



What do immigrants and refugees need to know about domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse can happen to people from all cultures, races, religions, sexual orientations, income levels and education levels. You may have situations that make you vulnerable to abuse. For example, you might:

- Not know about Canadian laws and women's rights
- Not speak English or French very well
- Be isolated from others in your community
- Fear bringing shame to your family
- Fear losing your children
- Fear losing your immigration status
- Not know about social service agencies that can help you.

Domestic abuse is a crime in Canada. It is against the law.

Domestic Abuse and Immigration Status

The criminal and family laws in Ontario protect you against domestic abuse. If you are a permanent resident, you will not lose your status for reporting abuse or leaving an abusive relationship.

If you were sponsored

If you were sponsored and you are a permanent resident (PR), you will not lose your permanent resident status and you will not be deported for reporting that your spouse abuses you.

You will also not lose your permanent resident status and you will not be deported for leaving your spouse (or sponsor) if you are in an abusive relationship.

If You Are Not a Permanent Resident

If you do not have permanent resident status - for example, if you are a refugee claimant or live-in caregiver - you might have more difficulty.

In this situation, you may be able to apply for permanent resident status on humanitarian and compassionate ("H & C") grounds. You should contact a lawyer or a community legal clinic for advice. To find a community legal clinic near you, contact Legal Aid Ontario:

Toll-free: 1-800-668-8258

Toronto: 416-979-1446

You can also contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) for more information on humanitarian and compassionate applications. Call the CIC Call Centre at:

Toll-free: 1-888-242-2100

What about your children?

You will not lose your rights to your children for reporting abuse or if you leave an abusive marriage or relationship.

Where to get help for Domestic abuse?

You can get help in an emergency, in a crisis, or anytime that you experience abuse. You can get help in many ways:

- Call the police for emergency protection.
- Go to a hospital or tell your doctor.

- Call a telephone crisis line for assaulted women.
- Contact a settlement agency.
- Contact a community information centre.
- Speak to a social worker or counsellor.
- Go to a shelter.

Phone Numbers

- Assaulted Women's Helpline - Call if you experience abuse or if you have a crisis. You can call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Toll-free (In Ontario) : 1-866-863-0511
Toronto: 416-863-0511
TTY: 1-866-863-7868
- Emergency Police - Call 9-1-1 or look in the front of your local phone book for local emergency phone numbers.

Settlement agencies or community organizations can also help you. To find a service near you dial 2-1-1 from your telephone to speak with a representative.

References:

[Abuse is Wrong in Any Language](#)
[All Women One Family Law](#)