

# SHARING SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION PRACTICES THAT WORK FAMILY CONFLICT PREVENTION PROGRAM

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association  
Calgary, AB

## **Area of Practice:**

Programs to address gender-based violence

## **Video:**

<https://youtu.be/SORRvAbyxVE>

A Pathways to  
Prosperity Project

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**PATHWAYS TO  
PROSPERITY**  
Promoting Welcoming Communities in Canada



**VOIES VERS LA  
PROSPÉRITÉ**  
Promouvoir des communautés accueillantes au Canada

## **BACKGROUND ON THE ORGANIZATION AND IMPETUS FOR THE PROGRAM**

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Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA) is a non-profit organization established in 1982 as a registered charity. CIWA is a culturally diverse settlement agency that recognizes, responds to, and focuses on the unique concerns and needs of immigrant, refugee and racialized women and their families. CIWA's uniqueness is based on its gender-specific mandate. Over the years, CIWA has continually responded to the emerging needs of immigrant, refugee and racialized women, developed innovative programs, established meaningful partnerships, and has come to be recognized as a provincial and national leader in outcome-based gender-specific settlement services.

CIWA offers over 50 programs and services for immigrant, refugee and racialized women and their families. CIWA adopts a holistic approach to support clients in the areas of settlement and integration, literacy and language training, employment support and bridging programs, family violence, parenting, individual counselling, in-home support, civic engagement, health, housing, and community development. All clients have access to childcare and first language support during group sessions and individual appointments.

The impetus for developing the Family Conflict Prevention Program was the desire to avoid the occurrence and reoccurrence of domestic violence, gender-based violence, family violence, and intimate partner violence (DV/GBV/FV/IPV) among immigrant, refugee and racialized women and their families. Past research and CIWA's 40 years of experience indicate that immigrant, refugee and racialized women are at a higher risk of experiencing DV/GBV/FV/IPV due to language and cultural barriers, poverty, a lack of information on available resources, and a lack of understanding of gender equality in Canada. The Family Conflict Prevention Program aims to address: (a) the stress factors that place immigrant, refugee and racialized women and their families at risk of DV/GBV/FV/IPV, and (b) the need to increase access to supports to enable immigrant, refugee and racialized women and their families to cope with DV/GBV/FV/IPV. The Family Conflict Prevention Program positively impacts clients by changing attitudes about gender equality and violence, and by increasing individual capacity to reduce risk factors associated with violence.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM**

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**Name:**

Family Conflict Prevention Program (FCPP)

**Description:**

The FCPP specifically addresses the needs of immigrant, refugee and racialized women and their families facing family conflict and domestic violence. The aim of the program is to offer these women and their families support and to make community services more accessible to them. The program supports families by providing customized culturally sensitive services that promote peaceful and harmonious living. Services include intake, assessment, crisis and short-term counselling, workshops, support groups (including those for men and secondary victims of violence), advocacy, referral, outreach, volunteer support, and follow-up. The program acts as a bridge between abused immigrant, refugee and racialized women, their families, and the community. Clients are connected to appropriate community supports and gain the skills and coping strategies to deal with conflict

situations. The program is offered in diverse languages. Currently, counsellors speak Arabic, Amharic, Bengali, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Malayalam, Mandarin, Punjabi, Pashto, Spanish, Tigrinya and Urdu. Additional interpretation support is provided by volunteer interpreters.

**Goal(s):**

The FCPP aims to increase the accessibility and decrease the barriers to community services for immigrant, refugee and racialized women and their families living in family conflict situations. The long-term goal is for immigrant, refugee and racialized women – as well as their spouses, children and other family members – to experience healthy interpersonal and intimate relationships.

**Target Client Group(s):**

The target population includes immigrant, refugee and racialized women, men and their families facing domestic violence, family conflict, and relationship issues.

**Delivery Partners:**

The FCPP relies extensively on partnerships and collaborations with many organizations to increase clients' access to early intervention supports and to relevant community and clinical resources. This includes formal partnerships with Calgary Police Service and Catholic Family Services, as well as multiple informal partnerships.

**Human Resources:**

The FCPP includes a department manager, a team lead, three family counsellors, and two case managers. The department manager is responsible for the strategic components of the program, the outcome measurement and evaluation framework, and cross-sector and systems collaborations. The department manager also represents the program and agency on local, provincial and national working groups, panels and committees. The team lead manages the day-to-day operations and supervises the family counsellors and case managers. In addition, the team lead is also a family counsellor and works in that capacity next to the other three family counsellors.

**Funding:**

The FCPP is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and United Way of Calgary and Area.

## **KEY FEATURES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THIS BEING A PROMISING PRACTICE**

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**Effective:**

The FCPP uses several strategies to provide prevention and early intervention support to the target population. This includes outreach to connect with and deliver services to isolated immigrant, refugee and racialized women who are too afraid or unable to access support at CIWA. The FCPP also offers emergency transitional funding so that immigrant, refugee and racialized women are able to flee abusive relationships. Furthermore, clients receive culturally sensitive services that are customized to their unique needs. These services are offered in clients' first language. In addition, the program focuses on engaging and supporting men to cope with the stresses associated with life transitions and to respect gender equality in their relationships. Finally, FCPP's partnerships and collaboration with other community organizations increase client access to early intervention support.

**Efficient:**

The key features that contribute to the program's efficiency include: (a) a strong outcome measurement and evaluation framework, (b) perpetrator engagement to shift attitudes and change abusive behaviors through education, awareness, and counselling supports, (c) working collaboratively with Calgary Police Services, shelters, and various mainstream and community organizations, and (d) cross-systems and sector collaborations.

**Relevant:**

The FCPP has made a positive impact on immigrant, refugee and racialized women and their families. The program teaches them how to respond in an emergency situation, and creates awareness about the available resources and services in the community, and how to access these resources and services independently. It also provides information about family related laws in Canada and effective coping strategies to deal with family problems. Finally, the program offers immigrant, refugee and racialized women safety and a support network.

**Sustainable:**

To ensure the sustainability of the program, CIWA consistently seeks continued funding from all levels of government, foundations, and other funders. CIWA also heavily invests in regular staff training, professional development, and self-care to avoid turnover. Finally, CIWA strongly values and supports their community partnerships to increase the program's accessibility.

**Transferable:**

The FCPP has an established logic model and evaluation plan that can be easily used by any other organization intending to replicate the program. Additionally, CIWA also offers customized diversity training and mentoring support with a customized lens on DV/GBV/FV/IPV (amongst other specific areas).

**Innovative and Forward Thinking:**

One of the unique and novel features of the program is that it focuses on engaging the whole family, including the perpetrators, to truly resolve family conflict and DV/GBV/FV/IPV. In addition, CIWA is the only immigrant-serving agency to offer culturally sensitive customized DV/GBV/FV/IPV supports to women, men and their families through a formal collaboration with Calgary Police Service and their Equally Safe Domestic Conflict Response Team.

**Differs in Definable Ways from Other Similar Practices:**

The FCPP is a program based on evidence and feedback gathered from clients over many years. This extensive body of knowledge informed the development of several strategies aimed at resolving the issues of DV/GBV/FV/IPV within families and the community.

**High Client Uptake:**

The program relies on the following strategies to attract clients: a) outreach to connect with and deliver services to isolated immigrant, refugee and racialized women who are too afraid or unable to access support at CIWA, b) promotion of FCPP services through presentations at various community events and committees, as well as through ethnic radio channels, c) offering of counselling services at six offsite locations and in 13 languages to increase accessibility, d) referrals from health service

offices and professionals, courts and legal systems, social services staff and ethnic groups/communities, e) establishment of a formal partnership with Calgary Police Service's Equally Safe Domestic Conflict Response Team, and f) participation in activities that lead to a shift within ethno-culturally diverse communities towards zero tolerance for violence.

### **High Client Retention:**

Several factors enable the FCPP to retain clients for the full length of the program. Besides the initial needs assessment, clients go through an ongoing needs assessment during each session to ensure that needs are addressed as they present themselves. During each counselling session, clients' level of understanding of issues and barriers is assessed. The feedback provided by the clients is then used to inform the next counselling session. Furthermore, the program works with clients to set up a goal and action plan in case of an emergency or any other safety issue. Finally, the delivery of the program in clients' first language greatly aids with retention.

### **Strong Evidence of Successful Outcomes:**

FCPP has been able to achieve its short-term and mid-term outcome targets. In the short-term, the program set the target to have 80% of clients be safe from abuse and violence. This target was superseded. Mid-term targets included that 80% of clients access community services independently and that 80% of clients learn about healthy relationships and their rights. These targets were also superseded.

Evidence collected from clients' outcome rating scales ( $n = 174$  completed) showed that 96% of clients reported knowing what to do in an emergency, 95% of clients reported being able to independently access community resources, and 87% of clients reported knowing about family related laws in Canada. Clients also provided very positive workshop evaluations ( $n = 41$ ). In particular, 94% of clients reported that they had learned ways to effectively deal with family problems that arise; 91% of clients reported that they learned about the impact violence has on the family and community; 91% of clients reported that they learned about factors that increase the risk of violence in immigrant families; and 81% of clients reported that they had learned about programs and services available in the community to help victims. Finally, clients also rated the support groups favourably ( $n = 45$ ). In particular, 93% of clients reported that their safety and support network had improved, 98% of clients reported being more aware of services in the community and that they would be comfortable accessing them independently, and 95% of clients reported being able to handle family conflict better.

## **PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION STRATEGY**

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CIWA tracks the progress and outcomes of the FCPP using several methods. These methods include:

- 1) Initial and ongoing needs assessments to measure clients' basic, employment, language, social and emotional needs.
- 2) Assessment of risk and protective factors at the initial counselling session.
- 3) Use of client outcomes rating scales (CORS) to measure client outcomes regarding knowledge barriers, rights in Canada, social networks, coping strategies, use of safety plans, confidence, connections to community resources, and client satisfaction with how their needs are addressed and with the information provided. These CORS are completed at the end of each counselling session.

- 4) Support group and workshop evaluations that are completed after attending each support group and workshop.
- 5) Record of the number of clients who accessed services outside of CIWA in one of the four community areas to gauge if the demand for family conflict counselling support is needed in the neighbourhood or if the program should branch out to other communities.
- 6) Weekly staff meetings to discuss staff capacity. The information collected through these methods allows the program to identify gaps in programming and outcome achievements, implement strategies to address these gaps, and measure the effectiveness of the implemented strategies.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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**CIWA:**

<https://www.ciwa-online.com/>

**Program website:**

<https://www.ciwa-online.com/client-services/family-services/family-conflict-program.html>

**Resources developed:**

<https://ciwa-online.com/resources/champions-for-victims-of-family-violence/>

<https://ciwaresources.com/ciwaesaviw/>