

SHARING SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION PRACTICES THAT WORK CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
Calgary, AB

Area of Practice:

Strategies for Engagement with Non-Settlement Service Providers

A Pathways to
Prosperity Project

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**PATHWAYS TO
PROSPERITY**
Promoting Welcoming Communities in Canada



**VOIES VERS LA
PROSPÉRITÉ**
Promouvoir des communautés accueillantes au Canada

BACKGROUND ON THE ORGANIZATION AND IMPETUS FOR THE PROGRAM

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) is a non-profit organization based in Calgary, AB. Founded in 1981, it provides settlement and integration services to immigrants and refugees in Calgary and surrounding areas. These services are enriched by the engagement of different stakeholders, including local, provincial and federal government agencies, public and private funders, community partners, and dedicated volunteers. Through these supportive partnerships, CCIS works to build welcoming communities and ensure that newcomers to Alberta are positioned to thrive in Canadian society.

CCIS established the Cultural Brokerage Program to address an identified need for enhanced, culturally competent services for culturally diverse children and families involved with the Government of Alberta's Ministry of Children's Services (Children's Services). Each year, the most prevalent concern leading to Children's Services involvement with Cultural Brokerage Program clients is family violence. Research and experience have shown that culturally diverse families experience significant barriers to accessing the mainstream family violence support services available in Calgary. In response to the specific challenges faced by culturally diverse families with family violence concerns and Children's Services involvement, CCIS created family violence specialist roles within the Cultural Brokerage Program team and the Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program (also known as Apartment 1310) for male perpetrators of family violence. These programs support the unique goals and desires of culturally diverse families and work directly with male perpetrators to create long-term behaviour change.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

Name:

Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence

Description:

The Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program supports newcomer families involved with Children's Services, where there is a concern relating to family violence that requires a separation. It seeks to reduce family violence within newcomer families, increase child safety, and decrease the need for systems intervention. Male perpetrators are offered support to leave their home for a temporary stay, up to eight weeks, in a fully furnished apartment called Apartment 1310. As part of the program's participation requirements, perpetrators must agree to work with a male family violence broker immediately after settling into the apartment to understand the impacts of their actions, learn about expectations in Canada, and develop strategies to avoid violence in the future. They are also connected to culturally responsive services that support learning and behaviour change related to healthy relationships and parenting. Simultaneously, the victim(s) also receive similar support from a female family violence counselor to ensure that all parties receive high quality and congruent information to support long-term avoidance of violence in the home.

Goal(s):

The goals of the Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program are: to reduce the stress, trauma, burden, and disruption that family violence and family separation can cause for victims of family violence; to increase the ability of victims of family violence to create effective safety plans; to reduce the financial impact of family separation requested by Children's Services; to increase perpetrators' timely access to services and supports that address the root causes of family violence; to ensure families have information and support during a period of family separation requested by Children's Services; to ensure victims and perpetrators have the same information about the impacts of family violence, expectations in Canada, parenting strategies, and strategies to avoid violence in the home; to reduce the stigma and shame experienced by families embedded within collectivist ethno-cultural contexts that value keeping the family unit intact; and to increase the ability of families to reunite, if that is the desire, while avoiding family violence in the long-term.

Target Client Group(s):

Newcomer men involved in family violence

Delivery Partner(s):

The Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program is co-delivered with Children's Services.

Human Resource(s):

The Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program is delivered by a team of five staff, including a family violence broker, a program coordinator, a division manager, a property manager, and an evaluator.

Funding:

The Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program received initial start-up support from the Calgary Foundation. It is currently being self-funded by Calgary Catholic Immigration Society.

KEY FEATURES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THIS BEING A PROMISING PRACTICE

Effective:

The Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program provides perpetrators of family violence with immediate access to information and supports that can help them reflect on the incident and its implication on the whole family, change violent behaviours and prevent future incidents of family violence. It works in a nuanced way to support the desires of the family and promote whole family wellness.

Efficient:

The Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program has clearly defined roles, boundaries, and scope of service, thus reducing inefficiencies. It also leverages an existing CCIS

asset in the community to provide temporary accommodation and immediate programming for culturally diverse men who have perpetrated family violence.

Relevant:

The Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program recognizes the need to approach family violence as a whole-family experience involving both victims (often female) and perpetrators (often male), as many culturally diverse families ultimately seek to reunite after a period of separation. It focuses on increasing understanding around the impacts of family violence, responses to family violence, expectations around family violence in Canada, and available community resources and options for families.

Sustainable:

Although the sustainability of the Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program is not yet secure, CCIS is in a good position to maintain and strengthen the program by building on its existing assets. The staff member who serves as the gatekeeper of the apartment is embedded in another funded program, and the apartment itself is owned by CCIS. CCIS is currently converting the property into a multi-use building in an attempt to generate income as its own entity. If successful, the revenue generated will support the use of two apartments dedicated to the initiative.

Transferable:

The Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program could be replicated in other communities across Canada, but it would require physical capital such as an apartment building or house to provide a temporary accommodation space. All other policies and processes, including the Family Violence curriculum delivered to clients, could be shared and easily transferred to qualified practitioners.

Innovative and Forward Thinking:

Traditionally, services responding to family violence provide options for victims to leave an abusive situation to ensure their safety, placing the onus on victims to keep themselves safe from abuse. While this approach is well intentioned and seeks to create safety for victims of family violence, it is often contrary to non-Western worldviews. It can disrupt cultural connections and the family's familiar surroundings / routines, elevating the risk of trauma and potentially introducing a stigmatizing or shaming response from the ethno-cultural communities from which families may draw strength. In an effort to decrease the burden placed on victims of family violence, the Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program offers temporary accommodation, counselling, referrals, and supports for the perpetrators of family violence. This innovative approach supports the unique goals and desires of culturally diverse families and provides an opportunity to work directly with perpetrators to create long-term behaviour change.

Differs in Definable Ways from Other Similar Practices:

The Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program uses a "Stay Home" approach rather than a traditional shelter-based response to family violence. Victims of family violence are supported to stay in the family home while the perpetrator is supported in leaving. This allows the victim to maintain a semblance of household normalcy and children to maintain their routines despite the disruption in their family.

High Client Uptake:

The Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program does not need to attract or draw in clients; it provides support to newcomer families involved with Children's Services where there is a concern relating to family violence that requires a separation.

High Client Retention:

The ultimate goal is not to retain clients. The Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program is voluntary and usually part of a larger safety plan identified by Children's Services.

Strong Evidence of Successful Outcomes:

Since its inception, the Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program has been evaluated on an ongoing basis. The data have shown that the program is creating positive outcomes for newcomer families. For example, Apartment 1310 supported 13 perpetrators of family violence in 2019, with an average length of stay of just over one month. Based on the survey completed six months after program exit, 67% of participants who were interviewed indicated that they had been able to return to the family home, and 100% reported that violence had decreased since participating in the program. All participants who were interviewed reported learning something new through the program, including the impacts of family violence on children and families, strategies for self-care, strategies for calming down during times of conflict, problem-solving techniques, differences between Canadian and their home culture and what is expected in Canada, positive parenting strategies, how to use communication to solve conflicts, and opportunities moving forward. With family reunification being the ultimate goal for most families involved with the program, these results indicate that the program is supporting clients in achieving their own goals while changing behaviours to ensure safety in the home if the family is reunited.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION STRATEGY

The Culturally Responsive Accommodations for Family Violence program uses an external credentialed evaluator to monitor, track, and assess progress. Using a developmental evaluation approach, the evaluator connects with program staff to record program updates and changes, as well as to ensure developmental evaluation learnings are incorporated into program practices on an ongoing basis. Evaluation methods use a mix of quantitative and qualitative techniques, including: evaluation-related questions on the Apartment 1310 Intake Assessment that are completed by all clients; tracking of relevant output information for all applicants and clients (e.g., number of referrals, number of applicants declined and reasons for decline, number of clients accepted to the program, client length of program involvement, client demographics); a custom-designed survey completed by all clients when exiting the program to track outcomes achieved and reasons for exit; and follow-up interviews with clients six months after exit. Results are assessed and shared through an annual evaluation report.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

<https://www.ccisab.ca>

Cultural Brokerage Program

<https://www.ccisab.ca/families/cultural-brokerage-program.html>

CCIS Family Violence Specialist and Apartment 1310 Developmental Evaluation Report

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e8067dd2b857a31e18826c/t/5cc72026419202213952f3ed/1556553768246/CCIS+Family+Violence+Specialist+and+Apartment+1310+Developmental+Evaluation+Report+01-14-2019.pdf>