

If you are in immediate danger:

1. Dial **911** for police assistance. Say the name of your language and they can connect you with an interpreter, or say **"HELP"**
2. Go to a place where you feel safe, like a public library or a store.
3. Talk to someone you trust, such as your doctor, ESL teacher, your place of worship, your welfare worker, a friend, a relative, a neighbour or your community worker.

**Resources:** Ask for a *Somali interpreter to assist you with these resources:*

**Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence**  
1-888-792-2873

**National Center for Victims of Crime**  
1-800-394-2255

**National Sexual Assault Hotline**  
1-800-656-4673

**National Suicide Prevention Line**  
1-800-273-8255

**Shelternet for Abused Women**  
1-866-693-3318

[www.shelternet.ca](http://www.shelternet.ca) Shelternet is Canada's first and only national online resource and support network for abused women, their children and the local shelters to serve them.

**Disclaimer:** This publication contains general information only. It is not a substitute for getting legal advice about your particular situation. This project was proudly funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.



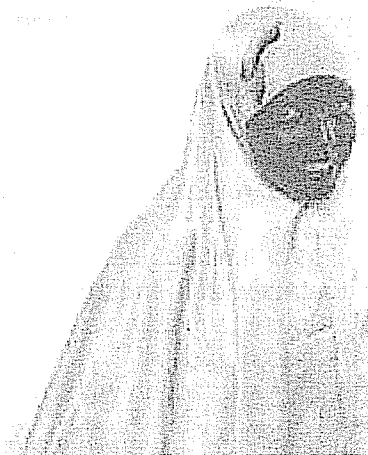
Family Service Toronto would like to thank Rexdale Women's Centre in Toronto, Ontario and North Star Immigration Consulting in Ottawa, Ontario for their work as our Community Partner.



**northstar**  
immigration consulting

"If I had only known..."

### Sisters Speaking to Sisters about Family Violence



**Read to reap knowledge...**

*This brochure provides you with information and resources to prevent family violence against women. These brochures were developed by the Somali community for the Somali community through working groups and focus group discussions and through information from the Justice Canada website.*

**Is this happening to you?**

- Are you being hit, slapped or pushed?
- Are you insulted and humiliated in front of your children and extended family members?
- Are you lacking access to household income?
- Does your husband threaten to leave you if you don't obey him?
- Are you being forced to have sex against your will?

**If you are experiencing any of these behaviors, you are advised to seek assistance because you might be in an abusive relationship or in danger of becoming abused. This brochure contains important information about ABUSE and what you can do to protect yourself or seek help.**



## What does the Canadian Government say about Family Violence?

"Family violence" includes many different forms of abuse that adults or children may experience in their home environment. Abuse is when one person uses his or her power to control another person.

Victims of violence have the right to call the police if they are experiencing abuse. In some cases the police become involved in the matter, the victim may not be able to stop the investigation, withdraw the charges, or end court proceedings. The police could arrest, detain, and charge the abuser with a criminal offence.



## Forms of Abuse

### **Physical Abuse:**

Beating, hitting, rough handling, Shaking, Slapping, Pushing, Choking, Kicking

### **Emotional and Psychological Abuse:**

Degrading you in front of your family members, friends, co-workers and/or your children;  
Discouraging you by repeatedly telling you that you lack education and English skills;  
Using intimidating gestures

### **Isolation and Neglect:**

Using cultural references to control you;  
Preventing or limiting you from basic social contact with friends and family;  
Using jealousy to justify his inappropriate behavior;  
Limiting your interaction with close friends

### **Economic and Financial abuse:**

Not allowing you to have the choice of employment;  
Not allowing you to have input into financial matters;  
Selling your valuables against your will

### **Using Children:**

Threatening to remove the children and take them back to their country of origin;  
Manipulating children into treating you disrespectfully

## Women's Rights

1. Under Canadian law, women have the same legal status, rights and opportunities as men. Violence against women is against the law. Women who are abused can seek temporary residence for themselves and their children in local shelters. They are also entitled to legal protection to keep them safe.
2. A woman leaving an abusive marriage can qualify for government funded financial assistance. If the abuser is not a Canadian citizen, a criminal conviction can lead to the abuser being removed from Canada.
3. Immigrant, refugee, refugee claimants or non-status women have the same rights and responsibilities as Canadian-born women under family law. You can bring a claim for custody, access, child and spousal support to the court. If you choose to separate, you can ask the court to award you a share in your family's property on separation.  
<http://www.onefamilylaw.ca/en/familylawissues/>

4. If you are a citizen, permanent resident or landed immigrant, you cannot be removed from Canada for leaving an abusive situation, even if you were sponsored by the person who is abusing you. If you have temporary status or do not have status, you should contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada or a lawyer because you may be able to apply for permanent residence. You have the right to privacy when dealing with officials.

For detailed information, please refer to the Justice Canada website at:

<http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/fv-vf/about-aprop/index.html>