

Support for Families with Refugee Experience Managing Family Conflict and Domestic Violence

TITLE OF RESEARCH: Support for Refugee Families in Waterloo Region in Managing Conflict and Addressing Domestic Violence: Towards an Interculturally Integrated Approach to Family Conflict Management

RESEARCHER TEAM: Jean de Dieu Basabose, Dillon Browne

SUMMARY: This study examined the available supports for refugee families in managing family conflict and preventing domestic violence in the Waterloo Region. The research team interviewed 20 participants who worked with refugee families, had lived experience as a refugee, or had sponsored refugee families.

LINK: Click [here](#) to read the executive summary

KEY FINDINGS

All participants confirmed that domestic violence is an existing problem in the Waterloo Region.

Although there are many services that support families with refugee experience in the Waterloo Region, participants identified **gaps** in managing family conflict and domestic violence in a culturally appropriate way.

These gaps resulted from a limited understanding of the cultural norms and practices of refugee families in managing family conflict and insufficient educational resources, financial resources, and training for stakeholders involved in supporting families to manage conflict or respond to domestic violence.



In most cases, Western approaches which involve the police and court proceedings are found to be culturally inappropriate for helping families address the problem.

Strategies for addressing family conflict and domestic violence in an **interculturally integrated way** could include:



Helping refugee families to feel respected and to increase their sense of belonging to their host community without losing their cultural identity.



Helping refugee families overcome trauma and build resilience.



Seeking to understand and respond to the unique challenges and needs of families that can cause or intensify family conflict.



Increasing the awareness of all stakeholders involved in the integration of refugee families on how violence affects family well-being, how to identify early signs and risk factors of domestic violence within the family, and how to intervene in a way that respects and maintains trust.

Recommendations:

- Relevant institutions should include domestic violence prevention in the cultural orientation training provided to newly arrived refugee families and to sponsoring groups preparing to host refugee families.
- Bring together different stakeholders in a multidisciplinary approach that encourages collaborative efforts to supporting refugee families in managing family conflict.
- Efforts to address domestic violence in refugee families should equally consider and be compassionate towards men and women.
- Organizations serving refugee families should create a cultural navigator position to help strengthen the cultural appropriateness of supports for families.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition.

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