

**From Community Outreach
to Community Integration:
Engaging Muslim
Communities
to Prevent Domestic Violence**

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Outline: The Ten year Journey

- Phase I: Starting point (2002-2003)
- Phase II: Program Inception and Program outcomes (2003-2005)
- Moving forward beyond community outreach (2005-present)
- Phase III: Creating the MRCSSI (2009- Present)
- Context of the Muslim Community Engagement
- Lessons Learned

* Starting point: [2002-2003]

Identifying the problem:

- Barriers of accessing Mainstream services by Muslim and Arab Abused women
- How Muslim men perceive DV against women and children

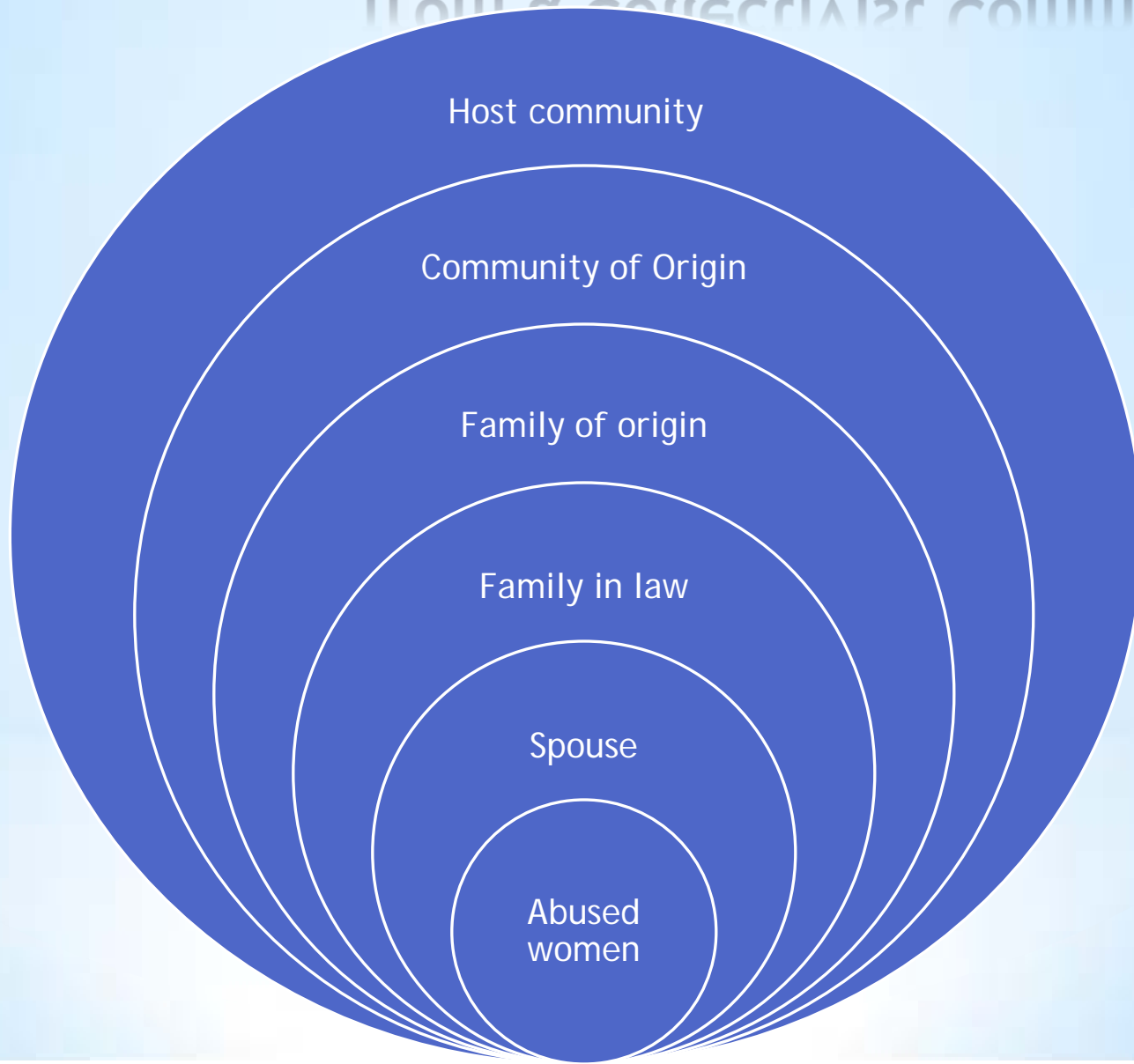
Investigate these barriers through research projects:

- Interviews, FGDs, literature reviews, surveys

Developing Community Outreach Strategy that include [Establishment of the MFSP]:

- Identifying potential community partners
- Joint advisory committee

* Understanding the dilemma of Abused women from a Collectivist Community



The Focus of the Muslim Family Safety Project Work (2003-2005)

- * to change the attitude of the community especially the leaders of the Muslim Community by engaging them in dialogues
- * to create true partnership between the Muslim community the service providers
- * to empower women to understand their culture and religious traditions in a positive more healthier perspective
- * to set the stage for women and men to be more responsive and receptive to the help and assistance which requires extensive time and effort
- * engaging men to prevent domestic violence both targeting individual men and targeting the community at large
(Collectivist and the Individual nature of Intervention)

Muslim Family Safety Projects' Main Outcomes:

- Women asks for outside help more often without fear of being isolated from the community
- Community leaders more cooperative with mainstream services including VAW services
- More women are referred by community leaders to VAW services
- VAW services are more culturally sensitive and better understood BY Muslim women
- More alternative services for women and families involved with domestic violence
- Abusive men would be challenged if they would use Islam to justify their abusive behavior



Moving forward beyond community outreach [2005-Present]

- * Establishing the Muslim Family Support Service as a connection service
- * Muslim community contribution [financial, political and moral]
- * Beyond London, province, national and international

Creating a safe place for integrative service [MRCSSI]

- * Family Violence Prevention and Intervention Innovative Responses for families with collectivist structural background and those who come from conflict zones [CORT, Coordinated Organization Response Team] model of intervention
- * Integrating Canadian values with Muslim/Arab Values,
- * Integrating the Client with the mainstream, Muslim Community, the Community leaders and MRC
- * CAS Extended Services [CASES]
- * a Co-ordinated body that responds to complex needs

Some Context about Muslim Community Engagement

- The climate of September 11
- The debate about the Shariah based Arbitration in Ontario
- The Emergence of Islamophobia
- Differences in perspectives about collaboration and partnerships
- Who should we ally with [questioning whether faith based groups would compromise core values of VAW community to support victims of DV
- Expectations from both groups
- Challenges with funding

Key Lessons Learned

- * Put enough time and efforts to better understand the targeted community: ethno-cultural factors, demographics, religious factors, political factors, level of diversity, key players, community level of integration, community history of dealing DV,
- * To truly engage a community means to have a **participatory** process including dialogue, education with respect to public education, competency training, capacity building and interventions.

* Key Lessons Learned

- * Identify your biases and dispel any myths about the targeted community
- * to provide an environment of comfort and safety to ask questions and find the integration of Canadian values and their own intrinsic values
- * Engage the community in a dialogue about the best way to address DV within their community (between 1-2 years)
- * Develop a joint plan for community capacity building to help them build their own response to DV
- * Help in encouraging women to take a leadership role in the campaign (2 years)
- * Evaluation and future directions