

SERVICE PROVIDER TRAINING 4

Intervention



FORCED MARRIAGE PROJECT
AGINCOURT COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSOCIATION

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ABOUT FORCED MARRIAGE

What is a Forced Marriage?

Forced marriage is the “union of two persons at least one of whom has not given their full and free consent to the marriage.”

- UN Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriage, Article 1(1), 1964

“A forced marriage occurs when people are coerced into a marriage against their will and under duress, which can include both physical and emotional pressure. A forced marriage is very different from an arranged marriage in which the free and informed consent of both parties is present. Due to its confusion with the tradition of arranged marriage, forced marriage is often associated in developed states with South Asian immigrants, but it is important to remember that it occurs across many cultures and religions.”

- Department of Justice Canada, *Annotated Bibliography on Comparative and International Law relating to Forced Marriage*, 2007

Who Gets Forced into Marriage?

Forced marriage can happen to anyone, regardless of age or gender.

It can also happen anywhere in the world. It occurs in South and East Asian communities, in North African and Middle Eastern countries, in North and South America, and in Europe. It is not limited to any racial, ethnic, or religious group.

Forced marriage is an abuse of human rights.

Forced marriage is a form of violence against women and a form of domestic abuse.

Is it legal in Canada?

No. It is against the law in Canada to force someone to get married.

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

If you work with young people, this toolkit is for you. It is meant to help facilitate open discussion with youth who may be at risk, or survivors, of forced marriage. We recognize that many people work with young people outside clinical or case-management contexts, and that forced marriage is a sensitive topic. As such, this toolkit has games that can be incorporated into your youth programming – whatever shape it may take. These games and workshops address many of the values and issues surrounding forced marriage (e.g. healthy relationships) which may be used to kick-start discussions on forced marriage.

For service providers who have the opportunity to work one-on-one with young people, this toolkit also addresses how to safely and efficiently identify, prevent and intervene in forced marriage cases.

We encourage you to share and adapt this toolkit to suit your needs.

ABOUT FMP

The **Forced Marriage Project (FMP)** is an initiative funded by **Status of Women Canada** in partnership with **Agincourt Community Services Association**.

FMP raises awareness and provides information about forced marriage in Canada through interactive workshops, presentations to service providers and community groups, a website, newsletter, and through participation in both local and international initiatives.

Legal information presented in this guide is for information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Independent legal counsel should be sought for specific cases.

FMP is not responsible for any loss or damage caused by reliance on any statement, made negligently or otherwise, contained in this booklet.

ABOUT OUR PROJECT

The Forced Marriage Project (FMP) is an awareness and education initiative. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of women, girls, men and boys in Canada are affected by forced marriage; however it is an issue that has not yet been adequately addressed in Canada. As such, we approach the issue of forced marriage from an anti-oppressive, anti-racist position, viewing it primarily as a form of violence against women, which is sometimes used to control men and boys as well, and we seek to address it along with other forms of violence and domestic abuse.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FMP would like to thank the **South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)** for their diligent work on the issue of forced marriage and for their generosity in allowing the use of their materials and toolkit. We would also like to thank the members of the **Advisory Committee on Forced Marriage (ACFM)** and the **Network of Agencies Against Forced Marriage (NAAFM)** for contributing their valuable feedback, which was vital to the development and creation of this resource.

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Some of the resources in this toolkit are borrowed or adapted from:

South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario. (2010). *Who/If and When To Marry, It's a Choice: Forced/Non-consensual Marriages - A Toolkit For Service Providers (Tool-kit)*. Toronto, Canada: SALCO.

"Young people and vulnerable adults facing forced marriage: Practice Guidance for Social Workers" booklet published by The Foreign & Commonwealth Office in the United Kingdom.

"Youth Policy Framework: Understanding Youth Development – Workshop in a Box: Facilitating Youth Dialogues across the Province" toolkit published by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2011.

INTERVENTION

This section is intended for people who work with clients in structured and clinical or case- management contexts. It includes guidelines and step-by-step instructions for how to intervene when faced with someone who is in a forced marriage, or at risk of one.

HOW TO INTERVENE IN FORCED MARRIAGE CASES

The Role of Service Providers

Forced marriage has many similarities with other forms of domestic violence. As such, victims may only try to access help from a service provider as a last resort.

Cases of forced marriage may present in various ways. You will need to watch out for **these warning signs**, since many individuals may **not** directly disclose if they are in a forced marriage:

- Person may seem depressed or anxious
- Person appears frightened or jumpy
- Person may seem withdrawn
- Self-harming
- Missing school, or drop in school performance
- Missing appointments
- Suspicious injuries
- Person always has a chaperone when attending appointments (family members, spouse)
- Spouse or parents seems aggressive/dominant, and person seems passive/afraid
- Person may have developed an eating disorder
- Attempted suicide

You can assist the person by offering non-judgmental and empathetic support and counseling. You can also help them:

- **Create a safety plan**
- **Learn about their rights and options**
- **Connect with appropriate services**

Due to the complex nature of forced marriage, several agencies usually work together to address all of the issues associated with each case. However, keep in mind that **you may only have one chance** to meet, talk and consult with someone in, or at-risk of, a forced marriage, so get as many details as possible, and provide as much information and support as you can.

Safety and Exposure to Risk

Service providers must be aware that the individual seeking help may be at risk of facing violence and harm if their family learns that they have sought assistance.

Safety and confidentiality are of the utmost importance.

WORDS TO CONSIDER »

Always hold firmly to the thought that each one of us can do something to bring some portion of misery to an end.

~ Bonnie Acker

Explain their Human Rights and their Legal Rights:

Universal Human Rights

- Canada is an original signatory to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states:

"Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses."

- UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 16, subsection 2, 1948n.

- Forced marriage is the "union of two persons at least one of whom has not given their full and free consent to the marriage."

- UN Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriage, Article 1(1), 1964

- "A forced marriage occurs when people are coerced into a marriage against their will and under duress, which can include both physical and emotional pressure. A forced marriage is very different from an arranged marriage in which the free and informed consent of both parties is present. Due to its confusion with the tradition of arranged marriage, forced marriage is often associated in developed states with South Asian immigrants, but it is important to remember that it occurs across many cultures and religions."

- Department of Justice Canada, *Annotated Bibliography on Comparative and International Law relating to Forced Marriage*, 2007

Legal Rights in Canada

- A marriage in which one or both parties did not give their full and free consent, in which one or both parties was forced to marry through violence, threat of violence, or through emotional duress, is not a valid marriage under Canadian family law. The only person who can invalidate the marriage is the person or persons who were forced to marry. They can have the marriage annulled at any time after the marriage regardless of where the marriage took place and regardless of whether they were Canadian citizens at the time. They may also choose to divorce on the basis that they were forced to marry. If they wish to pursue either option, they should seek counsel from a lawyer experienced in this field who can examine their particular circumstances and needs, and offer them informed legal advice.

Assist Clients in Exploring their Options:

Sometimes the options are limited; at other times they myriad. But there will always be options. When the individual is stressed, it is often difficult for them to think clearly. This is where you can help. Ask questions and work out solutions. It is always the individual at risk who is the one who knows her or his situation the best. Do not assume that you know better. However, looking at it from a different angle, you might be able to see possibilities that she or he has not thought of.

Later in the workshop we will be creating a flowchart for particular case studies. Thinking about possible options in different scenarios is helpful for strengthening your skills in this area.

Did You Know?

Even in countries where there are laws that address forced marriage and early marriage, the practice continues to increase and abductors are rarely punished.... Furthermore, laws on forced and early marriages are often circumvented by participation in traditional religious marriages.... These marriages, however, are not recognized by the law, which can affect the rights of women both during and after the marriage.

~ United Nations Forced and Early Marriage: A Focus on Central and Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Union Countries with Selected Laws From Other Countries, Cheryl Thomas

Connect Clients with Appropriate Services:

Impress upon participants how crucial this aspect of their work can be. If, possible they should not simply refer but actually speak with someone at the agency to which they are referring a client and, with the client's permission, give them an outline of the situation and make sure that they are willing and able to handle it.

Let participants know that they should not consider their responsibility to the client fulfilled when they have referred them to another agency. The shortage of staff properly trained to handle cases of forced marriage means that it is easy for someone to fall through the cracks. Even when referring to an agency with an excellent track record of handling cases involving forced marriage, remember that they may be particularly overburdened. Keep in touch with the client whenever possible to make sure that she or he is getting the help they need in a timely manner.

Ask questions of the client. Whenever possible refer them to someone of the race, gender or ethnicity with which they would feel most comfortable. Do not assume that they will necessarily want to speak to someone of their own background. While in some cases this is true, in others the client will feel more comfortable with someone they feel sure is not part of their community and will not be able to pass on information. Even if you are sure that this would not occur, take the client's level of comfort into account. It is a difficult enough situation as it is without adding additional stressors.

Make sure that you or someone from your agency is a part of the Network of Agencies Against Forced Marriage (NAAFM) so that appropriate connections can be made, and so that you are aware of which agencies have staff who are adequately trained to deal with cases of forced marriage.

Go over the handout, (SEE PAGE 25, **APPENDIX B** FOR Client Referral Checklist). While some items are self-explanatory, others may need further clarification.

- Food, for instance, could mean that they are in need of a food bank or it could mean that they have special needs in their diet which could be for health reasons (e.g. allergies, diabetic, etc.), religious reasons, pregnancy, etc. Make note of these needs in the space provided.
- Housing may include special needs such as housing for children as well as the client; housing in their neighbourhood to allow the children to attend their regular school, or housing far from their neighbourhood to allow them to be and to feel safe.
- Protection services might be the need for an identity change, or for other protection services that go beyond what the police can provide.

NOTE: Working Together With Other Agencies

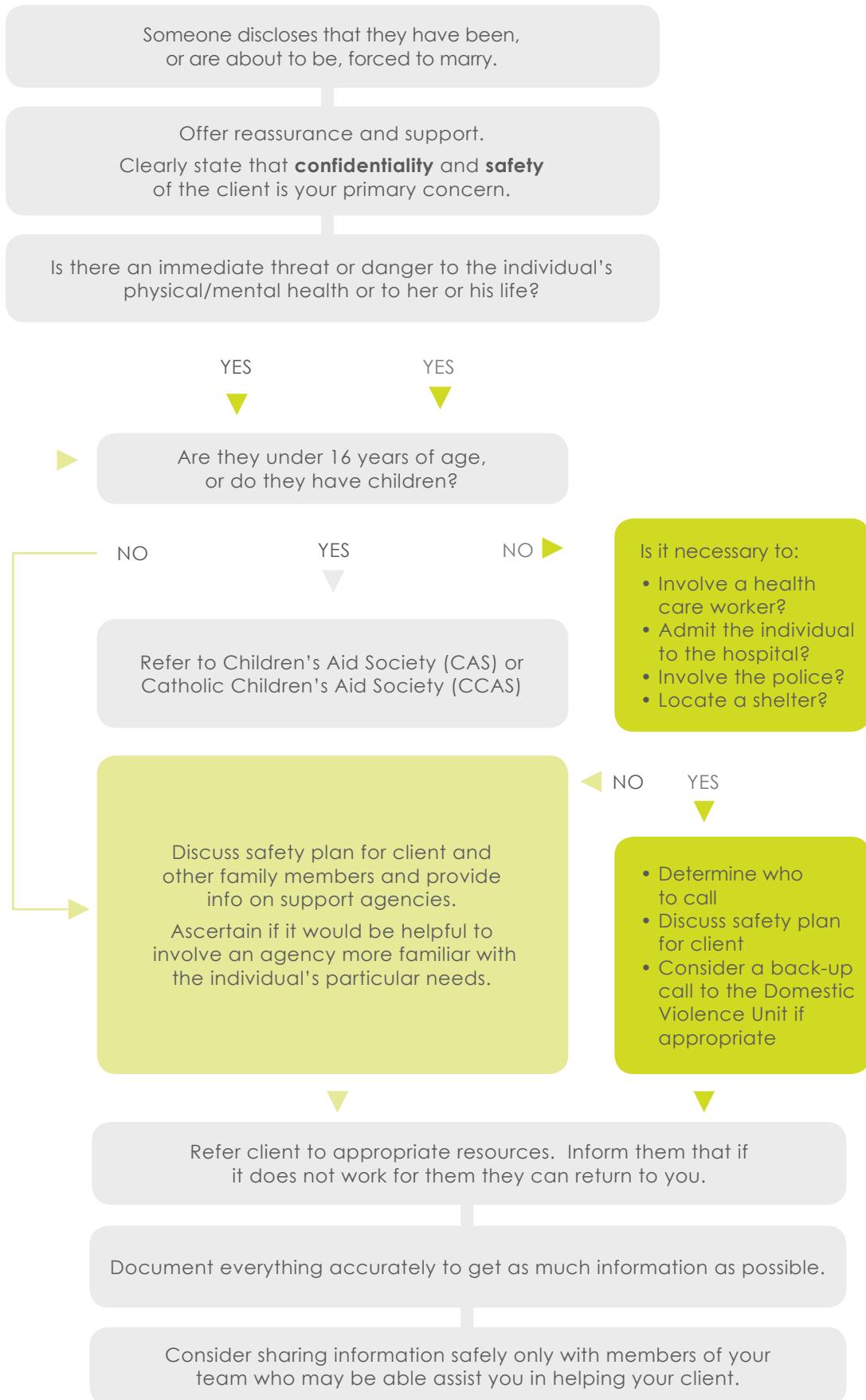
Due to the complex nature of forced marriage, several agencies usually work together to address all of the issues associated with each case. However, keep in mind that **you may only have one chance** to meet, talk and consult with someone in, or at-risk of, a forced marriage, so get as many details as possible, and provide as much information and support as you can.

WORDS TO CONSIDER »

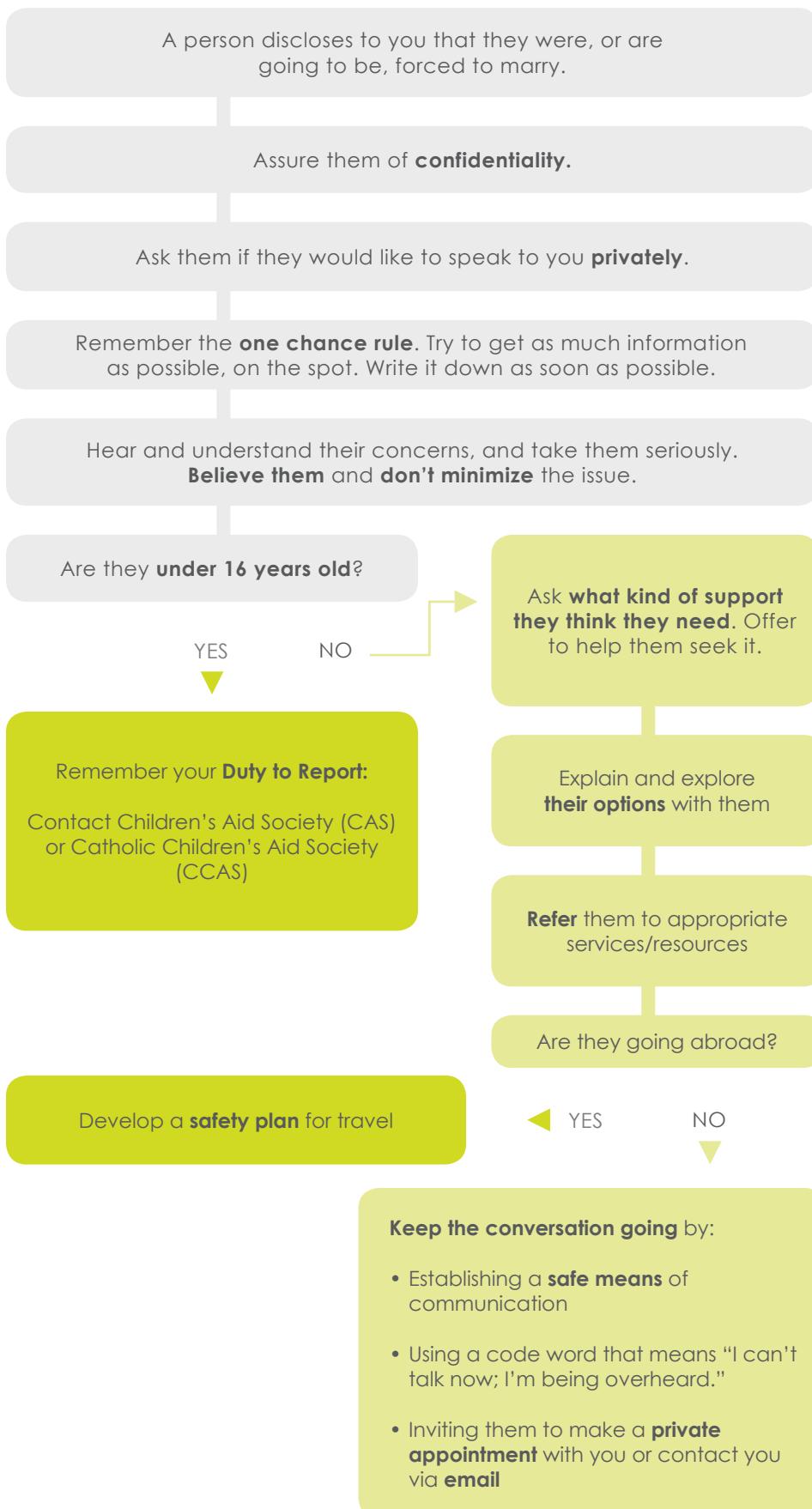
We have become so accustomed to living in a society saturated with misogyny that violence against females is more or less to be expected. Stories about the rape, murder and mutilation of women and girls are staples of the news, as familiar to us as weather forecasts.

~ Bob Herbert

CASE RESPONSE FLOW CHART



INFORMAL DISCLOSURE RESPONSE FLOW CHART



INTERVENTION—GUIDELINES

CONFIDENTIALITY IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE

REASSURE REPEATEDLY THAT THIS INFORMATION WILL NOT BE SHARED (OR WILL NOT BE SHARED OUTSIDE THE AGENCY)

Provide a Safe Environment

Advise the person of your professional and legal responsibility to maintain **confidentiality**. Listen without **judgement**. Be prepared to have them confide in you about personal matters related to sexuality, forbidden relationships, etc.

Make sure that **appointments** are booked at times when the individual can attend in a safe and discrete way. For example: schedule a meeting during their lunch hour at school so they can attend without their parent's knowledge.

Display relevant information about forced marriage and related topics so the person can see that she/he is not alone.

Duty to Report

Know your duty as a professional and service provider. According to the Ministry of Child and Youth Services **you are required to report if you are suspicious about the welfare of any child** under the age of 16 years old. This includes teens who are 16 and 17 years old who are already under protection. Their welfare can include being at-risk of, or experiencing, abuse and/or neglect.

Contact the nearest **Children's Aid Society** agency to report the situation, or for further guidance and information at **(416) 987-7725** or www.oacas.org.

Get the Details

When possible, obtain as much information as possible:

(See Appendix D, Detailed Information Gathering Form)

DO NOT

- **Send the individual away** without assistance, in the belief that it is not your responsibility, or that you cannot help them
- **Approach the family or friends**, unless they ask you to do so
- **Send the individual back to their family** without their permission
- Breach **confidentiality**
- Attempt to be a **mediator**
- **Contact community leaders** or members unless requested to do so by the client
- **Disclose immigration status** to police or immigration authorities
- **Provide legal advice** unless you are qualified to do so

Survivors Speak

I was afraid to tell anyone. I wasn't afraid that they wouldn't help me; I was afraid that they'd decide to go and tell my parents off, and then I would be done for, really done for.

~ Sheila* name changed at the request of the survivor

WORDS TO CONSIDER »

So long as women's reality remains invisible, suffering will be ignored. So long as the reality of suffering remains invisible, women will be ignored.

~ Robin Morgan

Know the Legal Position

There is **no specific criminal offence** in Canada for forced marriage.

However, provisions present in immigration, family and criminal law are often applicable to offences committed.

Criminal offences that may be applicable include:

- Sexual assault
- Threats to harm or kill
- Kidnapping
- Imprisonment
- Murder

Inform the person of their legal rights and leave it to the client's discretion whether or not to report to legal authorities.

Respect Client Rights

It is important to understand that whatever the circumstances, the individual has rights and that their autonomy to make decisions should always be respected.

This includes:

- Their personal wishes
- Their personal safety and level of risk
- Their confidentiality
- Receiving accurate information about their rights and choices

WORDS TO CONSIDER »

Take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor; never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor; never the tormented.

~ Elie Wiesel

THINGS TO REMEMBER

ONE-CHANCE RULE

Remember that **you may only have one chance** to meet, talk and consult with the person, so make efficient use of the time, get as many details as possible, and provide as much information and support as you can.

Keep Information Safe

Information from case and database files should be kept **strictly confidential** and preferably be restricted to named members of staff only.

Appropriate Referrals

When referring a forced marriage case to another organization, ensure that they are capable and have the resources to effectively, safely and appropriately handle the case.

Try to refer individuals, with their consent, to appropriate counselling services. For example: If the person belongs to the LGBTQ community, they need to be referred to counselling services familiar with their needs, in addition to specific services related to the issue of forced marriage. Give them advice on what service they should expect and from whom.

Appropriate Case Worker

Give the person, when possible, the choice of the **race** and **gender** of the social worker who deals with their case.

Inform of Rights

Inform them of their right to seek legal advice and representation.

Safety

Provide them with personal safety advice.

Record Injuries

Record any injuries and arrange for a medical examination. Keep detailed documentation of any injuries or history of abuse, as the police may require this for subsequent investigation or prosecution in related legal matters.

Keep a Record

Maintain a full record of decisions made and the reason for those decisions.

Given them Your Contact

Ensure that the individual has your contact details.

WORDS TO CONSIDER »

When an abused woman -- any kind of abuse -- is heard and believed that is powerful, powerful medicine for her, that's like cold water in the desert, food to a dying woman. It is just central. I feel so strongly about this. It is this that created a revolution, this believing women, or more correctly, women believing one another.

~ Heart, Charter Member, women's space/margins blog

WORDS TO CONSIDER »

There is no good reason that change must come slowly and painfully and only after the injury and death of thousands more. Things change when people stop being resigned to things as they are. Things change when people in large numbers get a hold of a principle and begin to act as if they believed it.

~ Ann Jones, author of Next Time She'll Be Dead.

INTERVENTION – STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

A. INTERVENTION - OVER THE PHONE:

At the start of a phone conversation, it is very important to:

- a. Establish **privacy** and reassure the person of your legal and professional responsibility to maintain their **confidentiality**
- b. Pick a **code word** for future contact to ensure the person's safety and ability to approach you at a later time, in the event that the phone call is interrupted or disconnected.

Talk to the person immediately; remember the **one-chance rule**.

Consider the need for immediate protection and placement away from the family where necessary. In all cases, **assess the risk of harm** facing the individual and yourself.

If the young person is **under 16 years old**, initiate a strategy discussion under child protection procedures to decide whether the young person is suffering, or at risk of, significant harm. Contact the nearest Children's Aid Society agency to report the situation, or for further guidance and information at **(416) 987-7725** or www.oacas.org.

Explain their options to them, and recognize and **respect their wishes**. If the individual does not want social services involved, you will need to assess your legal reporting duties requiring you to take further action.

Refer them to relevant and appropriate **resources**.

Try to arrange an **in-person meeting** as soon as possible at a time and place that is most suitable and safe for the client. If successful, ask the person to bring a photograph and their passport details if possible.

Gather as much information as possible. Focus on the most important information. (See **Appendix D, Detailed Information Gathering Form**).

B. INTERVENTION - IN-PERSON:

See the person immediately in a **secure** and **private** place

See the person **on their own**, even if they attend with others. Politely inform them of your organization's policy to speak to individuals alone

Reassure them of your legal and professional responsibility to maintain their **confidentiality**. Consider the need for immediate protection and placement away from the family where necessary. In all cases, **assess the risk of harm** facing the individual and yourself.

If the young person is **under 16 years old**, initiate a strategy discussion under child protection procedures to decide whether the young person is suffering, or at risk of, significant harm. Contact the nearest Children's Aid Society agency to report the situation, or for further guidance and information at **(416) 987-7725** or www.oacas.org.

Explain their options to them, and recognize and **respect their wishes**. If the individual does not want social services involved, you will need to assess your legal reporting duties requiring you to take further action.

Gather as much information as possible. Focus on the most important information first (see **Appendix D, Detailed Information Gathering Form**) Refer the person to relevant and appropriate **resources**.

Establish a means of safe **future meeting** or contact.

Survivors Speak

I faced the same uphill battles all women face when they leave an abusive relationship. There were moments when I felt trapped: I couldn't go back, but I couldn't imagine my future... A single mom, no one in my community wanting me... Women need to know they're not alone. My forced marriage was a lonely path. But I feel blessed that I found the strength to get out, and now I have a future that is all mine. I want other women to know they have a choice, too.

~ Sandeep - Canadian forced marriage survivor

WORDS TO CONSIDER »

In her heart she is a mourner for those who have not survived. In her soul she is a warrior for those who are now as she was then. In her life she is both celebrant and proof of women's capacity and will to survive, to become, to act, to change self and society. And each year she is stronger and there are more of her.

~ Andrea Dworkin

On the Ground

Raised to fear outsiders.... Debbie had nowhere to turn but the outside world.

~ The directors of Leaving Bountiful, speaking about Debbie Palmer who escaped from an abusive fundamentalist sect of the Latter Day Saints and whose story is told in the film.

CONSIDER:

- Evaluating your current safety planning guide to include the needs of young people who may be facing a forced marriage.
- How do you adjust your current plan to include threat from parents instead of threat from spouse?
- Can you anticipate any challenges you might face carrying out these steps?
- Can you think of any ways to overcome these challenges?
- Can you construct alternate ways of carrying out the difficult intervention steps to get the same result?

WORDS TO CONSIDER »

The mind has exactly the same power as the hands; not merely to grasp the world, but to change it.

~ Colin Wilson

EXIT STRATEGIES

It is important to help the person develop an **exit strategy**. This is not only for people who are making plans to leave, but also for those who may need to leave, with little time to plan, in the future.

The person should be fully consulted to determine their future needs and have their wishes respected. Safety is paramount. Avoid putting yourself or others at risk.

Potential strategies for the individual:

- Open a **personal bank account** at a different branch than parents.
- Leave **copies of important documents** (passport, Social Insurance Number, birth certificate...etc.) with a trusted person or the police
- Leave **spare clothing, cash, extra keys...etc.** with a trusted person
- Keep a list of **resources to contact** on hand (see our website: www.fmp-acsa.ca)
- Have a **telephone** card or change for urgent phone calls even if you have a cell phone.
- Arrange alternative “**emergency” accommodation**
- Think about **who to go to** in an emergency
- Think about who might send you **money** in an emergency
- Remember to **take personal possessions** such as: proof of identity (e.g. passport, student ID card...etc.), medication and medical cards, cell phone or laptop, photographs, marriage/divorce papers, jewelry and clothing.
However, no possessions are more important than your safety, and should be left behind if necessary.

WORDS TO CONSIDER »

Surrendering is more unimaginably dangerous than fighting for survival.

~ Leslie Feinberg

If the individual is leaving the home:

- **Police officers** should accompany them if they insist on returning to collect their possessions
- Consider asking **a third party** to collect their possessions e.g. a social worker
- **Refer them** to appropriate agencies/support groups for information and assistance

Survivors Speak

“She listened to me. She believed me. She didn’t tell me I was exaggerating. I owe everything to her.”

~ Tasha* name changed at the request of the survivor

FORCED MARRIAGE ABROAD

Forced marriages of Canadians do not always take place in Canada. Many at-risk individuals are taken to their countries of origin, sometimes under false pretences, to enter into marriages with people about whom they know very little.

These cases are a special concern because these transnational forced marriages are often outside the jurisdiction of Canadian law and often leave individuals (especially women and minors) in vulnerable and hostile situations, often in remote areas with limited means to access support from local services or Canadian authorities.

"Canada opposes the practice of Forced Marriage and urges all countries to respect their international human rights obligations relating to free and full consent to marriage. **Forced marriage constitutes a human rights violation** under international law to which Canada is a signatory."

- DFAIT (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade)

If foreign travel is mentioned and the person believes that there is a risk of being forced into a marriage while abroad, see if it is possible for them to decline the trip. If they feel that they cannot decline, prepare them for the various difficulties they may encounter if they wish to return to Canada.

You can create a **safety plan** with the individual if they are at risk. Here are some steps they can take before leaving Canada:

1. **Register with DFAIT before leaving.** If you are a Canadian citizen travelling or living abroad, you can register with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). DFAIT will then be able to help you in case of any emergency. The form can be found on the DFAIT website www.voyage.gc.ca/ or by calling **1-800-267-6788** (inside Canada) or **613-996-8885** collect (outside Canada).
2. **Create a Personalized Forced Marriage Safety Plan (see Appendix C).** Fill out the form with an emphasis on: **4. Safety In Case I am Taken Abroad.** Choose carefully the friend or trusted adult with whom you leave the photocopies and information.
3. **Take a list of resources.** Create and take a list of agencies in Canada and abroad that may be able to support you. (**Check our website www.fmp-acsa.ca for resources.**)

Please note that this advice applies only if the individual is a Canadian citizen. **If the at-risk person is a permanent or temporary resident** it is more complex. You can find more information at www.fmp-acsa.ca. You should also refer them to a legal service which deals with these types of situations. In addition, prepare them for any trip abroad by connecting them with non-governmental organizations (NGO's) located in the country to which they will be travelling.

WORDS TO CONSIDER »

Every single facet of this world is compromised by the marginalization of 50 per cent of the population. The struggle for gender equality is the single most important struggle on the planet.

~ Stephen Lewis

CASE STUDIES

Guidelines for Exploring Case Studies

Read each study carefully. For each case study, think about how you would handle or intervene in that situation.

Questions to think about:

- **What would you do to help someone in this situation?**
- **What are some issues that need attention?**
- **What obstacles can you foresee?**
- **How could you ensure this person's safety?**
- **What other supports can be set in place?**

CASE STUDY 1

A **25-year-old man** is depressed and struggling with school, his sexuality, and expectations from family and his religion. When his family learns that he is questioning his sexuality, they choose to disassociate from him and ask him to move out. After the move, his mental health spirals further as he feels lost without his connection to his family or community. One day, **his parents** come to pay him an unexpected visit. He is pleased to see them, and welcomes them to his apartment. They tell him that he is welcome back home if he marries a **woman** from the community who they already approve of. They want him to lead a "normal" life, and think this is the way to "cure" his sexual confusion. After much thought, he decides to marry this woman in exchange for getting his family back. After their marriage, the young couple argue constantly, which sometimes leads to violence. He has come to you for support.

Adapted from "Who/If and When To Marry, It's a Choice: Forced/non-consensual marriages- a toolkit for service providers." Toolkit published by the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario in Canada.

CASE STUDY 2

A **young woman** has managed to get herself out of a physically and emotionally abusive forced marriage. During this marriage, she had **two children**. She is mentally troubled and scared after the separation, especially since her **former spouse** continues to stalk and harass her and the children. **Her parents** have been supportive of the divorce because of the abuse she has endured. However, they are struggling to financially provide for her and her children since her separation. Eventually, they tell her that they can no longer support her and that her only option is to get married again. She cannot work because of her mental health issues, and is feeling pressured by her family to marry a distant cousin and sponsor him to come to Canada. She has come to you for advice and support.

CASE STUDY 3

A **15-year-old youth** is in high school, has excellent grades and wants to go to university after she graduates. **Her parents** don't know that she also has a **boyfriend**, and she is scared of talking to them about it because her parents never talk to her about dating or sex, except to say "Don't do it". Recently, her parents have brought up the topic of marriage a few times with her, but she doesn't know how serious they are about this. Her **older sister** got married right after graduating high school, and she remembers lots of fights leading up to the marriage. This summer the family is going "back home" to visit her dying grandmother, and the 15-year-old is worried that the family will marry her off while they are abroad. She has come to you for support, but her parents accompany her because they believe there is nothing she cannot talk about in front of them.

CASE STUDY 4

A **17-year-old young woman** is pregnant. The father of her child (**her boyfriend**) decides he wants nothing to do with her or the pregnancy. She doesn't know what to do, so she discloses to her very socially and religiously conservative **parents**, even though she is scared of their reaction. They tell her that because she is 4 months pregnant and can no longer get an abortion, she must marry so as not to shame the family. She endures much emotional and physical abuse from her family, but she still insists she does not want to marry. They threaten to kick her out of the house unless she marries someone they choose for her. Feeling like she has no other option, she agrees. Her mother encourages her to sleep with her **new husband** and make it seem like the baby was his. She does, and he believes the child is his own. However, throughout their relationship he beats her and tells her she is never good enough for him. She wants to leave her marriage. She comes to you for employment help, and accidentally discloses her situation to you.

CASE STUDY 5

A **young woman** is married to a member of her religious community. She was forced into the marriage by her family, but is unhappy, especially since it is a polygamous marriage and she endures abuse from the **husband** and other, **older, wives**. She wants to leave the marriage, but **her mother** tells her: "If your husband is abusing you, it is your responsibility to be a better wife. Divorce is shameful in our religious community". Because she is in an illegal polygamous marriage, she worries that the state will not recognize her marriage, so she will not be able to get a formal divorce and compensation from the father to support her **only child**. She discloses to you that she feels trapped by her family and religious community, is feeling hopeless, and is considering suicide.

CASE STUDY 6

A **young woman** who immigrated to Canada seven years ago is discussing her health with you. She discloses that her health problems began when she attempted to kill herself by ingesting a pesticide eight years ago. She explains that a man who came to her village in her country of origin had promised her work. However, when they crossed the border into a neighbouring country she was **sold as a wife to a man** who could not find one. The ratio of men to women was very imbalanced in his country. Her husband and his family treated her like a slave, so she decided to kill herself with the only poison she had access to. She awoke in hospital violently ill. An employee of an NGO spoke with her and reported her case to the authorities, and they sent her home to be reunited with her family. They have all since come to Canada. She believes that no man will want to marry her because she is "used goods" and also because of her ongoing health issues.

CASE STUDY 7

You get a call from a **young woman** who went on vacation a few days ago. She says that she has only a few minutes to talk. She says that she is being held in a relative's home and her parents have taken her passport, her ID and all her money. She says she will be forced to marry a man she has never met, tomorrow. She is crying and very frightened. She may not get a chance to make another phone call.

CASE STUDY 8

A **woman in her early 20s** is talking to you about marriage. She discloses that she was forced into an abusive marriage five years ago during a conflict in her home country. She was captured and given as a **third wife to a leader** on one side of the conflict. After a year she managed to escape and eventually immigrated to Canada. **Her family** will not have anything to do with her because they believe she chose to marry this man. Even though she was able to get a UN worker to explain the situation to her family, they still refuse to engage with her because they still believe she collaborated with the enemy. She has had no contact with anyone in her family since.

CASE STUDY 9

A **19-year-old man** is concerned because his parents are starting to talk about getting him married. He wants to get married someday and start a family but he doesn't want to do it until he has finished university and started a career. **His older brother** was married at twenty and his new wife became pregnant within six months. Soon his brother had a family to feed and had to leave school to do so. He doesn't want to follow in his brother's footsteps and end up in a boring, low-paying job. But he is afraid to raise the issue with **his parents**. He is afraid of how they might react.

CASE STUDY 10

You are talking with **a young woman** in a wheelchair. On past occasions she has been cheerful and upbeat about her life and the career she hopes to have in administration. Today she looks sad and seems lethargic. When you ask her what is wrong, she replies that **her parents** have told her that they have already arranged a marriage for her and that she will have to go through with it next month. She says that her parents don't believe that she could ever be independent and provide for herself because of her disability. To feel secure about her future, they believe it is their responsibility to find a husband for her. They also don't believe that any man would want to marry a disabled woman so they have offered a substantial dowry to induce **a man** to agree to the marriage. The young woman would rather have that money spent on her education. She also doesn't want to marry someone whose main motive is monetary. However, she doesn't know how to confront her parents about this. She is afraid of going against their wishes as they have always shown her affection and consider her to be "such an obedient and good daughter."

CASE STUDY 11

A distraught **young man** approaches you. He was forced to marry a **young woman** from **his parents'** home country. They now expect him to sponsor her to come to Canada. He wants to get a divorce, since he was forced to marry under duress. After returning to Canada, he spoke to his new bride by phone and told her he wants a divorce. She is frightened that no one will ever want to marry her if he divorces her because they will wonder why he didn't want her. He says that she is a very nice young woman and there is nothing wrong with her. However, he does not think they are compatible because she has been raised in an entirely different culture and they have nothing in common. Although he wants to end the marriage, he doesn't want to hurt her since she has done nothing wrong and he knows that her fears are not unfounded. He feels that whatever decision he makes, someone will be badly hurt.

CASE STUDY 12

You are speaking with a 33-year-old woman who escaped an abusive forced marriage, taking her three children with her. Her parents were very angry with her for leaving even though they knew she was being abused. At first they didn't want anything to do with her and she was finding it very difficult to raise three young children with no help from anyone. Now her family has approached her and said that although they were unhappy with her choice to leave the first marriage, if she agrees to marry another man they have chosen for her, they will help her financially and include her in all family activities as well as provide child care for her. She does not want to enter another marriage with someone she does not know, but she is feeling exhausted and sees no other way to make ends meet.

APPENDIX A: EMERGENCY RESOURCES

Emergency Links

If there is an emergency situation, immediately **call 911** for assistance.
Emergency and Police Services

911

Assaulted Women's Helpline

This helpline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Services are available in over 100 languages. Free crisis counselling and referrals for legal advice, shelters and other supports.

1-866-863-0511
(416) 863-0511 (Greater Toronto Area)
1-866-863-7868 (TTY)
#SAFE (#7233) (cell)

www.awhl.org

Femaide (Francophone)

1-877-336-2433
1-866-860-7082 (TTY)

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)

Contact: 1-800-267-6788
(North America)
1-613-996-8885 (Call Collect from abroad)

www.travel.gc.ca
sos@international.gc.ca

For a more detailed list of resources visit our website: www.fmp-acsa.ca

APPENDIX B: CLIENT REFERRAL CHECKLIST

Services required:

- Legal services
- Police services
- Protection services
- Counselling services
- Violence Against Women counselling and/or shelter services
- LGTBQ services
- Medical services
- Housing
- Food
- Clothing
- Language services
- Other services

Urgency Rating

extreme very high high moderate low

Danger Rating

extreme very high high moderate low

APPENDIX C: PERSONALIZED FORCED MARRIAGE SAFETY PLAN

Please work with your client to create a personalized safety plan that takes into account their particular situation and needs. Offer to be the "trusted adult" or friend referred to in the plan unless they prefer to leave documents and other information with someone else.

1. Know the easiest and quickest way out of your home, school or workplace and practice escaping that way. Potential violence may not just happen in your home.
2. Pack a bag and have it ready. Keep it hidden but make it easy to grab quickly.
3. If possible, keep a **cell phone and important phone numbers** hidden nearby but easily accessible should you need to use it. Keep the ringer and all sounds turned off.
4. Have a safe place to go if you are going to leave.
5. Decide on a code word that you can use with your friends or teacher/social worker/employer.
6. If possible, keep a diary to record all abusive incidents, including the date and time, and a description of the incident. Keep this in a safe place.
7. Take a self defense course. Ask a teacher or other adult to suggest it for health reasons in case your family find out.
8. Open and maintain your own bank account at a different bank than the one your family uses.
9. Whenever you call a shelter or other resource, make sure to dial a neutral number immediately afterwards so that your family cannot press the redial button and find out who you have been talking to. Environment Canada (automated weather forecasts) is one such number (in the GTA call 416-661-0123).

What to take with you

A general list of things you need to take with you when you leave an abusive situation.

1. **Identification** - birth certificates for you (and your children, if applicable), driver's license, social insurance card, health card, passport, immunization and school records, etc.
2. **Medications** for you (and your children, if applicable).
3. **Restraining orders**, and custody papers, if applicable.
4. **Keys** to your home, locker, workplace, and car.
5. **Money**, credit cards, jewelry, or small things you can sell.
6. **Address book**.
7. **Any information that could identify where you have gone or the address and contact information of anyone who is helping you.** Leaving this where it may be found will make it easier for your abusers to track you down.
8. **Recent photograph of yourself.**

It is also useful to make photocopies of original documents, copies of pictures and keys, and leave them with a trusted friend or teacher.

1. Safety during violence.

- a. If I decide to leave, I will go _____
- b. I can keep a bag ready and put it _____ so I can leave quickly.
- c. I can tell _____ about the violence and have them call the police when violence erupts.
- d. I will use the code word or phrase _____ for friends, or my teacher/social worker/employer to call for help, and the code word or phrase _____ to let them know that I am being overheard and it is not safe to talk.
- e. If I have to leave my home, I will go _____
(Be prepared even if you think you will never have to leave suddenly.)
- f. When an argument erupts, I will _____

2. Safety When I am Preparing to Leave.

- a. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____
- b. I will keep important documents and keys at _____
- c. I will open my own bank account by this date _____ to increase my independence.
- d. Other things I can do to increase my independence are:

- e. I will keep change for phone calls with me at **ALL** times, even if I have a cell phone.
- f. I will check with _____ and _____ to know who will let me stay with them or lend me money.
- g. I can leave extra clothing with _____
- h. I will review my safety plan every _____ (time frame) in order to plan the safest route. I will review the plan with _____ (a friend, counselor, or advocate.)
- i. I will rehearse the escape plan and practice it when safe to do so.

3. Safety After I Have Left

- a. I can tell my teachers, professors, boss, security, and _____ at school or work about this situation.
- b. I can ask _____ to help screen my phone calls.
- c. When leaving school or work I can do the following:

d. When I am travelling home from school or work and problems arise, I can

e. If I use public transportation I can

f. I will shop at different grocery stores and shopping malls at different hours than I did when I lived at home.

g. I will use a different bank and bank at different hours than I did when I was living at home.

h. I can also do the following:

4. Safety in Case I am Taken Abroad

a. If my family is planning on taking a trip abroad and I suspect it may be for the purpose of forcing me to marry, I can create the following reasons not to go:

b. If I cannot avoid going, I will make the following friends and trusted adults aware of my fears:

c. I will leave a photocopy of my birth certificate, passport and other important documents with a trusted friend or adult, along with the details of my trip (flight numbers; dates and times of departure and arrival back in Canada; names, addresses, and contact information of people with whom I will be staying and their relationship to me), full names, contact information and relationship of people who will be travelling with me, and a recent photo of myself. I will tell them to contact the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) by _____ (date) if I have not returned.

d. Before I leave I will contact the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and fill out the online form _____ (by day/time) and take their phone number with me. [DFAIT will then be able to help in case of any emergency. The form can be found on the DFAIT website <http://www.voyage.gc.ca/> or by calling 1-800-267-6788 (inside Canada) or 613-996-8885 collect (outside Canada).]

e. I will create and take a list of agencies in Canada that may be able to support me, as well as a list of NGO's in the country to which I will be travelling.

Canadian agencies:

NGO's in _____ (destination country):

f. I will take a cell phone with me and keep it hidden. If I need to contact someone, I will text them if at all possible.

5. My Emotional Health

I can do the following:

a. If I feel depressed and ready to return to a potentially violent situation with my family, I can _____

b. When I have to talk to my parents in person or on the phone I can

c. I will use "I can..." statements and I will be assertive with people.

d. I can tell myself "_____ when I feel people are trying to control or abuse me.

e. I can call the following people and/or places for support:

f. Things I can do to make myself feel stronger are:

g. I can create or expand my circle of support by:



FORCED MARRIAGE PROJECT
AGINCOURT COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSOCIATION

1911 Kennedy Rd. Unit 105 T 647.457.6914
Scarborough, ON M1P 2L9 F 416.321.6922



Status of Women
Canada

Condition féminine
Canada

