Annotated Bibliography
Challenging Violence Against Women (VAW) –
Links between
Newcomer communities and Indigenous Peoples

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While newcomer women experience similar forms of violence in the context of intimate relationships as women who were born in Canada, the intersections of abuse and immigration policy affect them in ways that are unique, and they may face specific barriers to accessing justice and services as a result of their status in Canada. Newcomers and the Indigenous Peoples of Canada have had similar experiences of various forms of violence including persecution, oppression, colonization, displacement, discrimination, stereotyping and exclusion. Furthermore, the CCR affirms that newcomers - like all people in Canada – are treaty peoples, with rights and responsibilities tied to this covenant relationship. Scholars have produced critical work concerning experiences of violence by both newcomer and Indigenous women, including incest, rape, sexual violence, exploitation, family violence, intergenerational violence and human trafficking. This annotated bibliography provides a selection of academic literature relevant to these themes.

VAW in Canada: An Overview

Barrett, Betty Jo and Melissa St. Pierre (2011) Variations in women's help seeking in response to intimate partner violence: Findings from a Canadian population-based study. *Violence against Women* **17(1): 47-70.**

This study examined how sociodemographic factors as well as the nature of violence and its characteristics both influence women's use of informal and formal supports in response to intimate partner violence (IPV). IPV includes physical, sexual, emotional/ psychological, and financial forms of abuse. Given the complexity of women's intersecting identities based on membership in multiple social categories based on ethnicity, religion, age, disability, immigration status and aboriginal status, it is important to recognize that women's experiences of victimization vary based on their various social positionings. In contrast to the widely perpetuated image of women in violent relationships as passive recipients of violence, the findings of this analysis indicate that women in abusive partnerships actively attempt to utilize the informal and formal resources available to them to facilitate their survival in and/or exit from these relationships Findings suggest that although there are significant sociodemographic variations in women's help seeking, the largest independent predictor of women's use of supports is fear that one's life is in danger.

Benoit, Cecilia, Leah Shumka, Rachel Phillips, Mary Clare Kennedy and Lynne Belle-Isle (2015) *Issue Brief: Sexual Violence Against Women in Canada*. **Ottawa, ON: Status of Women Canada.**

This Issue Brief provides a comprehensive picture of what is known about sexual violence against women in Canada. It includes a discussion of some of the challenges associated with measuring the prevalence of sexual violence, as well as some of the broader historical, political, and social processes that contribute to sexual violence and shape public understanding of the problem. This is followed by a discussion of available national and provincial data on the incidence of sexual violence in Canada, calling attention to particular sub-populations of women with increased vulnerability or about whose vulnerability little is known. The issue brief also includes a brief discussion of some of the program and policy changes taking place in Canada around the issue of sexual violence, as well as examples of innovative and effective interventions. It concludes by arguing for the need for additional information and better understanding of the nature and extent of sexual violence in Canada, including the risk factors and consequences of sexual violence for vulnerable groups of women. It also seeks to raise awareness regarding gendered and sexist assumptions that inform public perception, police investigations and judicial processing. Such assumptions greatly impact vulnerable populations that encounter multiple and intersecting biases as they navigate the legal system.

Cohen, Marsha M. and Heather Maclean (2004) Violence against Canadian women. *BMC Women's Health* **4(Suppl 1): S22.**
Available here: https://tinyurl.com/Cohen-and-Maclean-2004-VAW

Abused women use more health care services and have poorer social functioning than non-abused women. This study seeks to contribute to knowledge regarding violence against women and in doing so aims to assist in the planning of services for abuse prevention and treatment of the health consequences of abuse. Although somewhat out-dated, the study is still relevant. Some of these key findings are: The highest rates of any partner violence were in Alberta (25.5%) and British Columbia (23%) while the lowest rates were in Ontario (18.8%). Women aged 15–24 had the highest rates in all regions in Canada, compared to older women. Aboriginal women in Manitoba/ Saskatchewan and Alberta had higher rates of violence (57.2% and 56.6% respectively) than non- Aboriginal women (20.6%). Lower rates of partner-related violence were reported among women not born in Canada (18.4%) than among Canadian-born women (21.7%). Visible minority women reported lower rates of lifetime sexual assault (5.7%) than non-visible minority women (12.3%). Perceptions of violence may vary by ethnicity. The study recommended the need for more information concerning the prevalence of violence among Aboriginal women, immigrant and refugee women, women with disabilities, lesbian women and pregnant women.

DeKeseredy, Walter S. (2011) *Violence Against Women: Myths, Facts, Controversies.* **Toronto: University of Toronto Press.**
Available at: https://tinyurl.com/DeKeseredy-2011-VAW

The book provides an overview of the work done by Canadian scholars, practitioners, and activists on issues relating to VAW. It also addresses some controversies related to the topic, mostly in the Canadian context, but with references to other countries including the US, UK, and Australia. Chapter 1 describes and evaluates both narrow and broad definitions of VAW. Chapter 2 focuses on the nature and level of violence to which women in Canada are subjected. This chapter proposes that, contrary to the popular belief, women are much safer on the streets than they are behind closed doors. Chapter 3 challenges the notion that intimate violence is a gender-neutral problem. Chapter 4 seeks to provide sociological answer to the question "why does he do that?" Chapter 5 compels Canadians to ask: "what keeps her from leaving?" instead of "why does she stay?" Chapter 6 shows how many people in Canada who may not have directly experienced VAW still suffer indirectly from its effects. The final chapter discusses some policy options and alternatives.

DeKeseredy, Walter S. and Molly Dragiewicz (2014) Woman abuse in Canada: Sociological reflections on the past, suggestions for the future. *Violence Against Women* **20(2): 228-244.**

This article describes past scholarly achievements, assesses current contributions, and suggests progressive ways of responding to future challenges. It suggests that feminist sociologists in particular face significant challenges in the current neoliberal political-economic era characterized by a "well-oiled" counter-movement to de-gender the naming and framing of woman abuse.

Vulnerable Groups *(including Indigenous and newcomer women)*

Berman, Helene, Gloria Alvernaz Mulcahy, Cheryl Forchuk, Kathryn Ann Edmunds, Amy Haldenby and Raquel Lopez (2009) Uprooted and displaced: A critical narrative study of homeless, Aboriginal, and newcomer girls in Canada. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* **30(7): 418-430.**

The purpose of this study is to examine how uprooting and displacement have shaped mental health among three groups: (1) newcomers to Canada (immigrant and refugee girls); (2) homeless girls; and (3) Aboriginal girls. In-depth narrative interviews were conducted with 19 girls in South-western Ontario. As a result of downward mobility and poverty, language barriers, racism, and discrimination, newcomer communities often become marginalized spaces where the inhabitants are largely excluded from the privileges commonly afforded to those from the dominant culture. The research showed that both homeless and Aboriginal girls experienced patterns of exclusion. The findings of this research have important implications for mental health nurses who work with girls and young women. Most importantly, girls need safe spaces where they can talk openly and honestly about their experiences, where they can contemplate the ways in which uprootedness has affected their sense of belonging and overall well-being. Overall, the study highlights the relevance of the construct of uprootedness in girls' lives, provides initial direction for the design of gender specific and culturally meaningful interventions, and comprises a substantial contribution to the growing body of research related to girls and young women.

Brownridge, Douglas A. (2009) *Violence Against Women: Vulnerable Populations***. New York and London: Routledge.**
Available at: https://tinyurl.com/Brownridge-2009-VAW

The book focuses on violence against women in vulnerable populations, defined as groups that share common characteristics and are uniquely vulnerable with respect to risk and/or experiences surrounding violence. The author is aware of that a focus on vulnerable groups can lead to stereotyping, for example by associating socioeconomic status with violence against women but argues that there are nevertheless reasons to focus on vulnerable groups. The book defines various vulnerable populations and identifies how to approach theorizing and developing methods for considering what they face. In addition, the author uses large-scale samples to gain a better sense of relevant trends in Canada, including risk of violence, patterns in post-violence experiences, and the adequacy of explanatory frameworks. Chapter 2 shows how the study of vulnerable groups can complement other approaches to family violence research through the development of the intersectional puzzle of VAW. Chapter 3 focuses on methodological issues. Chapters 4-11 investigate VAW in relation to specific contexts or groups of women including cohabitation, separation/divorce, stepfamilies, living in rental housing, living in rural settings, Aboriginal women, immigrant women and women who have disabilities.

Guruge, Sepali, Brenda Roche and Cristina Catallo (2012) Violence against women: an exploration of the physical and mental health trends among immigrant and refugee women in Canada. *Nursing Research and Practice* 12.

The study assesses the history of violence and the impairment of physical and mental health among 60 women participants from the Iranian and Sri Lankan Tamil communities in Toronto, Canada. Findings revealed that the participants had experienced various types of violence throughout their lifespan, with psychological abuse by a spouse/partner occurring most frequently in the past 12 months. Commonly reported types of abuse included: insults, criticism and intimidation by partner (psychological abuse); slapping, hitting, and shoving (physical abuse); and forced sexual intercourse and sexually degrading acts (sexual abuse) by a partner/spouse. Results suggest that immigrant and refugee women exposed to violence may experience considerable symptoms of posttraumatic stress and depression. This finding has important clinical implications for healthcare providers with regard to screening immigrant and refugee women for mental and physical health symptoms. The study concluded that clarification of whether or not mental health symptoms are linked to exposure to violence against immigrant women (as they are among non-immigrant women) is needed to ensure appropriate assessment and treatment of immigrant and refugee women who have been exposed to violence.

VAW: Indigenous Women

Daoud, Nihaya, Janet Smylie, Marcelo Urquia, Billie Allan and Patricia O'Campo (2013) The contribution of socio-economic position to the excesses of violence and intimate partner violence among Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal women in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 104(4): e278-e283.

Socio-economic position (SEP) is a predominant contributor to the excess of abuse against Aboriginal compared to non-Aboriginal women in Canada. Hence, reducing violence against Aboriginal women can be achieved mostly by improving their SEP, something that should occur in conjunction with the strengthening of social processes and services that can mitigate abuse. However, SEP alone does not fully explain the excess of abuse experienced by Aboriginal women. The article suggests that further explanations can be found in "colonization or postcolonial theories," as well as related contextual factors such as differences in community social resources (e.g., social capital) and services. Hence, the article recommends that research on the excess of abuse among the Aboriginals needs to focus on the historical colonial narrative of Aboriginal peoples, social capital and access to social services. As well, the authors recommend the revitalization of elements of the Aboriginal spiritual values of anti-violence as part of a way to address the effects of imposed European patriarchal values.

Deer, Sarah (2004-2005) Toward an Indigenous jurisprudence of rape. *Kansas Journal of Law & Public Polic**y** 14: 120-154.*

This paper seeks to provide a foundation for the development of an indigenous jurisprudence of rape. The author understands sexual violence as a significant threat to indigenous culture and identifies three reasons why such a jurisprudence is needed: high levels of sexual violence against Native women; inability of legal systems to address sexual assault of Native women; and traditional belief systems that are strongly anti-rape. The paper notes that colonial definitions of violence against women underlie present jurisprudence and fail most women, including white women. Also, a legal regime that is fractionated and antiquated leads to inadequate investigation of rape against Indigenous women. Key to the current situation is the history of the use of sexual violence against indigenous women as a tool of colonization. The author links the need for an indigenous jurisprudence of rape to both the failure of the non-indigenous justice system to protect Native women and to the importance of protection and support of citizens to Indigenous nations' sovereignty.

Gesink, Dionne, Lana Whiskeyjack, Terri Suntjens, Alanna Mihic and Priscilla McGilvery (2016) Abuse of power in relationships and sexual health. *Child Abuse & Neglect* **58: 12-23.**

This paper uses a nêhiyaw (Cree) perspective to consider context, issues and beliefs in relation to high rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Community researchers found that the root cause of high STI levels is the abuse of power in relationships, a situation that leads to physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wounds. Some medicines, such as sex, drugs, alcohol and suicide lead to higher STI levels while other medicines, namely those tied to traditional knowledge and teachings decrease the risk of STIs. Many participants reported that casual sexual relationships are safer than monogamous ones.

Marchetti, Elena and Kathleen Daly (2016) Indigenous partner violence, indigenous sentencing circles, and pathways to desistance, *Violence Against Women* **(OnlineFirst) 1-23.**

This study assesses the impact of Australian Indigenous sentencing processes on violence between current or former intimate partners. The authors consider the ability of court proceedings to change the behaviour and attitudes of offenders. They apply the concept of desistance to interpersonal violence and find that targeted men's group activities can be an effective pathway to desistance.

Pearce, Margo E., Alden H. Blair, Mary Teegee, Stephen W. Pan, Vicky Thomas, Hongbin Zhang, Martin T. Schechter and Patricia M. Spittal (2015) The Cedar Project: Historical trauma and vulnerability to sexual assault among young Aboriginal women who use illicit drugs in two Canadian cities. *Violence Against Women* **21(3): 313-329.**

This article builds on previous research that indicates that drug use, relationship status, sexual abuse history, sex work involvement, and homelessness may contribute to sexual assault against Indigenous women. The results reported in this paper come from a cohort study of young Aboriginal people who use drugs in two cities in British Columbia, Canada. This study shows that young, urban Aboriginal women who use drugs are severely impacted by childhood sexual abuse, historical trauma and insufficient harm reduction services. They also found a high rate of sexual assault among young Aboriginal women who use drugs in urban British Columbia. Furthermore, they found that the daughters of residential school survivors experienced sexual assault at double the rate of those whose parents did not attend a residential school.

Pedersen, Jeanette Somlak, Lorraine Halinka Malcoe and Jane Pulkingham (2013) Explaining Aboriginal/Non-aboriginal inequalities in postseparation violence against Canadian women: Application of a structural violence approach. *Violence Against Women* **19(8): 1034-1058**.

This is the first national-level study to examine Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal inequalities in postseparation intimate partner violence (PSIPV), making important contributions to the sparse knowledge on violence against Aboriginal women and to the literature on IPV post separation. The study analyzed the 2004 Canadian General Social Survey data to examine Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal inequalities in PSIPV against women. The data shows that Aboriginal women have experience PSIPV four times as often as non-Aboriginal women. The difference in levels is primarily associated with two factors, the use of coercive control tactics and age.

Riel, Ellissa M., Sue Languedoc, Jason Brown and Julie Rodgers (2014) Safety for Aboriginal women in couples counselling where there is a history of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* **53(4): 478-500.**

This study addresses the lack of published literature on culturally appropriate counselling practices for working with Aboriginal couples following IPV. The authors consider the woman's safety as paramount in the counselling process. The article provides commentary regarding safety issues professionals should keep kept in mind when working in the area of family violence involving Aboriginal people. The authors used concept mapping to present results from qualitative interviews and involved participants in the analysis of the results. The study identified four key concepts: personal responsibility, community involvement, mandatory reporting, and separate support for women. The researchers report that participants emphasized the important role of cultural leaders, particularly elders, an approach not previously considered in the scholarly literature. The researchers also underlined the importance of gender-based group counselling for the two parties prior to the couple's counselling.

VAW: Newcomer Women

Ahmad, Farah, Maryam Ali and Donna E. Stewart (2005) Spousal-abuse among Canadian immigrant women. *Journal of Immigrant Health* 7(4): 239-246.

This paper reports the results of a study concerning the self-reported rates of physical and emotional spousal-abuse among recent newcomers to Canada compared to Canadian-born women. The study focused on women 25-49 years of age who are married or living in common-law relationships and used data collected as part of the 1999 General Social Survey (1999). The study found no statistical difference between levels of abuse reported by the two groups, though the newcomer women reported emotional abuse at nearly double the rate reported by Canadian-born women. The authors question whether the survey provided accurate data regarding the experiences of physical abuse and propose that further research and analysis is needed.

Ahmad, Farah, Nanky Rai, Bojana Petrovic, Patricia E. Erickson and Donna E. Stewart (2013) Resilience and resources among South Asian immigrant women as survivors of partner violence. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 15: 1057-1064.

This paper reports on a qualitative study that examined resilience among South Asian survivors of IPV who were immigrants to Canada. The research involved in-depth interviews with 11 women. All had children, one had remarried while the rest were separated, and most had post-secondary education and a low income. The women reported that key resources available prior to their decision to change or leave an abusive relationship included willpower, children, and family and friends. After changing or leaving the abusive relationship, the women said that support from family and friends, belief in God and professional support were important sources of support. The transition often led to a greater sense of autonomy and a positive attitude, which together led to contributions towards support for other women facing violence. The authors conclude that a combined focus on both agency and structure is needed in relation to programming, policy and research on IPV.

Ahmad, F., J. Smylie, M. Ormand, A. Cyriac and P. O'Campo (2017) South Asian Immigrant Men and Women and Conceptiosn of Intimate Partner Violence. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 19: 57-66.

This study uses selected data collected in a multi-ethnic study to examine the attitudes of South Asian (SA) women and men. The researchers conclude that SA women and men share similar views to each other and to other ethnic groups regarding sexual abuse and victim retaliation. The study also shows that SA women, like women of other ethnicities, are more likely than their male counterparts to understand aggression as cultural, including in relation to dowry, gender of newborns, gender of health care provider, and the justification of abusive behaviour in relation to religious and moral values. SA women, unlike their counterparts from other ethnic groups, tend to perceive physical abuse as a form of sexual abuse.

Bhuyan, Rupaleem (2012) Negotiating citizenship on the frontlines: How the devolution of Canadian immigration policy shapes service delivery to women fleeing abuse. *Law & Policy* **34(2): 211-236.**

This article examines how not-for-profit service providers navigate the devolution of both immigration control and integration policy in their response to migrants seeking help and support. Drawing upon conceptualizations of citizenship as a "negotiated relationship" the author characterizes VAW service providers, nongovernmental actors that rely on state funding, as "parastate actors" and examines their role in determining both who is deemed worthy of social membership and what rights an individual can successfully claim from the state.

Bhuyan, Rupaleem, Bethany Osborne, Sajedeh Zahraei, and Sarah Tarshis (2014) *Unprotected, Unrecognized: Canadian Immigration Policy and Violence Against Women.* **Migrant Mothers Project (University of Toronto).**

This report examines the impact of government policy on the safety of immigrants with precarious status, with particular focus on women seeking safety from violence. The report provides a framework for understanding precarious status as part of the VAW spectrum, shows how specific immigration policies during the time Jason Kenney was Minister of Immigration and Citizenship impacted women's rights and safety, and highlights advocacy efforts across Canada at that time.

Bhuyan, Rupaleem Adriana Vargas and Margarita Píntín-Perez (2016) **Fleeing Domestic Violence from a "Safe" Country?: Refugee Determination for Mexican Asylum-Seekers in Canada.** *Refuge* **32(3): 95-107.**

This paper reports on a study of claims for asylum by Mexican women that were related to domestic violence. Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board's members tend to reject claims for asylum by Mexicans – including those related to domestic violence – because they are not convinced that state protection is not available. The researchers found that the adjudicators generally perceive Mexico as a "democratic" or "safe" nation and pay little attention to a social context that leaves claimants largely without access to humanitarian migration.

Godoy-Ruiz, Paula, Brenda Toner, Robin Mason, Carolina Vidal and Kwame McKenzie (2015) Intimate partner violence and depression among Latin American women in Toronto. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* **17: 1771-1780.**

Using an intersectional approach and an ecological model for understanding the relationship between gender based-violence and mental health, this paper reports on the findings of a study of the relationship between IPV and depression among Spanish-speaking Latin American women in Canada. The study showed a strong connection between IPV and experiences of depression and other emotional and mental health issues. Furthermore, the research showed the importance of social supports for women facing IPV, including Spanish-language support groups and health services as well as informal social support from family and friends. The researchers conclude that policy must be informed by research that identifies sources of resilience for women facing violence.

Gonçalves, Mariana and Marlen Matos (2016) Prevalence of violence against immigrant women: a systematic review of the literature. *Journal of Family Violence* **31(6), 697-710.**

This systematic review documents relevant literature regarding violence experienced by immigrant women in their host country and the prevalence of such violence. The study emphasizes the concept of intersectionality and how it posits that vulnerability to victimization is a result of the intersection of several elements including gender, social status, age, race, and ethnicity. The study also draws attention to methodological problems that may hinder accurate results and conclusions in the study of violence against immigrant women. Such issues include ignoring cultural dimensions that influence different groups, the nature, type, level of severity, and context of the abuse, co-occurrence of multiple forms of victimization, the experience of different forms of victimization through the life course, psychological impacts, consideration of whether violence precedes and/or follows immigration, and whether or not there is a life trajectory of violence.

VAW: Remedies

Van Wormer, K. (2009). Restorative justice as social justice for victims of gendered violence: A standpoint feminist perspective. *Social Work* 54(2): 107-116.

This article provides an overview of the process of restorative justice[1] and examines its relevance to women who have been victimized by physical and sexual abuse. The widespread dissatisfaction of battered women and rape victims and their advocates with the current system of mandatory law enforcement opens the door for consideration of alternative forms of dealing with domestic violence. The overall purpose of this article is to explore the possibility of adapting restorative processes to the needs of female victims of gendered crime. Restorative justice strategies, as argued here, have several major advantages. Drawing on social work theory, these strategies are solution-based rather than problem-based processes, give voice to marginalized people, and focus on healing and reconciliation. Moreover, restorative justice offers an avenue through which the profession of social work can re-establish its historic role in criminal justice. The four models most relevant to women's victimization are victim–offender conferencing, family group conferencing, healing circles, and community reparations. Each model is examined separately from a feminist standpoint. The discussion is informed by insights from the teachings of standpoint feminist theory and social work values, especially social justice.

Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (2017) Preventing and responding to domestic abuse against newcomer, immigrant, refugees and no status women: Legal information booklet 2017. Available here: http://www.vircs.bc.ca/sites/default/files/u67/VIRCS%20Legal%20Info%20Booklet%20on%20Domestic%20Abuse_May%202017.pdf

This document provides information about domestic abuse in situations where immigration status is an issue. Using a simple question and answer format, it deals with various relevant issues including safety, seeking help and leaving an abusive situation. The booklet is not meant to replace legal advice.

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[1] As defined by the authors of the article: Restorative justice is a movement within (and sometimes outside of) the criminal justice system, a victim-centered approach, with special relevance to marginalized populations, one of which is women. Unlike standard forms of criminal justice that are adversarial and hark back to primitive practices related to combat, restorative justice can be considered more humanistic (Van Ness, 2004). Instead of revenge, the emphasis is on resolution. Typically, in this process, offenders take responsibility for their crimes and make restitution to the victim and community. Restorative justice approaches are promising in their ability to respond to relationship issues with special meaning for women (Failinger, 2006).