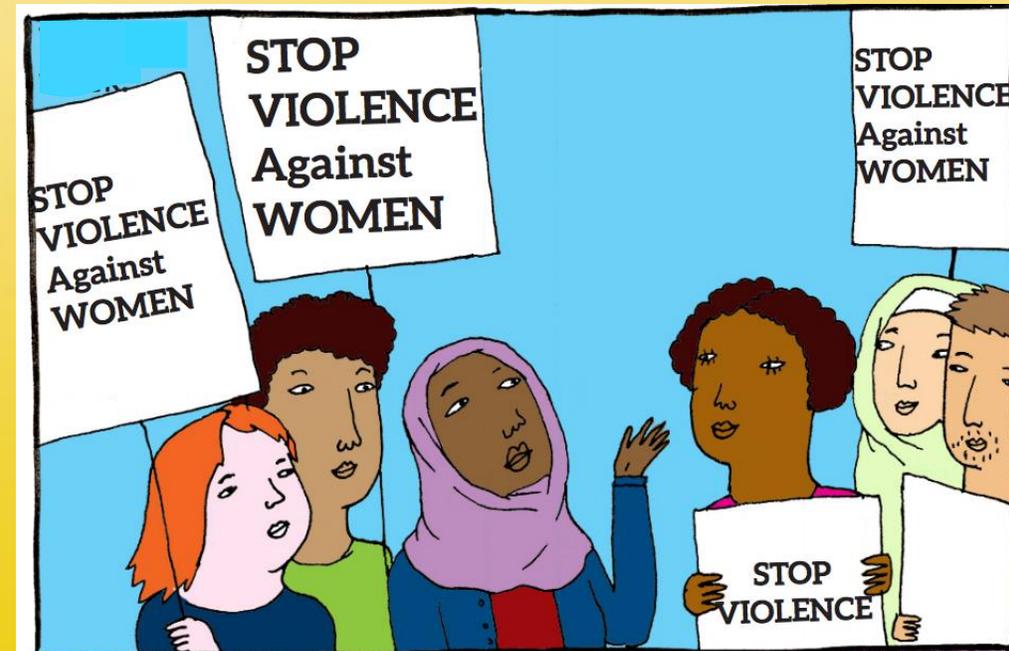
# Why is this project needed?



Approximately 635,000 incidents of sexual assault were reported by Canadians in 2014. This amounts to a rate of 22 incidents of sexual assault for every 1,000 Canadians aged 15 and older in the 12 months that preceded the survey. Additionally, more than 8 in 10 incidents are not reported to the police. (Statistics Canada)

Violence Against Women can come in different forms such as:

- Physical Violence
- Sexual Violence
- Psychological or Emotional Violence
- Harassment
- Financial Exploitation





# Why is this project needed?



**Immigrant and Refugee Women can face additional obstacles and challenges in situations of violence:**

- language barriers, lack of accessible services in their language
- Systemic racism and discrimination
- Lack of financial security or support, difficulty finding a job
- Precarious status
- lack of knowledge regarding their rights or the laws
- Not knowing about the existence of social services
- Not wanting to bring Shame to their family or community
- They are afraid to lose their children to social services or their partner

YOU DON'T HAVE TO JUSTIFY  
WHY YOU STAYED



# Systemic Racism & Discrimination

1. Graphic Novel challenges existing notions of racialized survivors as “victims” without agency
2. Intersectionality of experiences
3. Systemic barriers
4. Discusses racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia
5. Sexual violence takes different forms
6. Community based responses



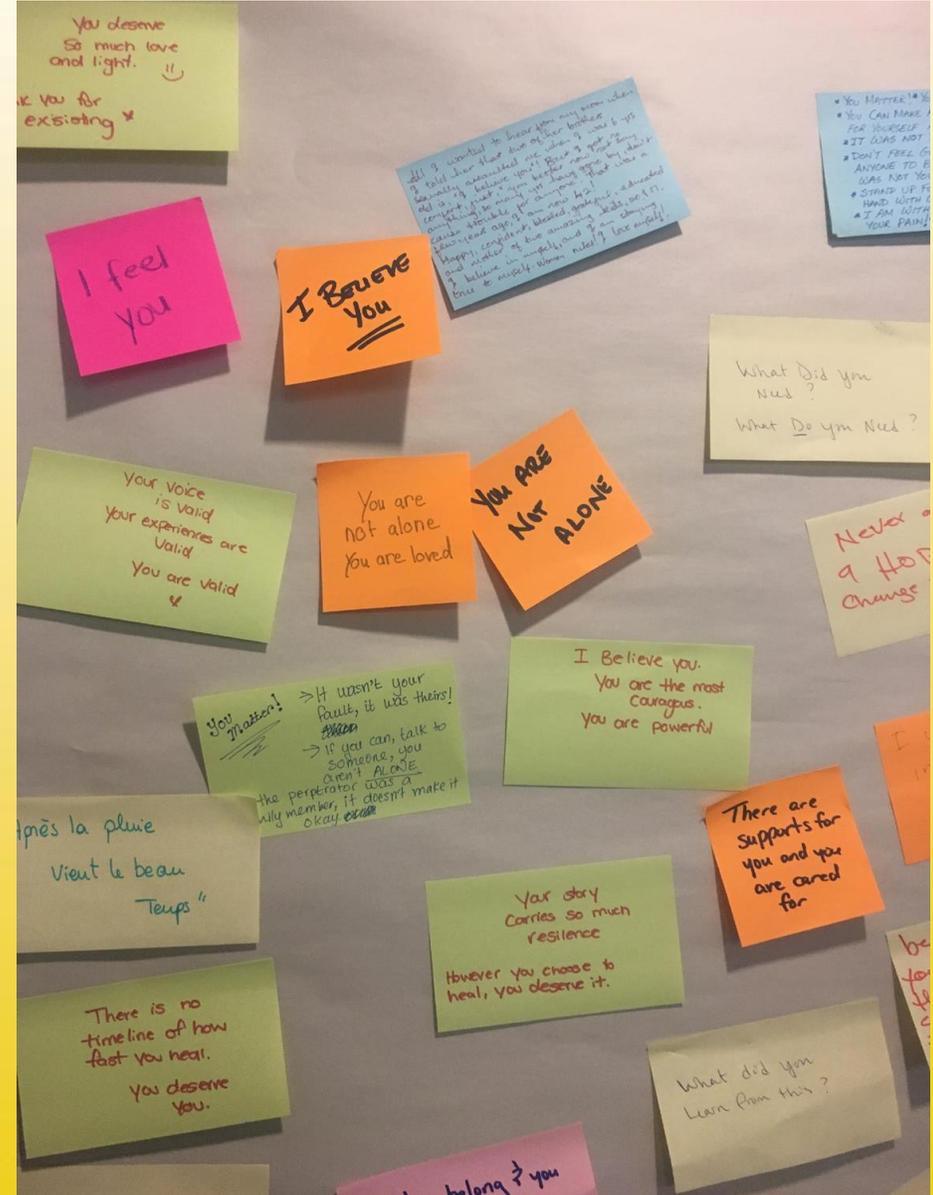
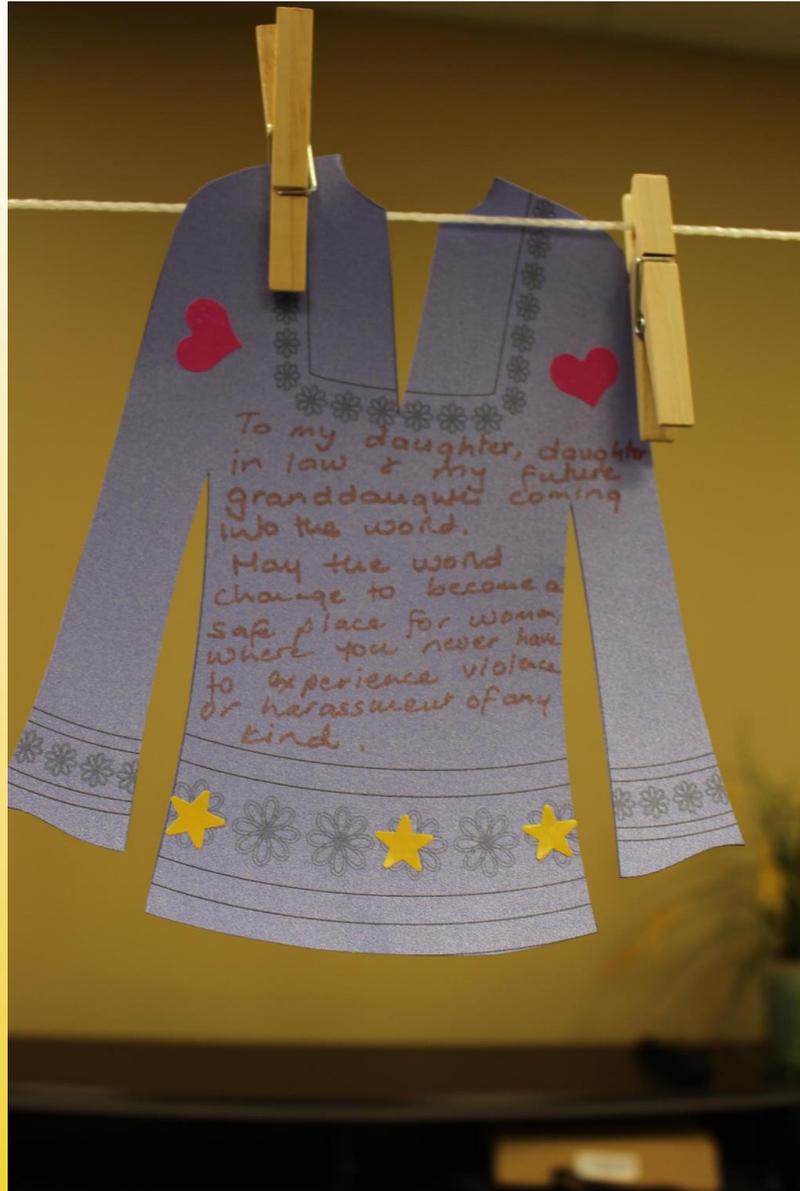
# GRAPHIC NOVEL LAUNCH





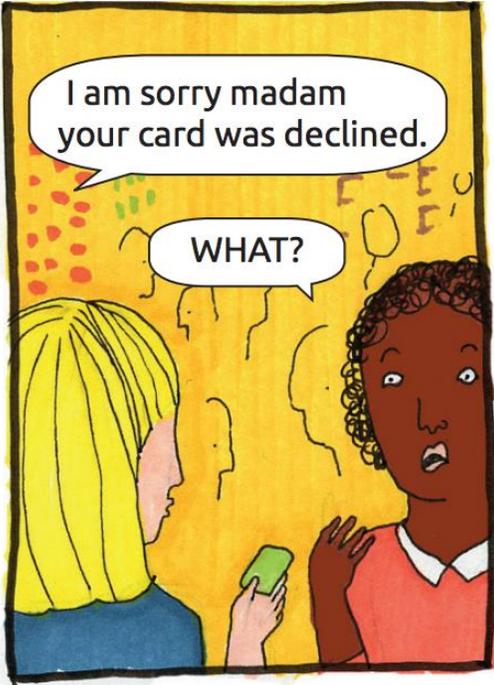
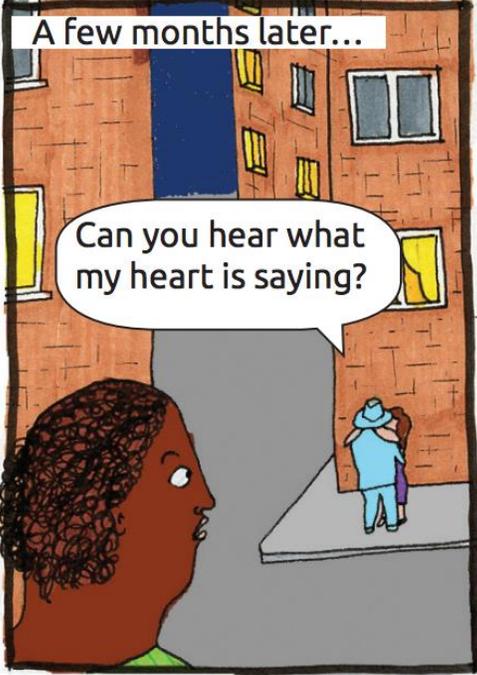


# COMMUNITY RESPONSES AT THE LAUNCHES



**Activity: Identify the themes**

# Excerpts from Kose's Story



# Excerpts from Kose's Story

I can't leave. I don't have any money.  
He's my husband.  
It's not rape if it's my husband, right?  
If I call the police they will deport me.



## Themes:

- Status as a tool of Violence
- Intimate Partner Abuse

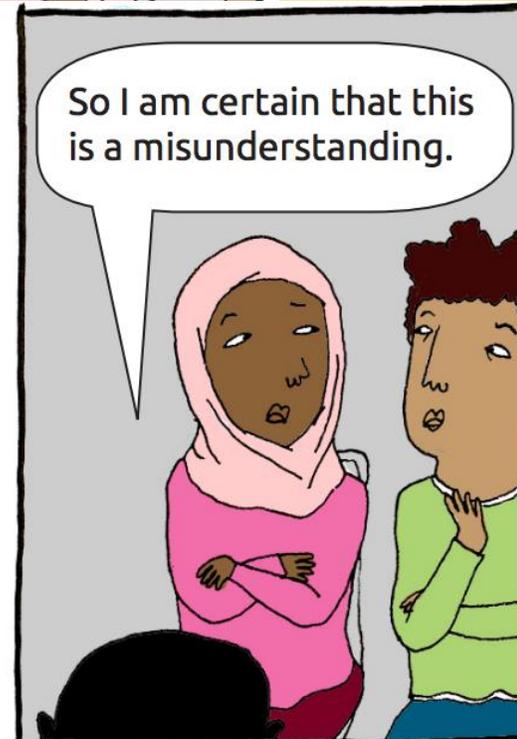
# Excerpt from Magali's Story



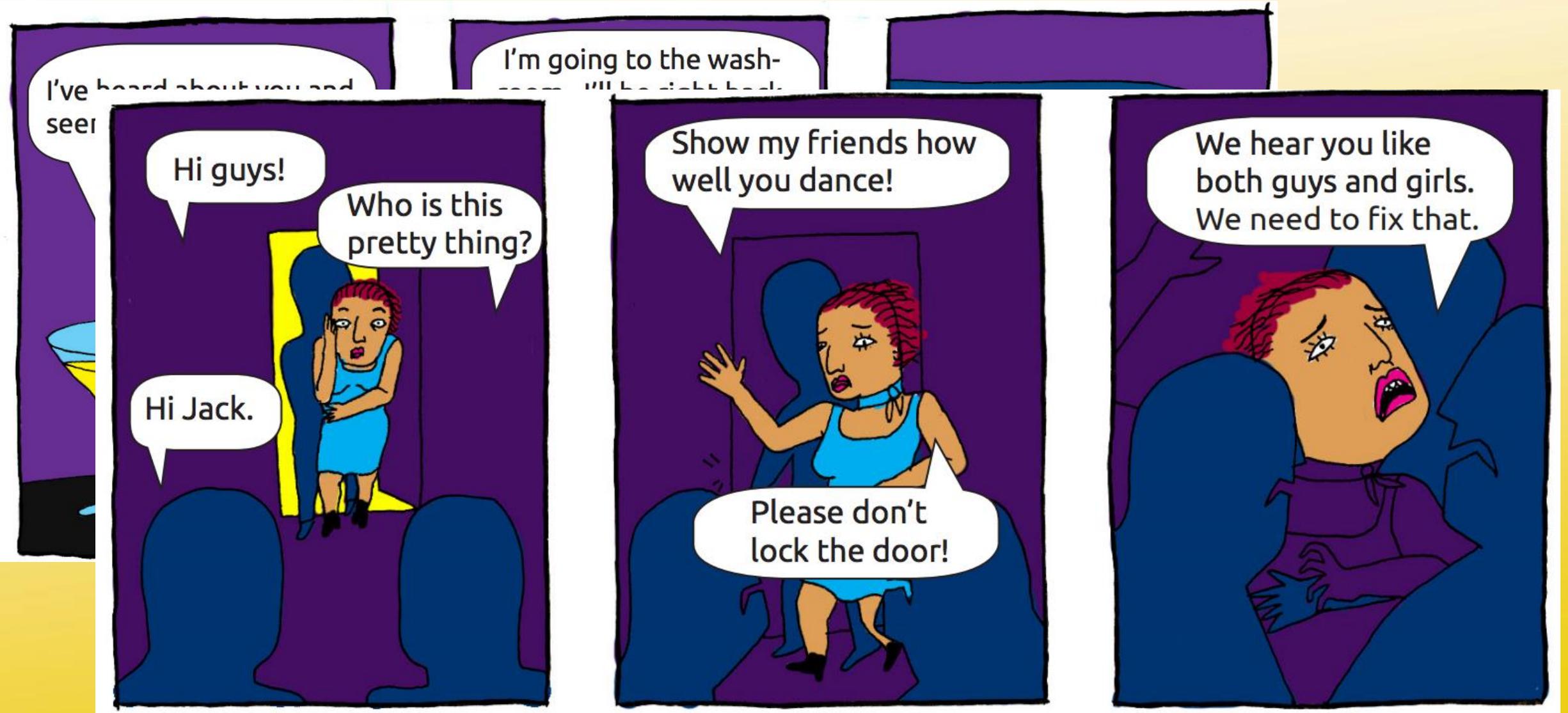
## Theme:

- Workplace Harassment

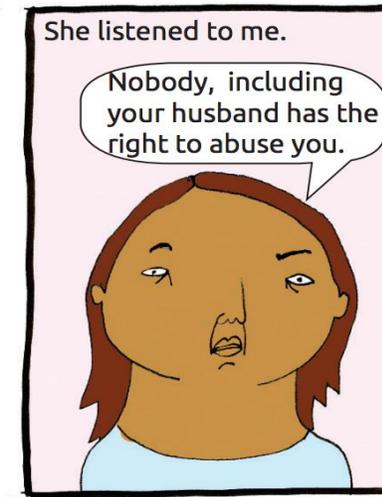
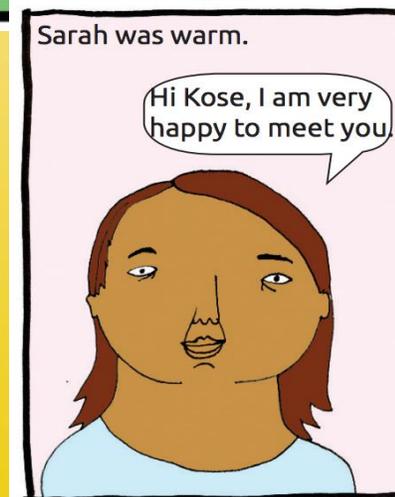
# Excerpts from Amal's Story



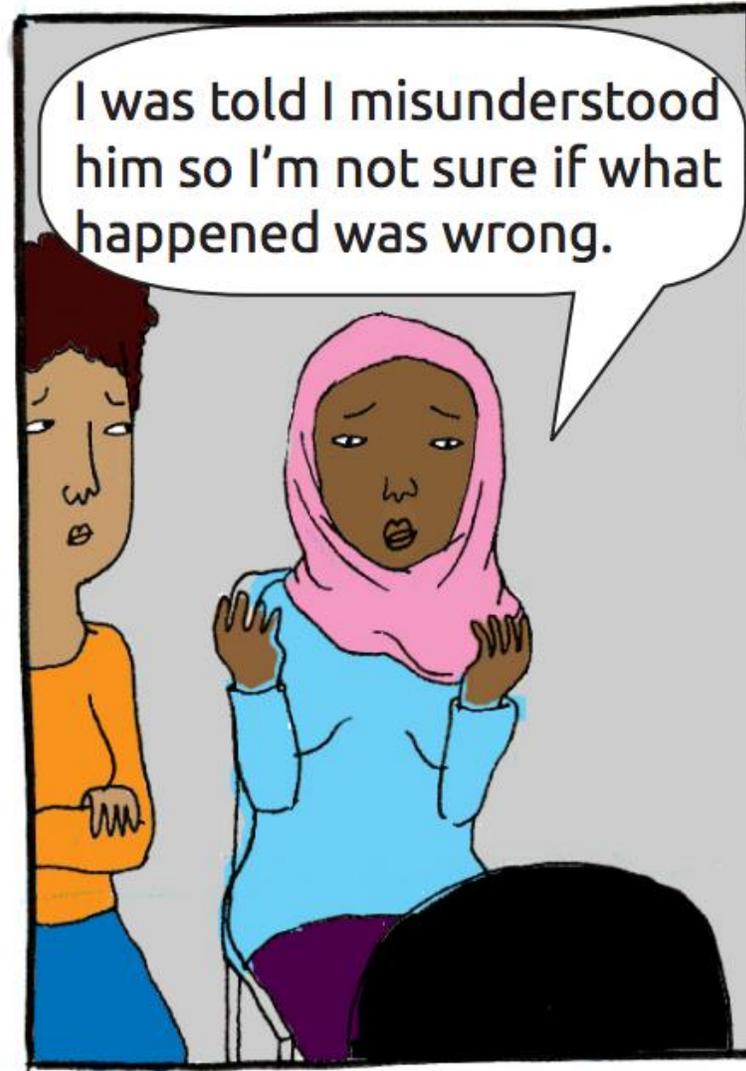
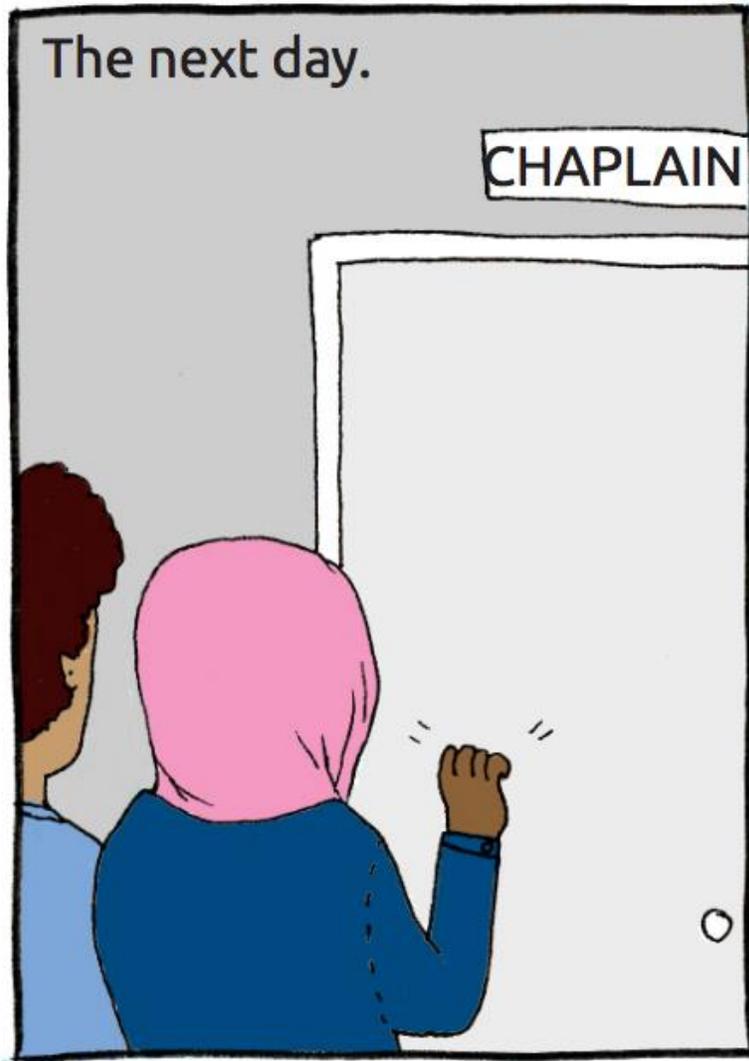
# Excerpts from Manuela's Story



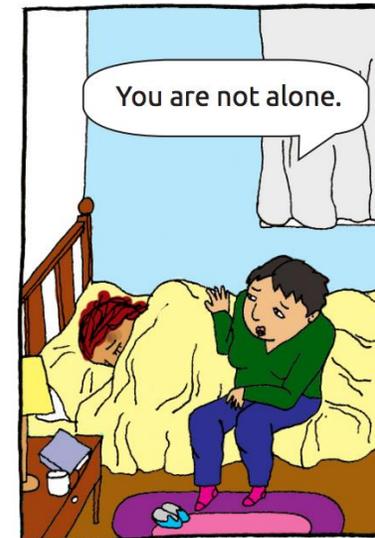
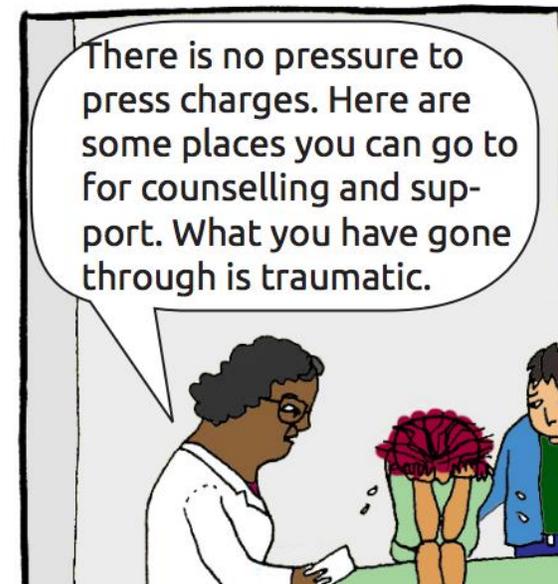
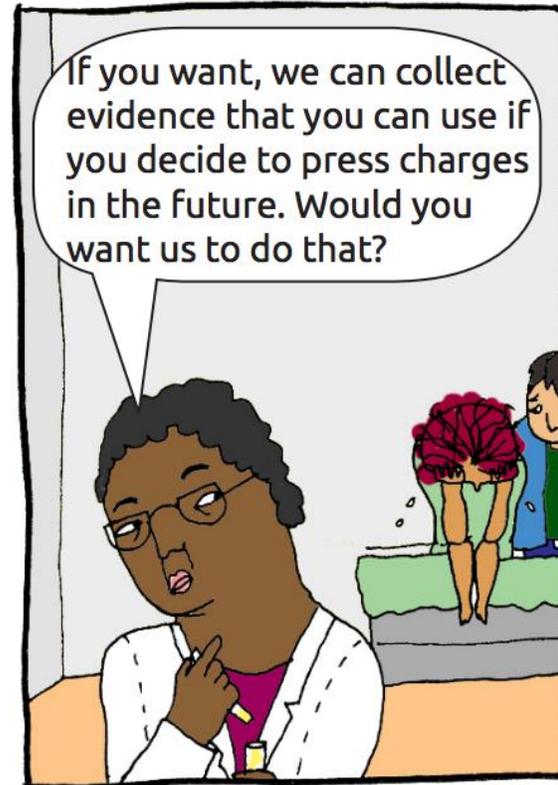
# Overarching Theme of Community Support



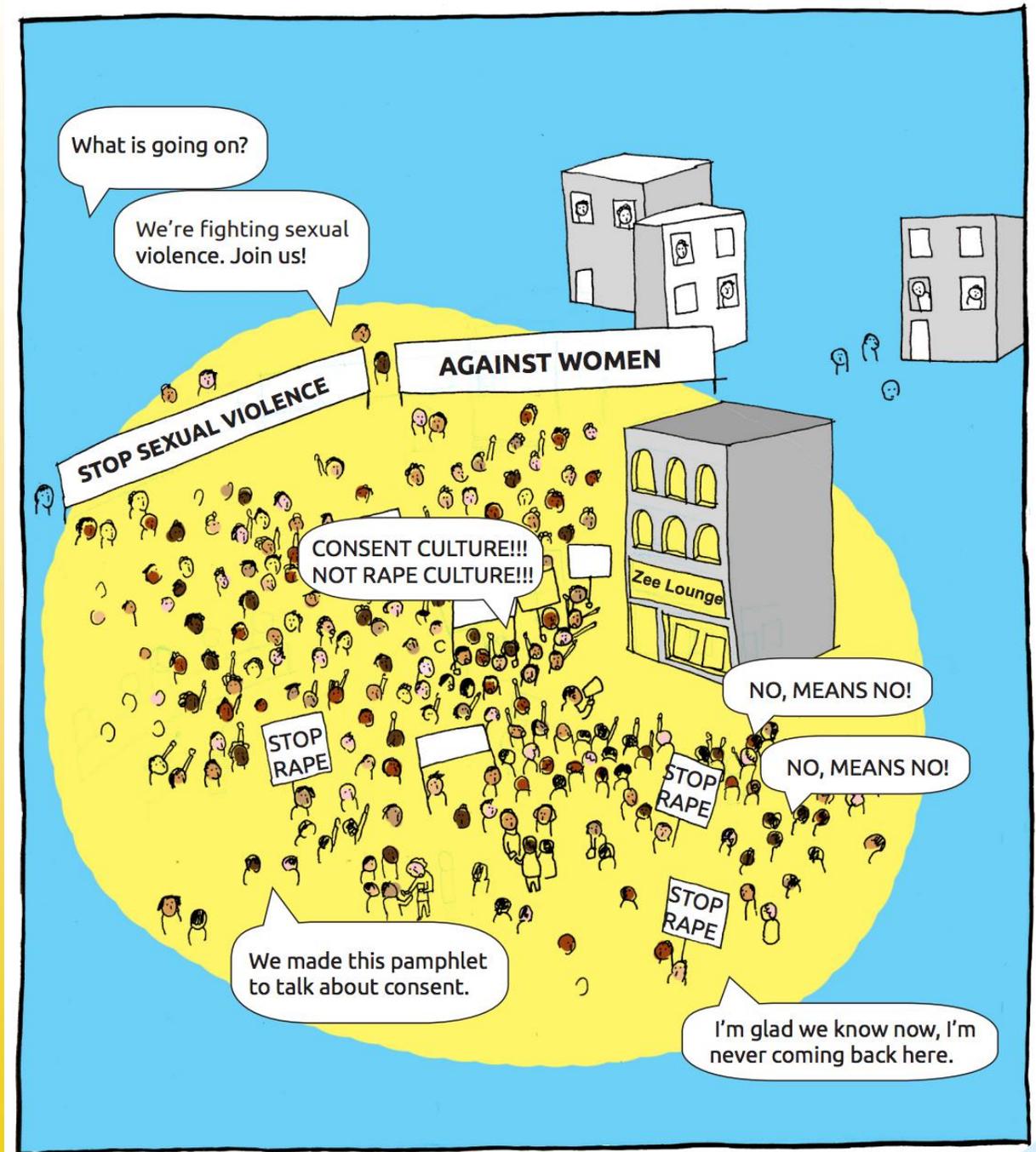
# Theme of Community Support



# Theme of Community Support



# Social Change Is Possible



# The Discussion Questions



## Using the Discussion Questions at the end of the Graphic Novel

For each of the 4 stories there are 8 questions that can be used to facilitate discussion



# Community Workshops



# Challenges



1. Homophobia and racism in settlement agencies
2. Short workshops
3. A lot of work in a short amount of time
4. Getting buy in of community partners for the project and launch
5. Launching in the summer
6. Need long term investment to see long term change



# OCASI Resources



**Order Graphic Novels at**

**<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9GTDM68>**

**Order VAW Booklets and Posters at**

**<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KGJ9CT2>**

**Download the 4 handouts from this webinar:**

Activity Ideas, Introduction to graphic novels and how to read them,  
and two survey forms

# OCA SI Resources



TO LEARN MORE  
about sexual violence & this campaign, visit  
[www.ocasi.org/campaigns/4ImmigrantWomen](http://www.ocasi.org/campaigns/4ImmigrantWomen)



facebook.com/ocasicommunity @OCASI\_Policy

facebook.com/mofif @MouvementFemmes



**IF YOU ARE BEING THREATENED OR COERCED,**  
you cannot give consent.

Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

Your silence does not equal consent.



**IF YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL VIOLENCE,**  
it is not your fault.

You deserve to live free from sexual violence.



**WE CAN ALL PLAY A ROLE**  
in preventing & addressing sexual violence against immigrant & refugee women

**DO YOU KNOW HOW YOU can support someone who has been sexually abused?**

- Believe them
- Listen to them
- Find resources
- Know it's their choice to take action



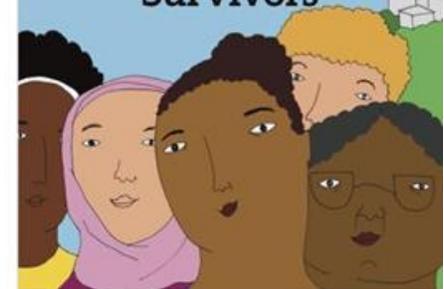
**FOR SUPPORT AND INFO:**

Assaulted Women's Helpline  
1 866 863 0511 / TTY 1 866 863 7868

Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres  
[www.sexualassaultsupport.ca/support](http://www.sexualassaultsupport.ca/support)

Neighbours, Friends & Families  
[www.immigrantandrefugeeff.ca](http://www.immigrantandrefugeeff.ca) for information and support about intimate partner violence.

## Supporting Survivors



#4ImmigrantWomen

**SEXUAL VIOLENCE**  
occurs in every country and every community.

**SEXUAL VIOLENCE**  
happens to LGBTQIA+ community members.

**SEXUAL VIOLENCE**  
happens to immigrant and refugees.

IT'S NOT OK.



**MYTH**  
Sexual violence happens in immigrant and refugee communities due to their 'culture'.

**FACT**  
Sexual violence happens in ALL communities.

It is racist and xenophobic to say that immigrants have more violent cultures.

Xenophobia is the fear or hatred of foreigners.



**IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN**  
may face barriers that make it difficult to get support such as:

- Fear of deportation
- Social isolation
- Fear of police
- Language barriers
- Poverty
- Racism and discrimination

**WORRIED ABOUT YOUR STATUS OR THE FEAR OF DEPORTATION?**

If you have permanent residency (PR), and you report sexual violence, you cannot be forced to leave.

**IF YOU DO NOT HAVE PERMANENT RESIDENCY**

(for example, you are a refugee claimant, you are a live-in caregiver, or you are undocumented), you may have more difficulty if you report sexual violence.

Contact a lawyer, community legal clinic, settlement agency or other support organization for info, support and advice.

**GIVING CONSENT** = voluntarily agreeing to engage in sexual activity.

Consent should never be assumed or implied.

Consent cannot be given if the person assaulting you abuses a position of trust, power or authority (for example, a teacher or a leader in your place of worship).

# OCASI Resources



**Sexual violence occurs  
in every country. It's not ok.  
We believe and support survivors.**

For support, call the Assaulted Women's Helpline:

**1 866 863 0511 / TTY 1 866 863 7868**

For support, visit

[www.sexualassaultsupport.ca/support](http://www.sexualassaultsupport.ca/support)

For more info and support about intimate partner violence, visit Neighbours, Friends & Families:

[www.immigrantandrefugeenff.ca](http://www.immigrantandrefugeenff.ca)

To learn more about sexual violence & this campaign, visit

[www.ocasi.org/campaigns/4ImmigrantWomen](http://www.ocasi.org/campaigns/4ImmigrantWomen)

 [facebook.com/ocasiconnects](https://facebook.com/ocasiconnects)

 [@OCASI\\_Policy](https://twitter.com/OCASI_Policy)

**OCASI**  
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

**M<sup>2</sup>FIF**  
ensemble pour un avenir meilleur

 Ontario

# OCASI Resources

Booklet on sexual harassment in the workplace.



Posters on sexual harassment in the workplace





# Q & A

