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Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

Theme: Intersectional Policies and Service Provision

CIWA is a culturally diverse settlement agency that recognizes, responds to and focuses on the concerns and needs of immigrant and refugee women and their families. The Family Conflict Program provides professional, culturally sensitive counselling for immigrant women and their families experiencing transition challenges, relationship problems, abuse and trauma.

Critical Elements

- A thorough needs assessment is completed with the whole family and looks at five levels of risk: critical, substantial, intermediate, stable, satisfactory. A rubric is completed to get a picture of what the needs of the family are (tool provided). The assessment informs the types of services and how quickly services are provided as well as which referrals are necessary in supporting the family.
- CIWA takes a very holistic approach to working with families – all family members are referred for supports; refer to other agencies and programs with expertise beyond the mandate of CIWA
- Find Me a Home Project- able to put families up in hotels/motels in emergency situations – e.g. if they have been evicted; unable to get into a shelter until shelter space becomes available. Also have funds available to cover rent or contribute to rent on a short term basis so that families can concentrate on other needs.
- CIWA stresses that it is essential to provide services in a culturally sensitive manner, including services in first language whenever possible and in an informal setting. CIWA has a 48 language capacity and approximately 700 volunteers speaking a variety of languages.
- Provide parenting programs- gender specific programming; have groups as well as individual supports
- Gender specific violence education groups for boys and girls in both high school and junior high
- Free childcare is essential in order for women to attend programming; it is important that the childcare be provided on site where the programming is happening.
- Programming needs to take place where the individuals are- services and programs are available in the community.