

VAWA - IMMIGRATION

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Domestic Violence Among Immigrant Women

- PubMed Central
- In 2006–2014; 1,763 client files reviewed.
- **Prevalence of DV:** 41% of clients reported experiencing domestic violence.
- **Risk Factors:** Highest incidence among separated/divorced women and those on temporary visas.

1

Intimate Partner Violence and Immigration



INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)



Definition:

- IPV is any physical, sexual, or psychological violence committed by a current or former intimate partner (CDC, 2021).

Global and U.S. Prevalence:

- U.S.: 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men experience IPV in their lifetime (CDC, 2021).
- Global: 1 in 3 women experience IPV globally (Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2021).

RISK FACTORS OF IPV FOR IMMIGRANTS

Acculturative Stress

Struggles adapting to new cultures can increase tension within intimate relationships

Economic and Social Barriers

Low income, financial stress, poor job prospects, and lack of education are linked to higher IPV risk

Isolation

Physical and social isolation, worsened by language barriers, can limit support and increase IPV risk

Fear of Deportation

Abusers may threaten victims with deportation, making them less likely to seek help

Cultural Norms

Immigrant women from patriarchal societies face a higher risk of IPV due to traditional gender norms that tolerate violence

IMMIGRATIONS GROUPS AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

1

Asylum Seekers

Fleeing persecution or violence in their home countries, many face heightened vulnerability to IPV due to fear of deportation, language barriers, and social isolation

3

Economic Migrants

Migrants who leave their countries for better job opportunities may encounter economic stress, poor job prospects, and cultural barriers that heighten the risk of IPV in their new country

2

Refugees

Having experienced displacement due to war, violence, or persecution, refugees often carry the trauma of past abuse, making them more susceptible to IPV in resettlement

Specific Immigrant Groups at Higher Risk for IPV

- ❑ South Asian Immigrants (India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka)
 - **Cultural Norms:** Patriarchal beliefs and rigid gender roles increase vulnerability to IPV
- ❑ Latino Immigrants (Central and South America, Mexico):
 - **Social Isolation:** Limited social networks and fear of deportation contribute to underreporting.
- ❑ Middle Eastern Immigrants (Iraq, Iran, Syria):
 - **War and Displacement Trauma:** Refugees often have prior trauma, which can exacerbate IPV
- ❑ East Asian Immigrants (China, Taiwan, Vietnam):
 - **Cultural Stigma:** IPV is often underreported due to shame and pressure to preserve family honor.
- ❑ Eastern European Immigrants (Russia, Ukraine, Poland):
 - **Economic Stress:** Many face financial hardships that increase tensions in relationships.

2

The Violence Against Women Act

What is VAWA?



What is the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)?

- Creates and supports comprehensive, cost-effective responses to:
 - Domestic violence
 - Sexual assault
 - Dating violence, and
 - Stalking

What is the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)?

- Provides survivors with resources for:
 - Housing
 - Legal assistance
 - Prevention programming
 - Economic justice
- For all victims of DV, not just “women”

VAWA- IMMIGRATION

What is it and who does it apply to?

Allows victims of domestic abuse to seek safety and independence from their abusers by providing a path to legal immigration status.

VAWA Applies To:

- Spouses and children of U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents
- Parents of U.S. citizens who are 21 years of age or older

Requirement: Suffered Abuse & Living with Abuser

- You must have been abused by your U.S. Citizen or Lawful Permanent Resident family member.
 - Examples of abuse (Immigration defines as "battery or extreme cruelty"):
 - Threatening to **beat** or **terrorize** you
 - **Emotional abuse** (insulting you at home or in public)
 - Forcing you into **sexual activities**
 - Threatening to **deport** you or call immigration
 - **Controlling** your movements and decisions
- You must have lived with the abuser at some time.
 - Note: You don't need to still live with them or show that you lived together for a specific period.

An Individual Who is Approved for VAWA:



3

Politics Effects on Immigrant Victims of Domestic Abuse





Politics: Immigration and Domestic Violence

In 2017, Denver prosecutors stated four victims of physical violent assault dropped their cases fearing that they were going to be deported.

At the time, I.C.E officers were waiting outside of the Denver courthouse to make arrest leading to a high degree of fear and anxiety within immigrant communities and distrust within the court system

The Impact of Fear and Anxiety on Domestic Violence Victims in America

- Fear of Future Politics:
 - Anxiety over changing immigration policies
 - Fear of deportation or changes in laws
- Consequences for Victims:
 - Victims may fear coming forward
 - Abusers often exploit these fears
- Legal Inaction
 - Abusers remain free and unpunished and are less likely to be held accountable

4

Our Duty as the Next Legal Professionals



We Can Make a Difference



Promote Access to legal information and resources within immigrant communities.

Educate Ourselves on the VAWA I-360 Form



Raise Awareness about available legal protections like VAWA and connect immigrants with trusted legal services.



Volunteer at legal aid organizations to provide hands-on assistance and help restore faith in the justice system.

Reach out to: Legal Aid Society of the O.C.B.A or Community Legal Services

The image features a solid purple background. In the corners, there are white-outlined squares of varying sizes, some of which are partially cut off by the edges of the frame. These squares are arranged in a way that suggests a grid or a stepped pattern.

Questions?