

# Victim Assistance Fact Sheet

## For Immigrants to Canada

### **Introduction:**

The 2015 National Victims of Crime Week theme “Shaping the Future Together” raised awareness about issues facing victims of crime and the services, programs, and laws in place to help victims and their families. Tri-City Transitions Society, with funding from the Department of Justice Canada presents the following information to help those victimized by crime in our community.

### **If you have questions about family violence, you are not alone:**

In February 2015, 175 immigrants from 21 countries were surveyed by Tri-City Transitions Society (TCT) to determine their level of knowledge and understanding about family violence and to ascertain the barriers they face in accessing our services. The survey was conducted by means of a questionnaire that was filled out prior to learning the applied definition of abuse or the types and cycles of abuse that occur in relationships. The majority of the participants came from China, Korea, and Iran.

The survey found that:

- 38% of the participants did not know that assault and criminal harassment (stalking) are crimes in Canada.
- When asked if they believed violence to be a normal and acceptable part of a relationship, 10% answered in the affirmative.
- 18% of the participants thought that children are better off with any parent, even a violent parent, than no parent at all; 6% were not sure.

When questioned about the factors that hinder access to our services, the significant barriers were language and no knowledge of the services at Tri-City Transitions Society. Other barriers included fear of retaliation from their spouse, loss of financial security, shame, loss of their relationship, isolation, and lack of confidence that they could survive on their own.

### **Tri-City Transitions Society can help you find answers:**

A lack of knowledge about basic human rights and Canadian legislation regarding domestic violence can generate anxiety and difficulties for newcomers to Canada. Please call us at Tri-City Transitions Society with your questions: 604-941-7111.

This fact sheet provides answers to common questions about immigration, family violence, and the services that TCT offers. Some of these answers contain general legal information. They are not intended to be used as legal advice for a specific legal problem.

This sheet also provides a short list of other resources that may provide helpful information.

**1. My husband/wife sponsored me to come to Canada. If I report his/her abuse to the police, am I going to be deported?**

Your right to remain in Canada depends on your immigration status. Your spouse or partner cannot decide to have you deported, even if they sponsored you to come to Canada. Only federal immigration authorities can make decisions about immigration status and deportation.

If your spouse or partner abuses you, you do not have to stay with them. However, leaving your spousal/partnered sponsor may have legal consequences that you should prepare for:

- If you are already a Canadian citizen or permanent resident without any conditions on your permanent residence, you cannot lose this status just because your relationship ends.
- If you have not been granted permanent residence, or if you have conditional permanent residence (meaning you are required to live with your sponsor in a genuine relationship for two years after being granted permanent residence), this does not mean you will be automatically deported, but you should seek legal advice as soon as possible. TCT can help you access legal advice and identify your next steps.

**2. My partner is abusive, but I don't want to get the police involved. Am I still eligible to get your services?**

Yes, we help people who choose not to be involved with the Criminal Justice System as well as their family members who have been impacted by the events of domestic violence.

**3. People say that 'violence breeds violence'. I am afraid that my children might grow up to be violent as they observed (witnessed) violence at home. Do you have a program for my children that would benefit them in any way?**

Violence observed or experienced as a child does not need to be a pathway to violence as an adult. However, it is very harmful and often requires counselling to help the individual learn to cope with the feelings generated. TCT has a number of support programs for children and youth who need help to break the cycle of violence.

**4. My partner apologizes to me after every time he/she beats me. He/She claims that he/she was under a lot of stress and/or was drunk.**

Stress can contribute to violence. However, while some people do bully or beat others as a way to relieve stress, most do not. Alcohol does not cause the violence. Alcohol is an easy excuse for why someone hits but it does not explain why others aren't targeted when the person has been drinking.

**5. I want to keep my family together. My children need a father/mother even though he/she is violent. What should I do?**

For most people, family comes first. TCT is committed to strengthening the family and offers programs to help families break the cycle of violence and move forward with their lives. As always, the safety of all family members is a priority.

**Other Resources:**

- [Abuse is Wrong](#)  
**[www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/family-sponsorship.pdf](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/family-sponsorship.pdf)**
  - This booklet was created by the Department of Justice Canada. It provides basic information about what abuse is, your rights under Canadian law, and what to do if you or someone you know is being abused. It is also available in [Arabic, Chinese \(traditional\), Dari, Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, and Urdu](#).
- [Information for Sponsored Spouses or Partners](#)  
**[www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/family-sponsorship.pdf](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/family-sponsorship.pdf)**
  - This booklet was created by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. It provides information about conditional permanent residence and the requirement to live together in a genuine relationship for two years after being granted permanent residence. It also contains information about the exception to this requirement in situations of abuse and neglect. It is also available in [Chinese \(traditional\), Hindi, Mandarin, Punjabi, Spanish, Tagalog, and Urdu](#).
- [If Your Sponsor Abuses You](#)  
**[www.legallaid.bc.ca/resources/pdfs/pubs/If-Your-Sponsor-Abuses-You-eng.pdf](http://www.legallaid.bc.ca/resources/pdfs/pubs/If-Your-Sponsor-Abuses-You-eng.pdf)**
  - This fact sheet was created by the Legal Services Society of British Columbia. It contains information about your legal rights, how to get help, and practical issues like how to obtain a copy of your immigration documents.
- [Court Information Program for Immigrants](#)  
**[www.courtinformation.ca](http://www.courtinformation.ca), 604-760-5727**
  - This program's court workers provide services in English, French, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Portuguese, Punjabi, and Hindi and can provide information and referrals to help you solve your legal problems.
- [Dial-A-Law](#) and [Clicklaw](#)  
**Dial-A-Law: 604-687-4680, 1-800-565-5297, or [www.cbabc.org/For-the-Public/Dial-A-Law](http://www.cbabc.org/For-the-Public/Dial-A-Law)**  
**Clicklaw: [www.clicklaw.bc.ca](http://www.clicklaw.bc.ca)**
  - Dial-A-Law provides recorded legal information by telephone in English and Chinese, and online in or English, Chinese, Punjabi, and French.
  - Clicklaw provides legal information and education online. It has resources available in more than twenty [languages](#).