South Asian Men's Perspectives Regarding Domestic Violence in their Communities

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

South Asians are the largest visible minority group in Canada, with a strong representation in Alberta's major metropolitan centres. They have immigrated to Canada from countries with some of the most oppressive gender regimes in the world, with limited laws, policies, and police/justice system intervention related to domestic violence, leading to high rates of reported victimization in both their source countries and after immigration to North America. Existing studies on domestic violence among the South Asian community after immigration have focused primarily on female victims, while neglecting male perspectives, even though males hold the power and privilege in this collectivist culture, and available statistics identify males as the most frequent perpetrators. The purpose of this qualitative doctoral dissertation study was to bridge this research gap by investigating how South Asian men residing in Alberta, Canada define domestic violence, the factors they believe contribute to violence against women, their proposed solutions, and how they see their own roles in addressing this social problem.

Seventeen South Asian men ranging in age from 24 to 74, of various countries of origin, religious backgrounds, tenure in the host society, employment status, and community roles were recruited through a combination of: (a) outreach at community events or cultural celebrations; (b) distribution of study advertisements in immigration/settlement agencies, religious centres, and community associations; and (c) snowball sampling across Alberta's two large cities: Calgary and Edmonton. The men participated in mini-focus groups consisting of 3 to 6 members who shared some similar characteristics (such as being in service delivery or community leadership roles or being recent immigrants versus having lived in Canada for a lengthy period). In these focus groups, the South Asian men were asked about their perceptions and exemplars of what makes a "good marriage" and a "bad marriage", and what kinds of behaviours towards

wives they consider or define as abusive or as representing domestic violence, if any. They were also asked about the factors, circumstances or events that contribute to wife abuse in their communities, and what specifically can be done to stop or address domestic violence, including any role they see for themselves in this process. At the conclusion of each focus group, the researcher initiated an educational debriefing intervention, providing participants with information about how domestic violence is defined and addressed in Canadian laws and the justice system, as well as information about local resources for dealing with marital tensions and abuse for both community victims and perpetrators. Focus group data was transcribed verbatim and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phase process of thematic analysis.

The South Asian men in the study identified physical violence (beating, breaking property, and killing), emotional violence (insults, humiliation, psychological torture through threats of male infidelity), financial violence (hostage-taking in terms of taking away any financial means from wives), manipulating the law (to frame women as perpetrators of crimes as opposed to victims), and sexual abuse ("servicing various men in the family") as forms of domestic violence that represent their community's "shameful secret". Their view of primary contributing factors included the "I am King" entitlement mindset passed down through their cultural socialization process, certain cultural practices that promote a male preference or make women vulnerable (like celebrating the birth of sons as opposed to daughters), ignorance about Canadian laws and policies related to abuse, and relational and life stress associated with immigration. Some of their proposed solutions included: (a) changing mentalities among their community members by positive male role modelling through their own family lives and male-to-male accountability for respectful behaviour towards women and girls, which actually began in the transformative dialogues that occurred during the focus group process; (b) religious leaders facilitating open

dialogue about abuse; (c) going back to the cultural basics of practices like arranged marriage by refraining from accepting or requesting dowries; and (d) considering interventions for marital tensions and acculturation stress-related domestic violence, such as restorative justice interventions that keep families together rather than break family ties. The men's unique contributions to understanding and responding to domestic violence among members of their communities have important implications for domestic violence prevention and intervention, which are discussed in this dissertation.

Preface

This dissertation is an original work by Jasmine Bajwa. The research project, of which this dissertation is a part, received ethics approval from the University of Alberta Ethics Board (REB), Project Name "Male Perspectives on Domestic Violence", No. Pro00058228, July 28th, 2015 – June 19th, 2017.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my loving parents, Effat and Jagjeet Bajwa, whose personal sacrifices and unwavering support allowed me to freely pursue my dreams.

Acknowledgements

Just like raising a child, it took a whole village to complete this dissertation. I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to all the people who assisted with making this study possible. Firstly, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the participants and community members who boldly shared their wisdom with me and provided an honest examination on a sensitive issue related to violence against women. I am forever changed by your candor and vibrant exchanges that helped to identify strategies that can assist in the safety and wellbeing all members in our community. Secondly, I would like to recognise the staff in the organizations (YWCA Edmonton, City of Edmonton, Welcome Centre for Immigrants, Pakistan Canada Association of Edmonton, Indo Canadian Women's Association, Calgary Public Library, and Punjabi Community Health Services Calgary) for their support, assistance in recruiting, and/or generosity in sharing their spaces to conduct this study.

I am eternally grateful to my primary supervisor, Dr. Noorfarah Merali, whose support, guidance, and dedication was fundamental to my ability to complete this manuscript. When I registered for your course in the last semester of my undergraduate degree, I had no idea what an instrumental role you would play in my professional, academic, and personal ambitions. Thank you for your unwavering faith in my abilities and willingness to share your wisdom so that I could grow as an academic. I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to my supervisory committee, Dr. Jacqueline Pei and Dr. George Buck, for their commitment and enthusiasm to my research project. Thanks also to my examining committee, Dr. William Whelton, Dr. Phillip Sevigny, and Dr. Purnima George for taking time out of their summer to review and evaluate my study. I thoroughly enjoyed your questions and our lively conversations that extended my learnings from this project.

Without a doubt, the support of my parents, friends, and partner was a vital component to my ability to complete this dissertation. Thank you so much for your unquestionable faith in my abilities and for lovingly guiding me back to the work, especially during times when I was thrown off course and doubted my capacity to finish. Each of you has left a mark on this project and in my heart for generously giving your time, energy, and encouragement. I am forever indebted and humbled by your confidence in me. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my parents for their unconditional love and support. In a world constructed to diminish my existence, thank you for proudly walking beside me, teaching me that anything is within reach if I was determined, and for allowing me to make my own the path towards my dreams. Making you proud is my biggest accomplishment.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades, violence against women has increasingly been recognized as a common phenomenon regardless of race, religion, country, and socioeconomic status. During the 1990's, the international community collaborated at various international congresses to discuss violence against women, which catapulted this issue as a human rights violation and a serious health concern (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2005). Domestic violence is possibly the most well-known form of violence against women that occurs in the context of marital or live-in intimate partner relationships. Consequently, there have been significant policy and attitude changes around the world regarding domestic violence, yet it continues to be a prevalent issue. According to the findings from a multi-country research study by the World Health Organization, the proportion of women who had ever experienced physical or sexual abuse (or both) by an intimate partner ranged from 15% to 71%, with most research sites reporting ranges between 29% and 62% (Garcia-Moreno, et al., 2005). Alarmingly, these violent incidents rarely occurred in isolation; rather, they were described by the victims as a continuing pattern of behaviour that also included acts of emotional abuse and controlling actions (Garcia-Moreno, et al., 2005). Similar ranges are reported from other multi-country studies such as the Demographic and Health Survey [DHS], which found lifetime rates of physical or sexual intimate partner violence for currently married women ranged between 17% in Dominican Republic to 75% in Bangladesh (Hindin, Kishor, & Ansara, 2008). Likewise, the World Health Organization [WHO] (2013) in conjunction with the London School of Hygiene and the South African Medical Research Council, conducted an unprecedented systematic review of global data to ascertain prevalence rates and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. Figures obtained from 79 countries and 2 territories indicated that

the global prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence among partnered women was 30% (WHO, 2013). However, this report also found that in some regions of the world, the rates of physical and/or sexual violence in intimate relationships were even higher. For instance, In South-East Regions (e.g., Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, and East Timor), 37% of partnered women reported experiencing these forms of violence in their lifetimes (WHO, 2013).

Violence against women is also prevalent in North America. In the United States, the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) found that 1 in 3 women (36%) experienced sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime (Smith et al., 2017). Additionally, one-third of the women (36%) who participated in this survey reported psychological aggression by their intimate partners. According to the most recent Canadian police-reported data, over 93, 000 Canadians were victims of violence by a current or previous intimate partner, which represents a rate of 310 victims per 100, 000 population (Burczycka & Conroy, 2018). Gender plays a significant role in domestic violence victimization, with women being almost four times more likely (483 versus 133 per 100, 000) to be assaulted by their intimate partner than men (Burczycka & Conroy, 2018). Additionally, women account for eight out of ten victims of violence by a current spouse (78%), former spouse (79%), current dating partner (79%) and former dating partner (80%) (Burczycka & Conroy, 2018). In 2016, intimate partner violence was the leading type of violence experienced by Canadian women (42%) and women represented 63 out of 81 (78%) victims whereby the violent offence resulted in their death (Burczycka & Conroy, 2018). National statistics also suggest that among Canadian provinces, Alberta has one of the highest rates of domestic violence in both police-reported and self-reported data (Burczycka & Conroy, 2018; Wells, Boodt, & Emery, 2012). Based on police-reported data, Edmonton not only has a higher proportion of female

victims of domestic violence (302/100,000) as compared to Calgary (262/100,000), but also compared to other census metropolitan areas (247/100,000) (Burczycka & Conroy, 2018).

A recent report by the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability (CFOJA) noted that in 2018 alone, 148 women and girls were killed in Canada (Dawson, Sutton, Carrigan, & Grand'Maison, 2019). Since 1961, when the official data recording of murder of women and girls began, there have been 10, 495 reported cases of femicide (killing of females), which averages to one death every 2.5 days. However, the authors caution that these numbers are likely gross underestimates due to the number of missing and presumably dead women and girls across Canada, lack of evidence to determine cause of death, ongoing investigations, and cases of undiscovered victims of femicide (Dawson et al., 2019). Nonetheless, the findings of the CFOJA report demonstrated patterns that were consistent with national and international reports regarding violence against women and girls. For instance, males were perpetrators in 91% of the cases and in a large majority of the cases (59%) the victims were in a current or former intimate relationship with the accused (Dawson et al., 2019). An additional 15% were murdered by a family member other than their intimate partner. Interestingly, Alberta once again had a similar pattern to the national data for intimate partner violence with the number of victims of intimate partner femicide in Alberta being overrepresented relative to the proportion of women residing in the province (Dawson et al., 2019).

Although it is widely accepted that domestic violence cuts across a variety of populations, many researchers acknowledge there are also important distinctions across different groups with respect to how domestic violence is defined, manifested, and addressed (Cuevas & Cudmore, 2017; Dasgupta, 2017; Warrier, 2009). However, these acknowledgements have not resulted in a more culturally responsive justice system, nor more effective and culturally appropriate interventions as there continues to be a mismatch between the complex realities of survivors and

current domestic violence laws, policies, programs, and services (Durfee, 2018). Little information is available about the prevalence or experience of domestic violence among different ethnic and/or immigrant groups (Alaggia & Maiter, 2012; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005; Stockman, Hayashi, & Campbell, 2015). The consequences of this inattention to the differing definitions of domestic violence, contributing factors, and appropriate solutions for the problem among various ethnic minority groups means that the issue of domestic violence remains invisible and myths or stereotypes about specific ethnocultural groups are propagated, which further oppresses victims and impedes the development of effective intervention and prevention strategies (Abraham, 2000; Abraham & Tastsoglou, 2016; Dasgupta, 2017). Besides the limited attention paid to the experiences and perspectives of ethnocultural group members with regards to domestic violence, existing literature and knowledge on domestic violence is largely based on women, representing their viewpoints as victims of abuse or front-line service providers assisting victims (Bhandari, 2018; Chaudhuri, Morash & Yingling, 2014; George & Rashidi, 2014; Kapur, Zajicek, & Gaber, 2017; Tam, Tutty, Zhuang, & Paz, 2016). Although women's voices are imperative in conceptualizing domestic violence, it also important to include the male perspective as a means to gain increased understanding of this complex phenomenon. This is especially important given the fact that all available statistics suggest that men are most often the perpetrators (Burczycka & Conroy, 2018; Smith et al., 2017; WHO, 2013), and they hold a power position in patriarchal cultures and societies (DeKeseredy & Hall-Sanchez, 2018; Hindin et al., 2008), which would make it impossible to address the problem without their input and participation in generating individual, family level, and community solutions.

Purpose of this Study and Overview of Dissertation

The purpose of this qualitative doctoral dissertation study was to investigate the perspectives of South Asian males residing in Alberta, Canada about the nature of domestic

violence, contributing factors for this problem in their ethnocultural community, effective solutions, and the role of men in domestic violence prevention and intervention. According to data from the most recent national Census, Alberta includes two of Canada's top 5 largest urban municipalities (Calgary and Edmonton), which have experienced the highest population growth since the last census (Statistics Canada, 2017a, 2017b). Additionally, both Edmonton and Calgary witnessed the most significant growth (31% and 28% respectively) in immigrants who don't speak either of Canada's official languages (Statistics Canada, 2017c). South Asians represent the largest visible minority immigrant group in Canada, with a population nearing 2 million people (Statistics Canada, 2017d), and have a strong representation in Alberta (Government of Alberta, 2011; Rahim, 2014). Existing research studies conducted in South Asian countries suggest epidemic proportions of domestic violence incidents (Bates, Schuler, F. Islam, & M.K. Islam, 2004; Karmaliani et al., 2008; Kalokhe et al., 2017; Kumar, Jeyaseelan, Suresh, & Ahuja, 2005; Paudel, 2007; Yount et al., 2016).

Studies have highlighted several variables to explain the high prevalence rates of domestic violence in South Asian countries, including: different levels of social acceptability of violence towards women (Boyle, Georgiades, Cullen & Racine, 2009; Ler, Sivakami, & Monarrez-Espino, 2017; Rani & Bonu, 2009), limited justice system/police intervention or response (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004; Akhter & Wilson, 2016), unique manifestations of domestic violence (Fernandez, 1997; Rastogi & Therly, 2006; Yount et al., 2016), reporting barriers (Subramaniam & Sivayogan, 2001; Young & Hassan, 2016), cultural and/or religious beliefs as contributing factors (Babu & Kar, 2010; Rocca, Rathod, Falle, Pande, & Krishnan, 2008), and challenges in prevention/remediation (Mitra, 2011; Niaz, 2003). Research suggests that South Asians show a high level of retention of their heritage culture and country of origin practices after migration as compared to other ethnic groups, particularly in relation to marriage and family life (Abraham,

2005; Kwak & Berry, 2001). The challenges and adjustments associated with immigration and integration into the Canadian context may produce other risk or protective factors that influence how domestic violence is defined, expressed, and responded to (Ahmad, Driver, McNally, & Stewart, 2009; Hyman et al., 2011; Shirwadkar, 2004; Thandi, 2013), making it very important to study how males within the community perceive domestic violence and appropriate responses to it after immigration. This is especially the case given that the South Asian culture is a patriarchal culture where males hold the most power and authority (Abraham, 1998; Chawla, 2004; Rahim, 2014).

Many scholars and international organizations have increasingly acknowledged the importance of collaborating with ethnoculturally diverse communities and engaging men in order to combat domestic violence (Casey et al., 2012; Ellsberg et al., 2014; Flood, 2011; Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015). This sentiment is also reflected in Alberta's framework to end family violence, which specifically identifies engaging men and ethnocultural communities, and using community-based knowledge in order to tackle this issue across the province (Government of Alberta, 2013). This dissertation study contributes a novel perspective within the domestic violence discourse and is consistent with the current focus of governmental organizations.

The remainder of this introduction chapter will provide an operational definition of domestic violence and the various forms it takes from the mainstream and immigration-related literature. A description and profile of the South Asian community in Canada will also be provided, along with some key domestic violence related findings in relation to this cultural community, which will be further explored in the literature review. Following the introduction is a critical review and integration of the literature including a description regarding the prevalence of domestic violence in the countries of origin of South Asian immigrants to Canada, possible contributing factors for domestic violence in their countries of origin versus in the immigration

context, and research studies on different perceptions of the problem in the South Asian culture and community. The literature review chapter concludes with a statement of the problem and the research questions. The method chapter that follows outlines the philosophical underpinnings and theoretical assumptions that situate this qualitative study, the use of the transformative paradigm and focus group design, as well as the data analysis procedures. Following this, the results chapter describes the major themes and sub-themes that emerged from the focus group discussions with South Asian men in response to the research questions posed in this study. Lastly, the discussion chapter situates this study's results within the context of existing knowledge, as well as outlines implications for domestic violence prevention and intervention for the South Asian community, policymakers, and front-line practitioners.

Prevailing Definitions of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence

Violence against women is an overarching phrase to describe a variety of abusive and controlling behaviours towards women and girls, which can occur over the lifespan in a variety of settings, and by a number of perpetrators, including individuals, organizations, and governments (Ellsberg et al., 2014; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). The United Nations (1993) defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (p. 2). This definition has been adopted by several governmental organizations and community agencies, including the World Health Organization (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005) and Statistics Canada (Sinha, 2013). Examples of gender-based violence can include physical battering, sex-selective abortion, female infanticide, female genital mutilation, honour killings, dowry abuse or deaths, forced marriages, differential access to basic needs for male and female family members, and being sold into slavery (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002).

There is a wealth of evidence indicating that the most common forms of violence occur between people who are known to each other. Abuse or violence within the family is commonly referred to as family violence or interpersonal violence and the possible victims can include children, siblings, spouses, and parents (Chamberlin, Munsey, Novotney, & Packard, 2008). This definition includes all forms of abusive behaviours within the family regardless of age, sex, or relationship between the victim and perpetrator (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). Murray and Graves (2013) broadly define family violence as "any form of maltreatment – including physical, sexual, and emotional (inclusive of both verbal and psychological abuse), as well as neglect – perpetrated or witnessed by one or more members of a family and/or intimate relationship upon one or more other members of that family or relationship" (p. 2).

A variety of terms are used to describe violence in romantic partnerships, such as domestic violence, interpersonal violence, spousal violence, wife abuse, and partner abuse. The American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family (1996) defines domestic violence as a pattern of behaviours, such as physical, sexual, and psychological maltreatment, that is used by one person in an intimate relationship against another in order to gain power or to maintain that person's misuse of power, control, and authority. The term domestic is used to imply that the violence occurs between two individuals who are living together as a family (in marriage) or who are cohabiting. The focus on female victims does not negate the fact that men also experience violence and abuse in their intimate relationships, but rather draws attention to the fact that women are most frequently the victims of violence by their male partners (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). In contrast, the term intimate partner violence is often used to encompass several different variations of violent or abusive behaviours in partnerships, such as: dating relationships, LGBTQ partnerships, and male victims of abuse by their female partners (Murray & Graves, 2013). Durfee (2018) expands on this definition by

describing intimate partner violence as a "pattern of behaviours whereby one intimate partner attempts to gain power and control over the other partner through the use of threatened or actual violence or force" (p. 109)

To be consistent with international and APA definitions, this research study used the term domestic violence to describe a wide array of abusive behaviours perpetrated by husbands and other family members towards the female spouse, as this would fit for the South Asian culture, which is a traditional culture where cohabitation most often only occurs within the context of marriage (Abraham, 2000). The definition also extends to family members other than the husband, because existing research suggests that in-laws are often involved in South Asian domestic violence incidents either by directly inflicting violence on their daughter-in-law, pressuring their son to abuse his wife, or ignoring the abuse that is occurring in the home (Abraham, 2000; Rew, Gangoli, & Gill, 2013).

Types of Abuse

"Imposing one's will on another is a form of violence" ~ Mahatma Gandhi

Culturally Universal Forms of Abuse

As noted by several international and professional documents, domestic violence can manifest itself in many ways within family and intimate relationships. The most common forms of abuse include physical violence, threats/intimidation, sexual abuse, financial/economic abuse, and psychological abuse (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). However, it is also important to acknowledge the non-physical and controlling forms of abuse that commonly co-occur with violent behaviours, as a means for perpetrators to establish power and control over their intimate partners (Pence & Paymar, 1993). The developers of the Duluth Model created the Power and Control Wheel to describe a range of violent and abusive behaviours that perpetrators use to establish control over their partners

(Pence & Paymar, 1993). This model contains eight segments of controlling behaviours, which are: using intimidation; emotional abuse (e.g., putting her down, name calling, humiliation); isolation; minimizing, denying and blaming (e.g., making light of the abuse, saying the abuse didn't happen, blaming her for causing the abuse); using children (e.g., threatening to take the children away, using the children to relay messages); practicing male privilege (e.g., treating her like a servant, making all the decisions); economic abuse (e.g., preventing her from keeping or getting a job or having control over earned income, making her ask for money, giving her an allowance); and using coercion and threats (Pence & Paymar, 1993). Physical and sexual abuse are listed around the perimeter of the wheel and considered to be severe tactics used by abusive men use to gain power and control in their relationships (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

Culture-Specific Forms of Abuse

Besides the types of abuse described above, there are also forms of violence that are unique to certain cultural groups. For instance, some abusive practices identified within South Asian cultural groups are sex-selective abortions, female infanticide, dowry-related violence, acid attacks, preventing women from obtaining an education, bride burning, and honour-based violence (Abraham, 1998; Niaz, 2003; Verma, Qureshi, & Kim, 2017; Young & Hassan, 2016). Although India has created laws to abolish dowry practices, many families continue to practice this tradition and it is considered one of the leading causes of domestic violence and death in young brides (Ahmed-Gosh, 2004; Verma et al., 2017). A longstanding tradition, dowries are monetary goods or assets, given by the bride's family to bring into her marriage and new family (Ahmed-Gosh, 2004; Banerjee, 2014; Nasrin, 2011; Rastogi & Therly, 2006). Over time this voluntary cultural practice became a form of negotiation and bargaining to secure grooms from higher status groups for daughters, with many families going into debt during the process (Banerjee, 2014; Rastogi & Therly, 2006). In some cases, either during or after the marriage, the

groom's family may perceive the dowry payment as insufficient and demand a higher amount. As a means to manipulate her family into succumbing to their demands for a higher dowry, the bride's husband and/or in-laws may become abusive or violent towards the bride (Nasrin, 2011). At times, these tactics can result in permanent disfigurement of the wife or even murder. According to a Unicef report (Kapoor, 2000) incidents of wife burning or "kitchen fires" and acid attacks in India and Pakistan are often related to unmet dowry demands.

In the existing literature, honour-based violence is used interchangeably with honour killings or honour-based crimes to describe acts of violence towards females accused of bringing shame onto their family by deviating from the gender norms imposed by society (Faqir, 2001; Mayeda, Vijaykumar, & Chesney-Lind, 2018). Although honour-based violence is found both historically and across cultures, there is no agreed upon definition that is cross-culturally appropriate (Gill, 2004). Most often this type of violence is seen in South Asian and Middle Eastern societies and among immigrants from these societies who migrate to Western countries (Gill, 2004). Further complicating the concept of honour violence is that it can constitute a very broad range of behaviours that are ultimately defined by the woman's social group, community or family to determine if a transgression has occurred (Gill, 2004). In Pakistan, sanctioned pre-meditated killings of females are called "karo-kari", which is a metaphoric term to describe illicit or extra-marital relationships (Patel & Gadit, 2008). A female is identified as "kari" for bringing dishonour to her family through her relationship with a man other than the one the family prefers for her, "karo"; once labelled, the family is permitted to kill her and the co-accused to restore the family honour (Patel & Gadit, 2008). Notably, men receive much less severe punishments or consequences than their female counterparts (Patel & Gadit, 2008).

Other examples of women's behaviours that could potentially jeopardize a family's honour include speaking to unrelated males, engaging in premarital relations, adultery, choosing a

romantic partner without family approval, demanding divorce, refusing to proceed with an arranged marriage, or changes in style of dress or personal demeanour (e.g., being assertive) that reflect a shift towards Western cultural norms (Niaz, 2003; Patel & Gadit, 2008; Kapoor, 2000). When a family's honour is perceived to be tarnished by a female relative, typically the male members of the family (e.g., grandfathers, fathers, uncles, brothers, husbands, and/or sons) participate in various forms of abuse towards the woman in order to restore the family honour, such as public shaming, physical abuse, or sexual violence (Nasrullah, Haqqi, & Cummings, 2009; Patel & Gadit, 2008). However, there are also cases where female family members participate in honour-based violence (Nasrullah, et al., 2009). Sadly, in many cases women are killed for actions that are not their own (e.g., rape, domestic violence) or where allegations are based on rumours with no tangible proof that any "dishonourable" behaviour occurred (Kapoor, 2000).

Immigrant-Specific Forms of Abuse

It is widely acknowledged that immigrant women who are subjected to domestic violence encounter vulnerabilities and barriers to support that are different from non-immigrant survivors of abuse. According to Raj and Silverman (2002), immigrant women's cultures, contexts, and legal status can increase their vulnerability for abuse, be used as tools to control wives, and create barriers for women to seek help or flee from the abuse. These authors propose that immigrant women are dually vulnerable to abuse experiences because they reside within two conflicting cultures and are isolated from their traditional social support systems (Raj & Silverman, 2002). Furthermore, evidence suggests that North American immigration policies increase South Asian women's vulnerability to abuse because they allow husbands to control their access to services and their entitlement to permanent citizenship status as the husbands

typically serve as their family sponsor for immigration (Kapur et al., 2017; Raj, Silverman, McCleary-Sills, & Liu, 2005)

In addition to the types of abuse described above, immigrant women face unique forms of abuse related to their immigration context and settlement process. Evidence suggests that abusive behaviours increase or escalate in severity following immigration, which suggests that aspects of the immigration process may put undue stress on the marital relationship (Erez, Adelman, & Gregory, 2009). One of the most commonly reported forms of abuse that immigrant women report is withholding immigration documents or information related to their citizenship status (Erez et al., 2009; Merali, 2009; Raj & Silverman, 2002). Many immigrant women across domestic violence research studies conducted in North America have also reported that their husbands threatened to deport them back to their country of origin or intimidated them with the potential consequences if the government was aware of their illegal status (Abraham, 1998; Erez et al., 2009; Raj et al., 2005). Because of their lack of knowledge of English and dependence on their husbands, many immigrant women are often unaware of their rights in the host country or how to access services that can provide them with this information (Alaggia & Maiter, 2012; Merali, 2009). This lack of knowledge allows batterers to control their wives by providing misinformation about their rights, manipulating their access to information, or threatening to take away their children (Abraham, 1998; Erez et al., 2009; Mehrotra, 1999; Raj & Silverman, 2002).

Preventing wives from successfully integrating into the new community is another form of abuse reported by immigrant women. When women immigrate to reunite with their husbands, they leave behind their support system and cultural institutions that are familiar to them. As a result, immigrant women are dependent on their husbands to adjust in the new country. Abusive husbands may prevent their wives from adapting to the new country in many ways, including: condemning them for making friends outside of their cultural community, prohibiting them from

wearing western clothing, discouraging or preventing them from learning the English language, limiting access to finances, frightening them about possible attacks by Westerners, or prohibiting them from entering the work force (Abraham, 1998; George & Ramkissoon, 1998; Merali, 2009; Supriya, 1996).

Isolating wives from their families and cultural communities is another tactic that prevents immigrant women from integrating into society (Abraham, 1998; 2000; Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996). In a study of violence against South Asian immigrant women, Abraham (2000) defined isolation as being "emotionally and socially alone, economically confined, and culturally disconnected" (p. 69) and described three different areas of isolation that women experienced. The first area pertained to their marriages, where husbands remained withdrawn from them. The second related to limitation of their contact with informal networks such as relatives, friends, and co-workers. The third area pertained to restricting access to and participation in formal networks such as community organizations or economic, legal and political institutions (Abraham, 2000). Many abused immigrant women described isolation as being one of the most painful aspects of their marital abuse (Abraham, 2000). It is important to note that isolation not only impacts women's mental health but also interferes with their ability to access resources and supports for the abuse. Having presented some basic information about unique ways in which domestic violence may be manifested among immigrant groups like the South Asians, this dissertation now turns to a description of the South Asian cultural group and their key cultural values/distinguishing features.

South Asian Culture and Norms

The term "South Asian" is a social construct that is increasingly being used to refer to people from the Indian subcontinent who share an overarching culture, and similar ancestral origins, languages, religions, and geopolitical boundaries (Islam, Khanlou, & Tamim, 2014).

More specifically, South Asians include individuals who can trace their origins to India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka (Assanand, Dias, Richardson, Chambers, & Waxler-Morrison, 2005; Maiter & George, 2003; Tran, Kaddtz, & Allard, 2005). However, South Asian ancestry may also include individuals from Fiji, the Caribbean, and East Africa (Assanand et al., 2005). Although the South Asian community is comprised of a wide array of religions, belief systems, regional customs, and languages, there are several commonalities among their values and norms and customs and traditions that distinguish them from other cultural groups (Inman, 2006; Rahim, 2014); they are members of faith communities with a strong focus on collectivism, filial piety, and traditional gender roles, which are emphasized through a multi-generational cultural transmission process. These factors have a strong influence on the family lives of South Asians, as described in the sections below.

Collectivism & Identity

The collectivist orientation is one of the most distinguishing features of the South Asian community and is reflected in various cultural practices, traditions, and customs (Choudhry, 2001). Societies that adhere to collectivist values assign primacy to the needs and wants of family members and community members compared to those of the individual, serving as the basis for a hierarchical family and social structure (Triandis, 1995). As such, individuals in collectivist societies are not considered autonomous, but rather interconnected with their family and community network (W.J. Dupree, Bhakta, Patel, & D.G. Dupree, 2013; Mittal & Hardy, 2005; Triandis, 2001). Collectivism also helps to support transmission of cultural traditions across contexts, geographies, and generations. It may also explain why South Asians report adherence to their ethnic identity and continue to retain their cultural practices following migration (Tran et al., 2005).

The collective identity in the South Asian community is highly valued and individuals are encouraged to consider the welfare of their family and community, which is considered an extension of the family network (Choudhry, 2001). In contrast to independent self-construals based on personal internal traits, individuals from collectivist societies tend to have interdependent self-construals and perceive themselves in relation to other members of the family and community (Shea & Yeh, 2008; Triandis, 2001). As such, healthy functioning of the family or community helps to forms the basis of individual identity. It also means that decisions made by individuals are perceived as a reflection of their family, and therefore the outcomes of these decisions (good or bad) are felt beyond the level of just the individual (Ibrahim, Ohnishi, & Sandhu, 1997). Therefore, many personal and life decisions typically are made in consultation with other family or community members to ensure there is consensus (Choudhry, 2001; Das & Kemp, 1997). This interdependence has important implications for privacy. Matters affecting an individual's life are not considered personal matters - they are considered to be family matters which all members are privy to. The concept of privacy is applied at the family level rather than the personal level, as private family matters are not shared with outsiders, and there are pressures to avoid engaging in behaviours that would tarnish the family's reputation or honour (Das & Kemp, 1997; Segal, 1999). An important element of collective cultures is to preserve group solidarity and ensure individual members are following norms that help maintain group harmony. As such, various social control mechanisms are in place to reinforce these norms such as community surveillance, gossip, and shaming of rebellious behaviours (Somerville & Robinson, 2016; Tonsing & Barn, 2017).

Within the collectivist orientation, familial and community supports are major resources that buffer against many life challenges and which offer a sense of belonging to South Asians both within and outside of their natal countries (Das & Kemp, 1997). However, the collectivist

value system can create many barriers and challenges for domestic violence victims. For instance, there is extensive evidence to suggest that South Asian domestic violence survivors delay help-seeking due to concerns about violating family privacy and bringing shame to the family, along with the potential of facing negative reactions and consequences from other community members about not maintaining family harmony or family ties (Ahmad et al., 2009; Sabri et al., 2018). Furthermore, the research indicates South Asian women are deterred from seeking help, advised by family members to remain in the abusive marriage, or are ostracized from their family and community when they seek help or leave their abusive husbands (Abraham, 2000; Bhandari, 2018; Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996; Raj & Silverman, 2007; Yoshioka, Gilbert, El-Bassel, & Baig-Amin, 2003). Some researchers have also found that marital separation or divorce negatively affects the quality of spousal matches for a woman's unmarried siblings or their own children's future marriages (Mehrotra, 2016; Sabri et al., 2018), since marriages area also often arranged between two families rather than two individuals (Mehrotra, 2016; Sabri et al., 2018).

Religion and Spirituality

A number of major religions are represented in the South Asian subcontinent, such as Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism (Das & Kemp, 1997; Williams, 1998). Most countries in the South Asian region tend to have large concentrations of a major religious group with political boundaries drawn between nation-states to reflect the religious majority (Purkayastha, 2005). For instance, Hindus largely dominate India and Nepal, Muslims are mostly found in both Pakistan and Bangladesh, and the majority of Sri Lankans practice Buddhism (Ahmed & Lemkau, 2000; Jayatilleke et al., 2011; Tamang, 2009). In contrast, Sikhs have a large concentration in the eastern Indian state of Punjab and were significantly displaced

following the India-Pakistan partition as their lands and people were spread across these two regions (Ahluwalia, Walo-Roberts & Singh, 2015).

Religion plays a significant role in the lives of many South Asians and can be difficult to distinguish from the similarities in cultural traditions that cut across religious divisions. For many South Asians, religious ideologies provide a framework for determining appropriate behaviours, outlining sanctions for violations, and serve as a basis for dictating one's decisions in multiple domains (Zaidi, Couture-Carron, Maticka-Tyndale, & Arif, 2014). Additionally, religious beliefs often guide one's values, parenting behaviour, family relationships, gender socialization, and form a basis for one's ethnic identity (Williams, 1998; Zaidi et al., 2014); therefore, all South Asians represent a faith community, with religion playing a major role in their lives and worldviews. Religious practices and customs are present in many South Asian cultural events, festivals, and traditions, and are a vehicle through which associated cultural knowledge is transmitted to subsequent generations (Williams, 1998). The impact of religion in the lives of South Asian migrants is evidenced by the various mandirs (Hindu temples), mosques, and Gurdwaras (Sikh temples) that have been erected throughout North America, UK, and Australia (Zaidi et al., 2014). These places of worship provide a gathering space for the South Asian community and serve as a centralized location for religious teachings, cultural transmission, general knowledge dissemination, festivals, and major life events (Dasgupta, 2011). Additionally, the influence of religious leaders on their respective members from the South Asian community has been frequently discussed in the literature. Most notably, religious leaders in South Asian community play a pivotal role in how religious doctrines are practiced, educate their congregation about problems or issues, and are looked upon to provide guidance in resolving issues occurring the lives of their members (Abugideiri, 2005; Ayyub, 2000; Patel & Siddiqui, 2010).

Marriage and Family Relations

At the core of South Asian culture is a strong attachment and responsibility to the family. Existing literature concerning the South Asian community frequently notes the importance of family life and maintaining familial bonds (Das & Kemp, 1997; Masood, Okazaki, & Takeuchi, 2009; Segal, 1999). The typical South Asian family consists of a joint system with multiple generations often living under the same roof (Das & Kemp, 1997). However, Tummala-Narra (2013) notes there is a rise in nuclear family living in urban South Asian countries and in immigrant households in North America. Regardless of whether one actually lives in a joint or nuclear family arrangement, in line with the collectivist values of South Asian culture, family members are expected to sacrifice personal needs and goals, and instead consider the needs, position, and honour of their family when living their daily lives and when making major life decisions (Maiter & George, 2003; Segal, 1999; Zaidi et al., 2014). As such, decisions are often informed by multiple family members and largely based on what benefits the entire family unit. In general, demonstrating absolute respect (filial piety) for parents, elders, and ancestors is the cornerstone of South Asian relationships (Das & Kemp, 1997). Family relationships are arranged hierarchically along multiple lines, such as age, birth order, and gender. Elders are revered and treated with great respect, and often consulted for major life decisions or to advise when issues arise (Ibrahim et al., 1997). Furthermore, many South Asian communities follow patriarchal traditions to a varied degree and tend to structure their relations around the male head of the household (Das & Kemp, 1997; Segal, 1999).

South Asian marriages tend to follow a patrilocal residence pattern whereby the bride moves into the husband's home, which he typically shares with his parents and unmarried siblings (Das & Kemp, 1997). Unlike Western societies, cohabitation before marriage, divorce, and having children out of wedlock are not prevalent in South Asian communities (Yeung,

Desai, & Jones, 2018). Similarly, casual dating is generally discouraged, and South Asian females disproportionately experience more pressure to maintain sexual purity than their male counterparts (Segal, 1999; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000). Arranged marriages – whereby parents, relatives, and significant elders find a suitable spouse for an individual – are considered a unique tradition of the South Asian community and still represent one of the most common forms of marriage among members of this group (Baptise, 2005; Segal, 1999; Yeung et al., 2018).

Marriages among South Asians are considered to represent a union of two families rather than two individuals, and often involve multiple family members on both sides to ensure compatibility between the two sets of families being joined (Das & Kemp, 1997). Modern arranged marriage practices can vary greatly in terms of level of involvement and decision-making power of the bride or groom in relation to their parents and other family members, and can take place across international borders (Leonard, 2018). For example, a male living in Canada may marry a woman living in South Asia, with the wedding taking place in their natal South Asian country. Subsequently, the Canadian partner would initiate a sponsorship application to facilitate the wife's immigration to Canada so they can live together in the same country. Broude (1994) described the social function of arranged marriages as a means of preserving group cohesion, strengthening family relationships, and retaining the family's economic resources within their own community or network.

The dowry system is another distinguishing feature of South Asian collectivist family life, although dowry practices have existed in other cultures around the world in various forms since the Greco-Roman period (Anderson, 2003). Historically, the bride's family has given dowries in the form of various gifts such as money, clothing, household goods, or property to the groom's family as a way to assist the new couple in establishing their life together with the groom's family of origin. However, over time this practice shifted from a benevolent cultural custom to a

forced demand placed on the bride's family to either secure her potential mate, or in some cases, as ransom for the bride's parents to pay or otherwise have their daughters suffer abuses until the groom's family's demands have been satisfied (Anderson, 2003; Bhopal, 1997; Bloch & Rao, 2002). To address these cultural perversions and prevent violent or fatal outcomes for brides, several South Asian countries attempted to abolish the dowry practice by making it against the law to give or take a dowry (Abeyratne & Jain, 2013; Ghosh, 2013). Despite these efforts, there is evidence to suggest that dowry practices continue to exist and occur in many South Asian communities both abroad and after immigration to North America (Dasgupta, 2007).

Gender Roles

From birth to death, and during various life milestones, one's gender plays a substantial role in how these experiences unravel, but also serves as a mechanism for socializing individuals about their roles in society. The extant literature regarding the South Asian community highlights the influence of traditional gender role socialization across the lifespan for its members and the clear differentiation of roles for males and females (Segal, 1999; Tummala-Narra, 2013; Varghese & Jenkins, 2009). The South Asian community is largely patriarchal and tends to adhere to traditional gender roles whereby men are viewed as the primary decision makers and hold significantly more power than women (Ahmad et al., 2009; Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004; Dasgupta, 1998). On the other hand, women are viewed as the primary caretakers and nurturers in the family, but also bear the responsibility for transferring cultural beliefs and practices to subsequent generations (Dasgupta & Dasgupta, 1996; Segal, 1999; Tummala-Narra, 2013). There is a large body of evidence that demonstrates that gender plays a significant role in South Asian communities such that females are unfairly disadvantaged in their access to basic needs, education, healthcare, and freedom compared to their male counterparts (Fikree & Pasha, 2004; Segal, 1999; Filmer, King, & Pritchett, 1998; Khera, Jain, Lodha, & Ramakrishnan, 2014;

Mehrotra, 2006; Solotaroff & Pande, 2014). Although there are have been significant improvements in large urban centres, these inequities continue to persist in villages and rural settings across South Asia (Filmer et al., 1998; Solotaroff & Pande, 2014).

Women's roles and obligations are often tied to their male relatives, first as daughters, then as wives, and finally as mothers. Throughout life, South Asian women will experience varying levels of authority and power in the household based on their relationship status, and ability to fulfill their duties in the family system (Ibrahim et al., 1997; Mehrotra, 2016). The least amount of power will occur as a daughter until she marries, which will boost her and her family's reputation because she is perceived by the community as fulfilling her dutiful role in society (Dasgupta et al., 2003). However, in her husband's home her place and authority in the family will depend on the husband's birth order. For instance, if she is married to the eldest son, she will obtain more power than if she was married to the youngest son. Nonetheless, as the daughter-in-law she will be expected to defer to her husband and in-laws, and also towards her mother-in-law and any sisters-in-law still residing in the home (Ahmed & Lemkau, 2000). A woman's position will also be impacted based on her ability to bear children, and more importantly, if the children she bears are male versus female. The pressure to have male children and beliefs about males being more valuable than females has led to the widespread practice of female infanticide and sex-selective abortions in the Indian subcontinent (Solotaroff & Pande, 2014). Finally, the most authority a woman will likely hold in her lifetime will be in the role of a mother-in-law to her son's wife, at which point, she may be finally allowed to command her wishes onto her family. However, there is always the potential for tension with the daughter-in-law in the household, who could threaten the mother-in-law's authority if she given too much influence over her husband (Choudhry, 2001; Dupree et al., 2013). The changes in power and status of South Asian women throughout their lifetimes highlights how the influence of gender in their lives does not

remain static, but rather is ever-changing, although it is ever-present. Furthermore, the way gender plays out in women's lives underscores the tense relationships between women in the family and the competition they may be in to form the strongest alliance or bond with a male authority figure in the family, which can directly impact the quality of their lives. In this process of competing for strong relationships with the male members of their families, women in South Asian families are not always supportive of each other, but may victimize each other either independently, or through collective abuses involving the male members of the family as well (Choudhry, 2001; Dupree et al.., 2013).

Various cultural practices reinforce traditional gender roles within South Asian communities. For instance, male births are viewed as auspicious and openly celebrated, whereas female infanticide or sex-selective abortions continue to occur throughout the South Asian subcontinent, with evidence that these are occurring abroad as well (Solotaroff & Pande, 2014). Similarly, South Asian women bear the burden of upholding family honour by maintaining their subordinate position in society and preserving their sexual purity, are socialized from childhood about their interdependence on male relatives, and face scrutiny if unable to fulfill their roles as good wives and mothers (Abraham, 2000; Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996; Goel, 2005; Kallivaylil, 2010). However, in the South Asian community there are also examples of female power and authority that create contradictory positions for women. Tummala-Narra (2013) highlights these contradictory positions of women in South Asian society and the mixed messages inherent in many of its religious and cultural traditions. For instance, in the Hindu religion there are several female deities who are revered for their ability to give life and protect against evil and are worshipped with great respect alongside other deities (Goel, 2005; Tummala-Narra, 2013). Similarly, there are various examples in Muslim and Sikh religions that extol the virtue and admiration of women's role in society (Abugideiri, 2005; Ahluwalia et al., 2015). Interestingly,

the responsibility of females to uphold their family's honour suggests their actions have significant power to raise or harm their family's reputation, which in turn leads to significant restrictions on their freedom and expression (Inman et al., 2001). As such, South Asian women occupy vital roles in the community because of their reproductive power and responsibility to transmit cultural values (Dasgupta, 1998; Kallivaylil, 2010). Notably, many researchers have observed that South Asian women's identities are largely shaped by gender ideologies and maintaining patriarchal norms (Abraham, 2000; Dasgupta, 2007; Goel, 2005). However, it is worth noting that these longstanding patriarchal attitudes and traditional gender roles have been changing over time and there is great variability within the South Asian community in how these are expressed by individuals or their families (Rudrappa, 2007).

Migration History and South Asian Diaspora

According to national statistics, Canada has one of the highest proportions of foreign-born people among the G7 countries, with the Asia/Pacific region being the largest source region of immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Approximately, 1 out of every 5 Canadians are a visible minority and most likely to be South Asian, as this cultural group has become the largest ethnic group in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017d). At nearly 2 million people, South Asians account for one-quarter of the national visible minority population and 5.6% of Canada's total population (Statistics Canada, 2017d). Furthermore, the South Asian population is projected to continue growing, and is expected to remain the largest visible minority group in Canada by 2036 with over 3 million people (Morency, Malenfant, & MacIsaac, 2017). Likewise, the South Asian population in the United States has grown over 40% between 2010 and 2017, with the total population estimated at 5.4 million (South Asian Americans Leading Together [SAALT], 2019). The 2010 US census reported South Asians were the third largest ethnic group in America, the largest Asian group in nearly half of the States, and the fastest growing ethnic subgroup,

exceeding the growth of the Chinese and Hispanic populations (Hoeffel, Ratogi, Kim, & Shahid, 2012). With the growth of this group across North America, it is not surprising that the South Asian community is receiving increasing attention in the literature. Inman and colleagues (2014) conducted a content analysis of the psychological research on South Asians and noted their preliminary search results yielded 50 publications from the 1980s, 114 from the 1990s, and 528 studies from the 2000s (Inman, Devdas, Spektor, & Pendse, 2014). Key areas of focus of research on this community include better understanding the experiences of South Asians, identifying the unique needs of community members, and providing culturally competent care (Chandra, Arora, Mehta, Asnaani, & Radhakrishnan, 2016; Inman et al., 2014; Rastogi et al., 2014).

Research focusing on the South Asian community has focused heavily on the immigrant experience and the resulting changes that have occurred in families and family life, as well as in their cultural practices. Existing studies suggest that South Asians tend to adopt more "pragmatic" aspects of the mainstream society they have immigrated to, such as language, attire, and social interaction norms when interacting outside of the home, but continue to hold onto their core values around marriage, gender role socialization, and obligation to the family system (Farver et al., 2002). There are several indications that South Asians have been successful in their host countries, as attested by high educational attainment, higher incomes as compared to the national average, low criminal activity, and contributions to their local economies through business development (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004; Hoeffel, Rastogi, Kim, & Shahid, 2012; Islam et al., 2014; Nadimpalli, Kanaya, McDade, & Kandula, 2016; Tran et al., 2005). However, there are many studies identifying the stressors associated with the immigration experience as a result of significant changes to family relations, gender role expectations, discrimination, conflicting cultural values with mainstream society, and pressure to live up to the

reputation of being a model minority (Inman et al., 2014; Masood et al., 2014; Nadimpalli et al., 2016; Varghese & Jenkins, 2009). As described earlier, the South Asian cultural value system differs significantly from Western ideologies, and therefore places individuals in the challenging position of attempting to simultaneously reconcile the values and behavioural expectations that are internalized from the culture of origin, and values and behavioural expectations imposed from the host culture (Inman et al., 2001).

South Asian immigration to North America has resulted in the creation of cultural or ethnic diasporas in the re-settlement process. Diasporas are defined as communities that are created based on linkages with one's culture and countries of origin that can include various institutions and forms of maintaining transnational connections between community members, such as through travel back and forth, erecting religious spaces, maintenance of heritage languages, and having programs for cultural maintenance and interaction in schools, community centres, newspapers, TV programs, and radio stations (Toloyan, 1996 as cited in Bhatia & Ram, 2004). These diasporas help to maintain connections with family and community living abroad, preserve cultural traditions/customs, and act as a collective community in a foreign land (Bhatia & Ram, 2004). Jain (2011) notes that the process of creating diasporas ("diasporization") not only reflects the historical dispersal of South Asians from one nation to another, but also represents the on-going, in-process, extranational networks that connects this group across multiple (re)locations (p. 19). It is important to acknowledge and understand the influence of South Asian diasporas because these communities help to reduce isolation and act as an extension of support that may have been lost during the migration process.

There is some evidence that cultural values systems can be challenged while adapting to life in North America and can result in negative consequences for South Asian families (Farver et al., 2002; Rahim, 2014). Research indicates that immigration stressors, shifts in gender role

expectations, and lack of family support may be contributing factors for domestic violence experiences for South Asian women living in Canada (Ahmad et al., 2009; Bhandari, 2018; Hyman et al., 2011). Although there are no specific incidence studies of domestic violence in the South Asian community in Canada, there are multiple published reports from service providers and cultural community association perspectives suggesting the high frequency and seriousness of this problem (Hurwitz, Gupta, Liu, Silverman, & Raj, 2006; Mahapatra, 2012), and there are multiple published studies on the very high frequency of domestic violence in the home countries they have migrated from (Bates et al., 2004; Kumar et al., 2005; Karmaliani et al., 2008; Paudel, 2007), which will be further elaborated upon in the literature review chapter of this dissertation.

Research studies from the United States indicate that South Asian women experience abuse and violence at a rate that is equal to or higher than the national average (Adam & Schewe, 2007). In a survey of 215 South Asian women across the United States, Mahapatra (2012) found that 38% experienced some form of abuse in the past year. Similarly, a study in Boston reported that 21% of South Asian women experienced physical or sexual violence by their intimate partner and 15% were abused within the past year (Hurwitz et al., 2006). In depth interviews with South Asian victims of abuse across several studies indicated that there are distinct differences in the types of domestic violence experienced and the types of barriers for seeking help and/or leaving the relationship. For instance, abuse may be perpetrated not only by the husband, but also by in-laws (Abraham, 1998; Jordan & Bhandari, 2016; Raj, Livramento, Santana, Gupta, & Silverman, 2006). Many women described their immigration status being used by their husband or extended family as a tool for abuse, such as threatening deportation, not filing their citizenship papers, prohibiting participation in the host country, withholding passports, preventing them from being able to exit the relationships or to seek help from counselling agencies (Abraham, 1998; Jordan & Bhandari, 2016; Thapa-Oli, Dulal, & Baba,

2009). Additionally, there were specific forms of abuse reported by South Asian women that had particular cultural relevance such as burning of clothing (e.g., sarees), sex-selective abortions, and being chastised for not abiding by gender roles or being "too Western" (Abraham, 1998; Mason et al., 2008).

In the literature review chapter that follows, I will elaborate on findings regarding domestic violence in the home countries of South Asian immigrants to Canada, contributing factors for violence in those countries, and how immigration and cultural adaptation may affect domestic violence expressions, definitions, and responses, drawing on both theory and research findings.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

"I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent" ~ Mahatma Gandhi

This chapter begins with an overview of studies on domestic violence in various South Asian countries, which have mostly focused on women as the study participants. The chapter subsequently examines the limited research on South Asian males' attitudes towards violence against women and their reported use of abusive behaviours in their intimate relationships. Research on factors that contribute to domestic violence in the home country and host country context after migration is then reviewed, situating it within the most widely accepted theoretical frameworks and models for understanding gender-based violence. The final section of this chapter presents information on current domestic violence assessment and intervention practices, to highlight how these practices may neglect key aspects of the cultural and immigration-related realities of South Asian families, as well as other culturally diverse groups. The chapter concludes with a statement of the problem and the research questions that were addressed in this doctoral dissertation study.

Domestic Violence in South Asian Countries

Prevalence Rates

National surveys in South Asia demonstrate that domestic violence is a widespread problem. Koenig and colleagues (2003) note that "domestic violence represents an accepted and, in many cases, an institutionalized practice in much of the [South Asian] subcontinent" (p. 270). Using data from a large family health survey, Koenig and colleagues (2003) analyzed data from over ten thousand married women between the ages of 15 and 49 living in two rural areas in Bangladesh. In this survey, over three quarters of women (78.7%) reported verbal abuse and 42.1% reported physical abuse by their husbands (Koenig, Ahmed, Hossain, & Mozumder, 2003). Other national surveys in Bangladesh indicate that domestic violence is becoming more prevalent. Between 2000 and 2001, a research team interviewed 76 women and an additional 1212 female respondents completed surveys (Bates et al., 2004). In this study, 67% reported experiencing domestic violence during their lifetimes, and over a third reported that they were physically abused in the past year (Bates et al., 2004). Results from the Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey (BDHS) found that 75.6% of the women surveyed experienced some form of abuse by their husbands (Silverman, Gupta, Decker, Kapur, & Raj, 2007b). The majority of these women experienced only physical violence (47.4%), while 24% of the women experienced both physical and sexual violence (Silverman et al., 2007b). A study examining Bangladeshi men's use of violence found that nearly half (48.7%) had perpetrated some form of abuse towards their wives in the past 12 months and almost 60 percent of the respondents endorsed attitudes that supported wife abuse (Akhter & Wilson, 2016). Other studies have reported similar prevalence rates in Bangladesh, suggesting that many women from this region experience psychological, physical, and/or sexual violence in their marriages (Schuler, Hasemi, & Badal, 1998; Young & Hassan, 2016; Yount et al., 2016).

Research studies conducted in India also highlight the high prevalence of domestic violence in this country. A study conducted by Chandra and colleagues (2009) surveyed 105 women who were receiving services at a south Indian psychiatric outpatient clinic. The prevalence of domestic violence was high in this population, with 56% of women reporting a history of abuse (Chandra, Satyanaryayana, & Carey, 2009). Of these women, 70% also reported experiencing sexual coercion by their husbands. Similar results were found in a different south Indian study. Data collected from 744 married women living in slum areas in Bangalore, India found that 56% experienced physical domestic violence (e.g., being hit, kicked, or beaten) and 27% experienced violence in the past six months (Rocca et al., 2009). Likewise, a study conducted with 500 women in central India discovered that 48% experienced physical abuse, 44% experienced violence while pregnant, and 38% were psychologically abused by their husbands (Jain, Sanon, Sadowski, & Hunter, 2004). A systematic review of 137 quantitative studies conducted in India over the past decade revealed that the median rates of domestic violence victimization for women during their lifetime and over the immediate period of the past year were 41% and 30%, respectively (Kalohke et al., 2017). However, it is important to note that there was significant variance in domestic violence prevalence estimates across the studies included in the review, which were attributed to differences in life contexts and settings of the study populations (e.g., poverty-stricken areas where couples may face higher overall life stress versus middle class life in urban centres), as well as to the lack of standardization of survey instruments across the studies, as some instruments were not culturally adapted or modified (Kalohke et al., 2017).

Relatively fewer studies investigating domestic violence have been conducted in Pakistan. This is not surprising given that in general, Pakistan has been relatively slow in addressing violence against women in comparison to other countries within South Asia (Niaz, 2003).

Nonetheless, the available research suggests that Pakistani women's experiences of domestic violence are similar to those of women in other countries in South Asia. One of the few large-scale population studies investigating domestic violence incidents and attitudes was conducted with 1325 pregnant women in Hyderabad, Pakistan (Madhani et al., 2017). In this study, over half (51%) reported some form of violence before and/or after their pregnancy, with a majority choosing to remain silent about their abuse (Madhani et al., 2017). Another study conducted in Karachi, Pakistan found that 35% of the female respondents reported being physically abused by their husbands in the past 12 months (Ali, Ali, Khuwaja, & Nanji, 2014). Other studies conducted in this region suggest that Pakistani women, much like other women in South Asia and worldwide, experience multiple forms of abuse in their marriages. For instance, Shaikh (2003) interviewed 216 women in two regions of Pakistan about their experiences of physical, verbal and sexual abuse in their marriages. She found that the majority of women experienced multiple forms of domestic violence both during their pregnancy and during other times, with only seven women who reported no incidents of domestic violence (Shaikh, 2003). Additionally, almost half of the women (46.9%) reported non-consensual sex by their husbands (Shaikh, 2003). Farid and colleagues (2008) interviewed 500 women seeking medical treatment who had recently given birth. Their findings demonstrated that Pakistani women commonly experienced physical and emotional abuse in their marriage and/or during their pregnancy (Farid, Saleem, Karim, & Hatcher, 2008). Fifty-two percent of the women reported experiencing either physical or emotional abuse during the course of their marriage and 44% reported either form of abuse while pregnant (Farid et al., 2008). Similarly, in a large population-based cohort study, 51% of women reported domestic violence prior to their pregnancy, 47% reported abuse within the past 6 months, and 38% experienced abuse during their pregnancy (Karmaliani et al., 2008).

Many studies investigating domestic violence in Pakistan have utilized convenience samples, such as women receiving medical, obstetric, or psychiatric treatment. This is likely because discussing matters related to one's home life is considered to be a taboo and is restricted in Pakistan, perhaps to a larger degree than in other parts of South Asia, making research participants for domestic violence studies difficult to access and limiting their degree of self-disclosure in non-medical settings (Farid et al., 2008). The findings from these research studies provide somewhat limited information about domestic violence because they are utilizing specific populations of women. For example, several researchers have only sampled pregnant Pakistani women (e.g. Farid et al., 2008; Karmaliani et al., 2008; Madhani et al., 2017) or those who attended medical clinics (e.g. Ali et al., 2015; Aftab & Khan, 2011; Fikree & Bhatti, 1999). As such, there may be significant differences between women who access medical treatment as compared to those who do not have these resources available to them, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Despite these limitations, the researchers have made a concerted effort to ask about domestic violence prevalence in these women's lives, both while pregnant and throughout their marriages.

In comparison to Bangladesh, India, and even Pakistan, there are relatively fewer domestic violence research studies available focusing on smaller South Asian countries, such as Nepal and Sri Lanka. Nepal is a northern South Asian country that is bordered by China in the north and India in the southeast. More than 25 million people occupy Nepal, with the majority (85%) living in rural areas (Paudel, 2007). Many Nepalese follow the Hindu religion while a minority practice other religions, such as Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity (Paudel, 2007). One of the few research studies from Nepal investigated gender-based violence by interviewing adolescent girls and women living in eight different districts. The findings from this study determined that 56% of women experienced physical violence, 43% experienced economic abuse, and 25% reported

sexual violence in their marriages (Paudel, 2007). Psychological abuse was the most common form of domestic violence with 92% of married women reporting these incidents. While husbands were the most common offenders of domestic violence, father and mother in-laws were also identified as perpetrators (Paudel, 2007). In a research study conducted in Sri Lanka, 417 women participated in focus groups or completed interviewer-administered questionnaires about their experiences of domestic violence (Subramaniam & Sivayogan, 2001). The researchers found that 30% of women reported a lifetime experience of domestic violence and 22% experienced violence within the past year (Subramaniam & Sivayogan, 2001).

These studies strongly suggest that domestic violence occurs throughout the South Asian subcontinent and across various demographic contexts. However, it is the most vulnerable women who experience the most frequent and severe forms of abuse. Many research studies identified women who were young, living in poverty, and with limited or no education as more likely to be victims of domestic violence (Chandra et al., 2009; Koenig et al., 2003; Silverman et al., 2007b). Unfortunately, the findings also highlight the lack of resources and limited protection from domestic violence for women residing in South Asia. Many of the participants reported that they coped with their abuse through silence and rarely took any legal actions or sought professional assistance (Karmaliani et al., 2008; Shaikh, 2003). Some abused women also disclosed that they did not seek assistance from their family because they knew that they would not receive any support (Karmaliani et al., 2008; Shaikh, 2003).

South Asian Men's Reports of Their Use of Violence

In order to fully understand the factors associated with domestic violence in South Asia, it is also important to include men and perpetrators in the research efforts (Koenig et al., 2003). In comparison to research on women in South Asia, there are far fewer studies focusing on men and interviewing them about their abusive behaviours in intimate relationships. Nonetheless, the few

studies that are available corroborate the prevalence rates provided by abuse victims in South Asia. Martin and colleagues (1999) used data from a Northern Indian male reproductive health survey to investigate the rates of domestic violence perpetration in a sample of married men between the ages of 15 to 65. Of the 6,695 men surveyed, approximately 18-45% reported engaging in physical abuse and 18-40% reported perpetrating sexual abuse against their wives (Martin, Tsui, Maitra, & Marinshaw, 1999). They determined that physical and sexual abuse were highly correlated with one another, suggesting that men who are physically violent towards their wives are also likely to engage in sexually abusive behaviours (Martin et al., 1999). Slapping/pushing was the most common form of abuse, followed by punching/kicking and use of a weapon, but most men reported using multiple forms of violence in their marriages (Martin et al., 1999). Similar results were found in another North Indian research study, where the lifetime prevalence of physical violence use among men was 34% and 25.1% reported physically abusing their wives in the past year (Koenig, Stephenson, Ahmed, Jejeebhoy, & Campbell, 2006). With respect to sexual violence, 31.8% was the reported lifetime prevalence and 30.1% reported sexually abusing their wives in the past year (Koenig et al., 2006). This study also found that men who were physically violent were also likely to be sexually abusive in their marriages.

Similar bleak findings were also evident in research conducted in Pakistan. In one study, almost half of the 176 married Pakistani men surveyed in one study reported some form of domestic violence within their marriages (Fikree, Razzak, & Durocher, 2005). Ninety-four percent of men reported verbal abuse towards their wives and 49% stated they were physically violent (Fikree et al., 2005). The men reported the most common triggers for their abusive behaviour towards wives were issues related to children, money, wife's attitude towards husband, being disrespectful to in-laws, and leaving the house to visit natal family or friends without permission. Although most of the participants recognized domestic violence as a

problem and agreed that more awareness was needed about this issue, almost half of the men reported that husbands have a right to hit their wives (Fikree et al., 2005). These results suggest that men may have incongruent beliefs with respect to identifying domestic violence as a problem and simultaneously tolerating these actions.

Bangladeshi men reported comparable rates of domestic violence to other South Asian countries. Silverman and colleagues (2007a) analyzed a national cross-sectional survey of over three thousand Bangladeshi men and found that over one-third (36.84%) perpetrated physical and/or sexual violence towards their wives in the past year. This study also found significant differences between abusive and non-abusive men with respect to their sexual behaviours and sexual health disclosures. For instance, physically abusive men were more likely to report multiple sexual risky behaviours and were less likely to disclose sexually transmitted infections (STI) to their wives, thereby putting their wives at risk for disease (Silverman, Decker, Kapur, Gupta, & Raj, 2007a). Similarly, Akhter and Wilson (2016) identified several personal, relational, and contextual factors associated with Bangladeshi men's use of violence towards their wives. For instance, low education, poverty, limited legal support, low tolerance for female decision-making authority, and cultural attitudes supporting wife abuse were the most significant variables contributing to spousal abuse (Akhter & Wilson, 2016). Another study utilized data from the UN Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence to examine the role of adverse childhood experiences on intimate partner violence perpetration in a sample of Sri Lankan men (Fonseka, Minnis, & Gomez, 2015). The researchers determined that childhood abuse experiences and witnessing abuse of one's mother were associated with the greatest increase in the odds to perpetrate physical abuse in one's own intimate relationships (Fonseka et al., 2015).

Factors Associated with Domestic Violence in South Asia

Studies of domestic violence in South Asia have identified a number of different contributing factors. Socio-demographic factors, such as income from dowries or employment, education, age, and family size have some of the strongest links to domestic violence in South Asia (P. Ali, Naylor, Croot, & Cathain, 2015; Babu & Kar, 2010; Koenig et al., 2003; Panda & Agarwal, 2005; Silverman, et al., 2007b). Dowry income can protect a woman from abuse if the full amount is paid at the time of marriage by the wife's family and the groom's family is satisfied with this amount and makes no additional dowry demands, but increases risk for domestic violence when it has not been paid in full or there are post-marital dowry requests (Bates et al., 2004; Kumar et al., 2005; Young & Hassan, 2016). In cases where the husband and surrounding community are accepting of increasing autonomy of women, being employed reduces women's risk of victimization, whereas among community members or villagers who are less socially progressive, employment of women has the opposite effect (Bates et al., 2004; Koenig et al., 2003; Kumar et al., 2005; Paudel, 2007; Rocca et al., 2009; Schuler et al., 1998**).** In terms of age, younger age at marriage and younger age in general relates to women reporting and experiencing more incidents of abuse in comparison to older women (Koenig et al., 2003; Silverman et al., 2007b; Yount et al., 2016). Similarly, younger men are more likely to assault their wives in comparison to older men (Silverman et al., 2007a). Some of the reasons for a higher prevalence of resorting to abuse among young married men could reflect pressure to demonstrate dominance in the marital relationship, a mechanism to control their wife, or perhaps an indication of personal stressors associated with younger age such as starting a family, employment (or lack thereof), and establishing their status within their extended family.

With respect to education, it appears that having less than 5 years of schooling or not being educated at all is related to experiencing higher levels of domestic violence (Akhter & Wilson,

2016; Chandra et al., 2009; Koenig et al., 2003; Martin et al., 1999; Panda & Agarwal, 2005). Limited education among women and their spouses are both associated with higher domestic violence rates and risk (Fikree et al., 2005; Silverman et al., 2007a; Silverman et al., 2007b; Subramaniam & Sivayogan, 2001). Fikree and colleagues (2005) note that non-educated wives were 5 times more likely to be physically abused than educated wives. Similarly, Chandra and colleagues (2009) found that men's education level was negatively correlated with domestic violence.

Socioeconomic status (SES) is another factor that is strongly associated with domestic violence. One of the most consistent results across several studies is that domestic violence is significantly more common among the poorest segments of the population (Azziz-Baumgartner et al., 2014; Fikree et al., 2005; Koenig et al., 2006; Martin et al., 1999; Panda & Agarwal, 2005; Silverman, Decker et al., 2007). Families that own more assets tend to have fewer incidents of domestic violence (Kumar et al., 2005; Panda & Agarwal, 2005). According to one study, poor men were three times more likely to perpetrate physical abuse in comparison to men of higher economic standing (Fikree et al., 2005). The link between poverty and domestic violence appears to be multi-factorial. On one hand, the financial strain of limited resources may exacerbate the stress level in family relationships, leading men with poor coping ability to resort to violence. However, differences of opinion between spouses in financial matters can also be a contributing factor. Arguments about finances were commonly cited as one of the triggers for domestic violence in two seminal South Asian domestic violence studies (Farid et al., 2008; Fikree et al., 2005; Jain et al., 2004).

Family size appears to be another factor associated with domestic violence in South Asia. Using multivariate analysis, Farid and colleagues (2008) found that the number of children within a family significantly predicted domestic violence in a Pakistani sample. Similarly,

several studies have reported that having multiple children is a risk factor for domestic violence (Martin et al., 1999). It is plausible that larger family sizes increase the strain on a family's financial and coping resources, thereby increasing vulnerability for maltreatment of women. Interestingly, although the number of children in a family is associated with domestic violence risk in families with children, childlessness among women has also been found to be a risk factor for them becoming targets of both physical and sexual violence in Indian families, as a social consequence for not fulfilling their culturally prescribed role expectation to bear children in the South Asian culture (Koenig et al., 2006).

Positive attitudes towards interpersonal violence are another key variable related to domestic violence rates in South Asia, although research indicates there is significant variability in levels of social acceptability of domestic violence among women versus men, as well as among different socioeconomic, geographic (e.g., rural versus urban), and religious/social groupings (Kalokhe et al., 2017; Madhani et al., 2017; Pun, Infanti, Koju, Schei, & Darj, 2016). Fikree et al. (2005) conducted a study of men's attitudes towards violence, and found that South Asian men who endorsed positive attitudes regarding a husband's use of violence towards his wife were more likely to engage in domestic violence in their own marriages. Addressing violence against women has been fairly slow in South Asian countries compared to other areas of world, and the lack of official legal statutes protecting women from violence for so many years has likely contributed to positive attitudes towards violence against women. Only in 2005 did India create the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (also called the Domestic Violence Act). The Domestic Violence Act (2005) replaced previous criminal laws within the Indian Penal Code (e.g., section 498a and 304b) and is considered to be a significant improvement in the scope of addressing domestic violence and the victims' needs during court deliberations (Kapoor, 2011). More recently, the Sindh province of Pakistan passed the Domestic

Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill in 2013, which criminalizes domestic violence acts and provides minimum punishment to those found guilty (Chandio, 2013). The Pakistani national government had passed domestic violence legislation in 2009 and was supported by the President and Prime Minister of that time (Shackle, 2013). However, this bill expired because the Senate failed to pass it within the required three months (Shackle, 2013).

In order to send a clear message to society that domestic violence is not acceptable and that victims will be helped, and perpetrators will be prosecuted, there needs to be strong legal statutes and equal emphasis on effective law enforcement over multiple generations. A safe environment is needed to support victims in coming forward. However, South Asian abuse victims face multiple barriers including: (a) cultural norms that support wife abuse and oppression of women, (b) high level of stigmatization for abused women, (c) limited personal and societal support to leave abusive situations, (d) failure of police officers to lay charges, (e) unwillingness of lawyers to prosecute domestic violence cases as criminality is often viewed as being confined to events that occur outside of the home, and (f) the lack of appropriate domestic violence legislation with clear enforcement rules (Niaz, 2003; Shirwadkar, 2004; Verma et al., 2017). Therefore, widespread changes to public attitudes, as well as several societal systems, would be needed in order to effectively address and combat domestic violence.

In order to truly prevent domestic violence, there must also be concerted efforts to engage men. Several organizations worldwide have engaged in efforts with local communities to intervene with boys at an early age about violence in relationships and to involve men in advocating for the rights of women (Carlson et al., 2015; Flood, 2011). As an example, the Mobilising Men Programme is a male-led initiative that engages men in combating gender-based violence and promoting gender equality in various institutional settings (Greig & Edstrom, 2012). This program utilizes various educational activities and exercises to help men understand

their privilege in society, their role in combating gender-based violence, identify reasons to ally with women and speak against violence, understand institutional violence, and participate in campaigns to bring about change in their environment (Grieg & Edstrom, 2012). Mobilising Men is supported by the United Nations Population Fund and has partnered with several organizations in India, Uganda, and Kenya to develop the programme for other nations to utilize.

Domestic Violence in the South Asian Community in North America

"Gender violence---rape, battering, sexual abuse, sexual harassment - dramatically impacts millions of individuals and families in contemporary American society. In fact, it is one of the great, ongoing tragedies of our time" ~ Jackson Katz

There are no large-scale prevalence studies on domestic violence among the South Asian community in Canada. One recent small-scale study tried to take the first step to obtain a rough estimate of its frequency in one region. Madden and colleagues (2016) surveyed 188 South Asian women living in Southern Ontario. Approximately 1 in 5 respondents from this sample reported some form of intimate partner violence in the past year, with a large majority (86%) indicating that domestic violence was a problem in their community (Madden, Scott, Sholapur, & Bhandari, 2016). Part of the reason for the limited research on domestic violence may be due to the reluctance of South Asian community members to discuss negative family occurrences among their group. Abraham (1998, 2005) coined the term "model minority" to describe the tendency of South Asians to present themselves as successful and able to negotiate the challenges of maintaining traditional values, while integrating modern North American individualism. Therefore, community members experience strong pressure by the cultural group to uphold the model minority status in order to prevent tarnishing their image with mainstream society, which often results in denying problems within their community to prevent negative racial profiling (Abraham, 2005; Liao, 2006). Despite the lack of prevalence studies, multiple studies conducted in Canada with groups of women abuse victims from the South Asian

community, suggest that domestic violence does indeed occur within this community after migration, in various forms including emotional, physical, sexual, culture-specific, and immigration-related forms described in the introduction chapter of this dissertation (See Ahmad et al., 2009; Mason et al., 2008; Merali, 2009; Shirwadkar, 2004). Several prevalence studies conducted in the United States have also borne out the fact that domestic violence behaviours are often transported from South Asia to North America with prevalence rates among South Asian immigrant women from India and Pakistan living in Chicago, Boston, and across multiple other cities in the U.S. ranging from 21% to 77% across the different samples (See Adam and Schewe, 2007; Hurwitz et al., 2006; Mahapatra, 2012).

Domestic Violence in the Context of Immigration: A Theory-Guided Analysis

Theories of domestic violence can help us understand how country of origin cultural influences and various factors related to the immigration experience may intersect to produce violent responses towards spouses after migration. There are a variety of theories about domestic violence that range from focusing on the individual to the society at large. Woodin and O'Leary (2009) provide a thorough description of the various theories that attempt to describe the etiology of intimate partner violence and categorize existing theories into three broad groups: sociocultural, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Sociocultural theories focus on societal factors that perpetuate violence against women, such as male privilege, gender roles, and patriarchal social norms (Woodin & O'Leary, 2009). Feminist theories would fall into this category because they focus on societal mechanisms that serve to oppress women and reinforce men's control of women through both violent and non-violent means (Pence & Paymar, 1993). By far, feminist theory has predominated our understanding of domestic violence and helped to frame the issue as a social problem, with the treatment approach from the feminist perspective including both police intervention and psychoeducational strategies aimed at educating perpetrators about their

use of power and control in their relationships (Pence & Paymar, 1993). In contrast, interpersonal theories identify unique interpersonal experiences within society that are associated with partner violence (Woodin & O'Leary, 2009). These theories have examined a variety of factors such as developmental processes, attachment, social learning, relationship functioning, and martial satisfaction (Wood & O'Leary, 2009). For example, abusive males may have been exposed to negative adult role models as children, which they carried into their own intimate relationships. Finally, intrapersonal theories explain domestic violence from a biological and psychological perspective. For instance, genetic predisposition, propensity for anger and hostility, and certain personality disorders are examples of intrapersonal variables that have been associated with domestic violence perpetration (Woodin & O'Leary, 2009).

In the past few decades, many of the existing theories of domestic violence have been strongly criticized for: (a) discounting other factors associated with domestic violence, (b) not taking into account the intersectionality between culture, race, class, and the other multiple variables at different levels of one's social ecology that can contribute to violence, and (3) not adequately representing the experiences of ethnic and immigrant women or men (Abraham, 1998; Adam & Schewe, 2007; Bograd, 1999; Bent-Goodley, 2005; Cuevas & Cudmore, 2017; Heise, 1998; Koenig et al., 2003; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005; Warrier, 2009). Using a multidimensional approach to domestic violence attempts to incorporate sociocultural, interpersonal, and intrapersonal variables into a cohesive theory (Woodin & O'Leary, 2009).

Heise (1998, 2011) developed an integrated ecological framework to explain violence against women and describes variables in her model that have been empirically supported by research studies conducted in both North America and international contexts, as well as cross-cultural research studies (see Figure 1). She stipulates that these variables are meant to be descriptive without implying any causality between the different levels of analysis and

recommends that this framework be used as a heuristic tool to understand the multidimensional phenomenon of violence against women, as well as identify methods for preventing and intervening with respect to gender-based violence. Individual experiences, the innermost level of the ecological framework, represent aspects of a person's history that are brought into their adult intimate relationships (Heise, 1998; 2011). This level includes experiences such as witnessing violence in the home, being abused as a child, and having an absent or rejecting father (Heise, 1998). The second level is the microsystem/relationship and describes the context in which the abuse takes place, such as male domination in the family, male control of family wealth, use of alcohol, and marital/verbal conflict (Heise, 1998). The exosystem/community is the next level and encompasses all institutions and social structures that influence the microsystem, such as work, neighbourhood, social networks, and identity groups (Heise, 1998). Important variables associated with domestic violence in this level of analysis are low socioeconomic status,

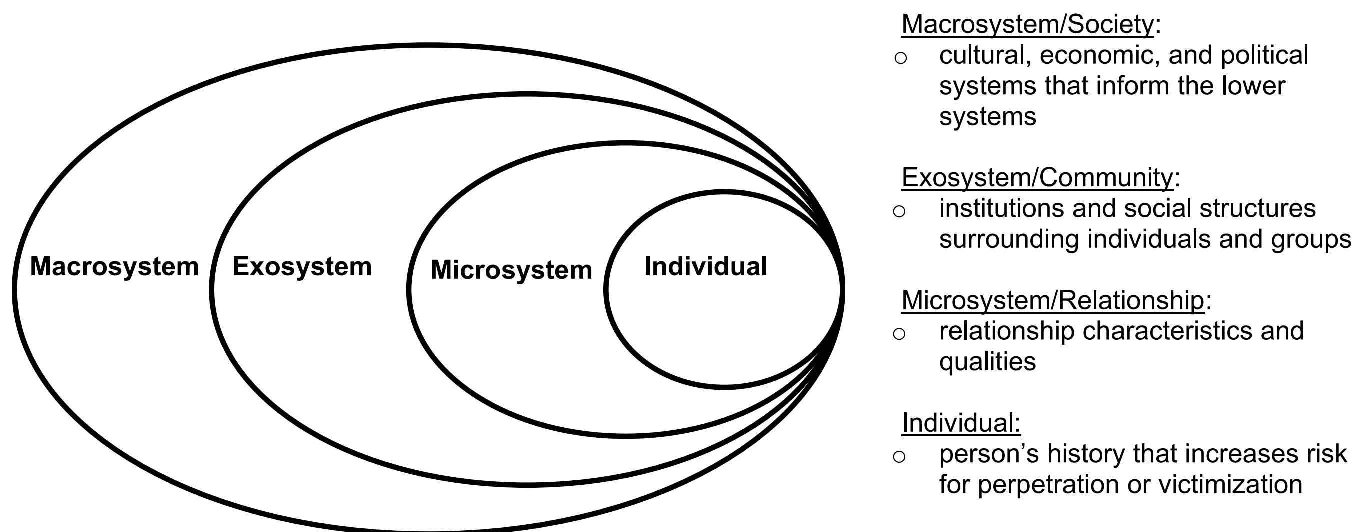

Figure 1. Ecological Model for Intimate Partner Violence adapted from Heise 1998, 2011

unemployment/underemployment, isolation of women or the family, and delinquent peer associates (Heise, 1998). Finally, the broadest level of analysis is the macrosystem or societal level, which includes the general views and attitudes inherent in one's societal structure.

Examples of macrosystem variables related to violence against women in international and cross-cultural research studies are male entitlement, aggressive masculinity, rigid gender roles, and acceptance of interpersonal violence or of physical chastisement of women for departing from socially or culturally expected behaviour (Heise, 1998). In the following sections of this chapter, the relevant research on South Asians in North America is examined within each level of this ecological model.

Macrosystem/Society

Patriarchy is perhaps the strongest macrosystem variable associated with domestic violence across many cultures; there is strong evidence from international and cross-cultural studies that societies with strong patriarchal attitudes have higher rates of domestic violence (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005; WHO, 2013). However, the degree to which patriarchal values are accepted and expressed varies both within and across cultures (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005). In South Asia, patriarchal ideologies can be seen in all levels within society such as laws and policies, differential access of males and females to social programs, restrictions on the autonomy of females, and personal attitudes of entitlement among males and expectations for submissiveness among females that emerge from cultural and familial socialization processes (Akhter & Wilson, 2016; Jewkes, 2002; Kalokhe et al., 2017). Dasgupta and Warrier (1996) postulated that patriarchal values are often transported into the North American context by the South Asian immigrant community through an emphasis on maintaining one’s heritage culture and transmitting the culture of origin across generations, as well as to firmly resist pressures for acculturation in the host countries.

Patriarchal attitudes are not only associated with domestic violence incidents, but also influence whether specific behaviours are perceived as abusive. Ahmad and colleagues (2004) interviewed forty-seven South Asian women who were provided with a vignette describing an

abusive interaction between a husband and wife. The study found that women who endorsed high levels of patriarchal beliefs were less likely to define the vignette as abusive (Ahmad, Riaz, Barata, & Stewart, 2004). Rigid gender role ideologies imposed on members is another macrosystem variable related to vulnerability for domestic violence. South Asian women are socialized at a young age from religious and cultural doctrines about fulfilling their roles as dutiful, submissive, and self-sacrificing daughters, wives, and mothers (Ayyub, 2000; Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996; George & Ramkissoon, 1998). These doctrines tend to also endorse a level of tolerance or acceptance of wife abuse in the marriage, which are then internalized by men and women (Liao, 2006; Mehrotra, 1999). Women who adhere to these roles acquire respect and a higher level of social status in their community, whereas those who refrain from or oppose their ascribed roles may be admonished (Ayyub, 2000).

While patriarchal culture and rigid gender roles are clear contributing factors for domestic violence, many scholars have noted that culture is often inappropriately used as the primary explanatory model for gender-based violence (Almeida & Dolan-Delvecchio, 1999; Warrier, 2008). In some cases, culture is often blamed and used to excuse domestic violence in ethnically diverse communities (Sokoloff, 2008; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002; Warrier, 2008). There is a tendency by members of the mainstream community to perceive patriarchal norms as artefacts of the visible minority or immigrant/refugee cultural group's value system and not manifested in Anglo-centric cultures (Abraham, 1998; Liao, 2006). Patriarchy is also prevalent and pervasive in North American culture, and exhibited in a number of different domains, albeit sometimes in a more covert manner in comparison to other non-Western countries. However, the recent #MeToo movement has exposed the occurrence of North American patriarchy and its relation to longstanding issues of violence against women. Nonetheless, while the South Asian culture exhibits more explicit expressions of patriarchal norms, immigrant women experience dual

subordination because they experience patriarchy from their community, as well as from mainstream society (Abraham, 1998).

Exosystem/Community

Heise (1998; 2011) describes exosystem variables as institutions and social structures, both informal and formal, that individuals are embedded in, such as work, neighbourhoods, social networks, and cultural groups, that place them at risk for gender-based violence by increasing the stress on the family system, or by isolating women from supports to prevent or respond to domestic violence. For immigrant families, several exosystem variables associated with domestic violence can be grouped together under acculturation stressors. Issues related to acculturation and adaptation have been extensively studied with immigrant populations in North America. Acculturation refers to the process of change that commonly occurs within non-dominant groups through contact with the dominant group (Berry, 2006). Research concerning newcomers' acculturation experiences highlights a number of problems that can develop during this process and the stresses associated with confronting numerous life changes. Immigrants and refugees face a number of challenges during acculturation such as language barriers, isolation, discrimination/racism, financial difficulties, and grieving the loss of their home country (Alaggia & Maiter, 2012; Erez & Harper, 2018). In addition, they face new and unfamiliar systems, including the complex immigration systems, but also health care, school, employment, and social services (Alaggia & Maiter, 2012; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002; Sokoloff, 2008). For example, many immigrants experience downward social mobility due to the lack of recognition of their foreign educational qualifications in North American society, leading to unemployment or underemployment and sometimes living in short or long-term poverty (Alaggia & Maiter, 2012; Erez & Harper, 2018). The link between low socioeconomic status and domestic violence was already established earlier in this literature review. The negative consequences and challenges of

immigrant experiences during the acculturation process are referred to as acculturative stress (Berry, 2006).

There has been some investigation regarding how acculturation stress impacts marital relationships among immigrant couples. Sorenson (1996) proposes that the loss of support by extended family to monitor activities within the home along with the increased freedom may contribute to domestic violence. Although the relationship between acculturative stress and domestic violence has not been formally investigated within the South Asian community, many abused women's narratives describe difficulties associated with adaptation, limited social support, financial troubles, and lack of economic opportunities as contributing to their abuse (Hyman et al., 2011; Kallivayalil, 2010). Furthermore, the complicated immigration system, experiences of racism, limited English, and few culturally competent programs, are factors that South Asian abused women have cited as preventing them from getting help in numerous studies (Ahmad et al., 2004; Alaggia, Regehr, & Rishchynski, 2009; Shirwadkar, 2004). These findings suggest that acculturation stressors not only contribute to domestic violence in South Asian immigrant families but may also serve as barriers to accessing and benefiting from necessary supports.

Connection with one's cultural community is another exosystem variable found to be related to domestic violence in South Asian families. Many South Asian victims felt a lack of support from their cultural group while coping with domestic violence or reported being perceived as traitors by their community when they sought outside help for their abuse, leading the community to look bad through racial profiling (Ahmad et al., 2009; Dasgupta, 2000; Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996; Jordan & Bhandari, 2016). Ayyub (2000) observed that some religious institutions in the South Asian Muslim community condemned abused women for seeking legal protection. She also reported that the religious community refused to provide

domestic violence resources because the material was seen as too radical and supportive of eradicating the family system (Ayyub, 2000). However, the Muslim community contains many separate sects and factions, and such responses are not necessarily typical of all segments. Among South Asian women from the various cultural and religious subgroups who have experienced abuse, losing face in the community or being the topic of gossip has been noted as another factor preventing them from seeking help, which in turn may have kept them vulnerable to repeated instances of violence (Dasgupta, 2000; Mahapatra, 2012; Pajak, Ahmad, Jenney, Fisher, & Chan, 2014). Some women reported not being invited to cultural events or experiencing sneers by their community members at various gatherings following their abuse disclosures or for seeking outside assistance (Shirwadkar, 2004).

Microsystem/Relationship

Aspects of the microsystem associated with domestic violence are variables that occur in the immediate context of the abuse. The loss of support that South Asian families experience following immigration appears to be a significant factor in domestic violence incidents. As noted earlier, collectivism is embedded within South Asian cultures and married couples typically rely on the support of various family members as they raise their own family (Abraham, 2000; Almeida, 2005; Nath, 2005; Rahim, 2014). Following immigration, the loss of family support removes a crucial network for the couple to rely on during challenging times and may also increase vulnerability for violence as couples cope with the stress of adapting to a new country. George and Ramkissoon (1998) interviewed forty-seven South Asian women who recently immigrated to Canada to understand the challenges they experienced during the settlement process. The women cited lack of family support as one of the most challenging aspects because in their home country they would have received assistance from extended family members to complete household chores and childrearing activities. Instead, in Canada they experienced

"double workloads" because they were expected to be employed and complete all the domestic duties in the home despite the lack of support (George & Ramkissoon, 1998, p. 113). Many studies have identified losing social support following migration as a contributing factor in abuse experiences (Abraham, 2000; Hyman et al., 2011; Jordan & Bhandari, 2016). Additionally, having no family support in North America is associated with women's reluctance to seek help for their abuse or to leave their marriages (Ahmad et al., 2009; Raj & Silverman, 2007).

It appears important to distinguish between family support and presence in terms of the woman's side of the family versus from the husband's side of the family. Although the presence of family members from the woman's side may prevent the woman's isolation and provide assistance with family or household tasks reducing vulnerability for abuse, there is strong evidence that family members from the husband's side being present in the home may increase vulnerability for domestic violence. In several studies, the role of extended family members (e.g., in-laws) as perpetrators and/or instigators is commonly reported in domestic violence situations (Abraham, 1998; Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996; Jordan & Bhandari, 2016; Rianon & Shelton, 2003). Research findings from surveys completed by 169 South Asian women and interviews with twenty-three women reveal the intricate relationship between marital violence and abuse from in-laws (Raj et al., 2006). Specifically, women who experienced violence in their marital relationship were more likely to also endure emotional abuse by their in-laws in comparison to women who did not report domestic violence (Raj et al., 2006). Interestingly, the women did not have to live with their in-laws to experience abuse, as some of the abuse occurred internationally through telephone conversations or brief visits. The in-depth interviews with abused women indicated that they were subjected to the same forms of violence commonly found in domestic violence studies in North America, such as: isolation, economic control, verbal abuse and

degradation, imposing domestic servitude, and controlling intake or access to food (Raj et al., 2006).

Culturally specific forms of abuse by in-laws included criticism of the woman's family, dissatisfaction with the dowry amount, and provoking the husband to be physically abusive towards his wife (Kamimura, Ganta, & Thomas, 2017; Raj et al., 2006; Rew et al., 2013). While mothers-in-law are disproportionately identified as perpetrators of abuse, evidence suggests that other family members from the husband's side (e.g., fathers-in-law, siblings, sisters-in-law, uncles, grandparents) may engage in abusive behaviours towards wives as well (Kamimura et al., 2017; Raj et al., 2006). This indicates that a broader examination of domestic violence incidents and the quality of relationships between different family members is required when evaluating abuse in South Asian families.

Changes to gender role expectations following immigration appear to be associated with domestic violence in the South Asian immigrant community as well. Dion and Dion (2001) suggest that examining gender provides unique insights about the conflicts and challenges that immigrant families experience as they acculturate to the new society. They also note the vast differences in the manner gender is socially constructed across cultures and how these differences come into conflict as immigrants navigate through the settlement process. Frequently, immigrant couples need to renegotiate their marital roles in order to meet the financial demands and societal expectations of living in North America (Dion & Dion, 2001; Menijivar & Salcido, 2002; Midlarsky, Venkataramani-Kothari, & Plante, 2006); women who were previously traditional stay at home wives or mothers often have to seek employment in the new country to ensure the family's financial survival in response to the lack of recognition of foreign education and work experiences of their husbands, and their husbands' consequent unemployment or underemployment (George & Ramkissoon,1998). Furthermore, increased

exposure to western gender ideologies and participation in societal roles that are contrary to what they may have experienced in their countries of origin may challenge previously held expectations and assumptions about gender roles (Dion & Dion, 2001). Women who were previously submissive may start demonstrating assertive behaviours after observing and interacting with other women in North American society. However, disagreement or resistance by spouses regarding role negotiations within their relationship can sometimes result in violent and disturbing results for immigrant couples (Dion & Dion, 2001). Many studies have found gender role reversals to be associated with domestic violence in immigrant couples from various cultures (Bui & Morash, 2008; Erez et al., 2009; Perilla, 1999). The current literature suggests that some South Asian immigrant women experience abuse when they defy male authority or challenge women's traditional roles (Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996) and that men may have difficulty sharing power with their wives (Ayyub, 2000). However, there has been limited research on this topic within South Asian families, so it is also plausible that many other South Asian immigrants successfully adjust to or embrace dual-career couple transitions or gender role reversals.

Personal Characteristics

An individual's personal characteristics are considered the most intimate system within the ecological model. Not surprisingly, there are several individual factors that can increase one's risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence in relationships. Merali (2009) conducted in-depth interviews with South Asian women who were sponsored by their husbands to come to Canada following an arranged marriage. The study revealed stark individual differences between women who suffered domestic violence and those that did not. For instance, women who had poor English proficiency, limited knowledge about laws/policies in Canada, and lower education were significantly more likely to experience serious abuse and neglect by their husbands (Merali,

2009). Lack of information about legal rights and the resources available for domestic violence victims appears to be a common vulnerability factor across several studies (e.g., Finfgeld-Connett & Johnson, 2013; Jordan & Bhandari, 2016). Many South Asian women describe being unaware that community organizations could support them or that they could access financial resources to help them leave their abusive relationships (Ahmad et al., 2009; Jordan & Bhandari, 2016). Furthermore, many others have been found to have misconceptions about how their immigration status would be impacted by leaving their husband and exhibit limited knowledge about their legal rights in the new society (Alaggia et al., 2009; Shirwadkar, 2004). This lack of knowledge typically extends to the domestic violence resources available to them and how to access these services. Therefore, it is not surprising that South Asian immigrant women tend to underutilize public agencies (Dasgupta, 2000). South Asian women are also unlikely to seek support from their family or community members, which suggests that victims tend to suffer in silence (Raj & Silverman, 2007). One study found that women waited an average of 7.4 years before reaching out for help, with the range of the waiting time in this sample being between 1 year and 24 years (Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996).

Victims' interpretations of their abuse experiences appears to be another factor associated with domestic violence in South Asian populations. For example, attitudes that accept or tolerate abusive behaviours, including the belief that these experiences are one's "fate" or "karma", appear to be associated with victimization and delays in help-seeking (Kallivayalil, 2010). A narrative research study with a group of immigrant South Asian abuse victims and mental health workers revealed the intense rumination that these women experienced that focused on trying to determine how *they* caused violence in their marriage (Kallivayalil, 2010). The researcher noted that self-blame emerged as a dominant theme in all the interviews and was identified by clinicians as a factor that may have delayed these women's healing (Kallilvayalil, 2010).

Possibly, self-blame by victims may be a product of some segments of the South Asian community's tendency to blame women for their abuse experiences or focus on the women's role in their husband's abusive behaviour, rather than hold perpetrators responsible (Ayyub, 2000).

A crucial gap in the current domestic violence literature is the examination of personal characteristics of South Asian immigrant men that may contribute to domestic violence, or of their perceptions of domestic violence. The only existing study related to this topic involved surveys with South Asian male students from a southern Ontario university, but background information about the participants did not include whether the male students were born in Canada or were immigrant males, and this would be an important factor in the degree to which they would be exposed to cultural influences and socialization processes evident in South Asia. In this study, Bhanot and Senn (2007) surveyed one hundred South Asian male University students to investigate relationships between their levels of acculturation, gender role attitudes, and attitudes towards violence against women. They found that rigid gender role attitudes mediated the relationship between low acculturation and violent attitudes towards women; lower acculturation levels are related to acceptance of violence towards women when men adhere to strict, traditional gender roles (Bhanot & Senn, 2007). However, there were significant limitations in this study, such as limited information about the participants' backgrounds and not inquiring whether participants were currently in relationships or whether they had ever been abusive in romantic relationships. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the correspondence between their attitudes and their actual interpersonal behaviours.

Most of the information about South Asian perpetrators of domestic violence is derived from interviews with victims, which is limiting, because it does not provide reliable information to determine if certain qualities are associated with violent behaviours on the part of their abusers. Nonetheless, insights shared by South Asian abuse victims across different studies

provide valuable information about some themes that emerge regarding the characteristics of abusive husbands. From the various studies, one of the common factors associated with perpetration is difficulty accepting wives' increased autonomy and nonconformity to rigid gender roles in North American society (Hyman et al., 2011). Addiction problems, infidelity, and negative interference by in-laws have been cited as other contributing factors related to husbands' violence (Hyman et al., 2011; Rianon & Shelton, 2003). Other South Asian victims reported feeling "betrayed" by their abusers who had promised them a certain social standing and quality of life during marital courtship (Kallilvayalil, 2010).

Eligible bachelors residing in North America often return to their country of origin in South Asia to find a wife due to the strong emphasis on traditionalism within the culture, and it becomes easy for women to fall victim to men who misrepresent themselves with respect to occupation, standard of living, and willingness to help them acculturate in the new society (Kallilvayalil, 2010; Mason et al., 2009). Upon arriving in the host country, many women face a completely different reality than what was promised and feel trapped in an unfamiliar society. It may not be surprising that these women sometimes continue to experience betrayal through their husband's abusive behaviours (Kallilvayalil, 2010).

One qualitative study attempted to engage men from immigrant and refugee communities to get their perspective on domestic violence. Simbandumwe and colleagues (2008) recruited sixty-five men of a wide age range (17-79) from twenty-two different countries that were residing in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The themes that emerged from this project echoed several points shared by abused immigrant women in other studies. For instance, the men identified shifting power dynamics in the marital relationship, financial stressors, loss of status due to underemployment or unemployment, cultural differences with the mainstream community, and addictions/gambling as causes for domestic violence in their ethnocultural communities

(Simbandumwe et al., 2008). Many participants also acknowledged that some husbands might be resistant to extend the same rights and freedoms that they experience to their wives and children, especially if these liberties were limited or non-existent in their countries of origin. The following section examines current domestic violence assessment and intervention practices, and how they take into account or fail to take into account many of the factors affecting domestic violence risk, manifestations, definitions, and occurrence among diverse cultural groups, like the South Asians.

Domestic Violence Assessment and Treatment Approaches

"The only people who see the whole picture are the ones who step out of the frame"
~ Salman Rushdie

Legal sanctions alone cannot be relied upon to eliminate domestic violence incidents (Dasgupta, 2017; Wells, Ferguson, & Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence and Bullying, 2012). Having effective assessment and treatment approaches is integral for counteracting the detrimental effects of domestic violence, as well as for preventing future occurrences. Since many domestic violence incidents do not come to the attention of police or the criminal justice system, it is imperative that front-line workers are equipped with the tools to identify, assess, and intervene effectively with those experiencing abuse and violence. Although it is widely accepted that one's situation, identity, and culture greatly influence how domestic violence is perceived or responded to, this understanding is not reflected in the available methods to evaluate or treat these issues in a diverse society. Most of the existing assessment tools and intervention approaches largely represent a Western/North American, Eurocentric, heteronormative, and individualistic understanding of domestic violence incidents (Dasgupta, 2017; Follingstad & Ryan, 2013; Thiara, 2015). The following section will briefly review the various assessment and treatment approaches for domestic violence and their relevance for

working with diverse groups, highlighting specific approaches that have been used with the South Asian population.

Domestic Violence Screening

Screenings tools consist of brief questionnaires/inventories or short clinical interviews consisting of some basic questions which aim to detect possible cases of intimate partner or marital violence. Their brevity, focus and ease of use enables them to be administered by a wide range of practitioners (social workers, nurses, psychologists, physicians, psychiatrists) in a variety of settings (e.g., health care settings, mental health clinics, social service settings) (Gomez-Fernandez, Goberna-Tricas, & Paya-Sanchez, 2019). Most screening tools are administered either as a face-to-face interview with the respondent or given in the form of a self-report questionnaire (Gomez-Fernandez et al., 2019). In a recent systematic review by Arkins and colleagues (2016) identified ten screening tools that have been evaluated in the literature and determined that the best tools assessed abuse in all three areas: physical, sexual, and psychological maltreatment (Arkins, Begley, & Higgins, 2016). Based on their evaluation of the studies and the psychometric rigor of the screening tools, they determined the best researched and adequately validated tools for detecting victims of intimate partner violence were the Abuse Assessment Screening (AAS; McFarlane, Parker, Soeken, & Bullock, 1992), Humiliation, Afraid, Rape, and Kick (HARK; Sohal, Eldridge, & Feder, 2007), and the Woman Abuse Screening Tool (WAST; Brown, Lent, Brett, Sas, & Pederson, 1996; Brown, Lent, Schmidt, & Sas, 2000). The AAS is administered during a face-to-face interview with a clinician to assess whether a woman has experienced physical, sexual, and emotional abuse in the past year. The woman is asked to respond either yes or no for each item and for any affirmative response additional questions are asked to identify who abused them (e.g. husband, ex-husband, boyfriend, stranger, other, multiple) and the number of incidents over the past year. The AAS

includes an item about lifetime prevalence ("Have you ever been emotionally or physically abused by your partner or someone important to you?") and another to determine if the respondent is afraid of the individual. There is also an optional question for pregnant women to inquire if they have experienced any physical violence (e.g. hit, slapped, kicked, or otherwise physically hurt) by someone known to them since becoming pregnant (McFarlane et al., 1992).

The HARK is a four item screening tool administered during a face-to-face interview with the respondent about their experience of each component of the tool's acronym by a partner or ex-partner in the past year (e.g. "Have you ever been *humiliated* or emotionally abused in other ways by your partner or ex-partner?"; "Have you ever been *afraid*?"; "Have you been *raped* or forced to have any kind of sexual activity?"; "Have you been *kicked*, hit, slapped, or otherwise physically hurt?"). Finally, the WAST is an eight-item tool that inquires from a scale of 1 (never or none) to 3 (a lot or often) about the woman's experience of being in the relationship ("Do arguments ever result in you feeling down or bad about yourself?") and whether they were subjected to physical ("Do arguments ever result in hitting, kicking, or pushing?"; "Has your partner ever abused you physically?"), sexual ("Has your partner ever abused you sexually?"), or emotional abuse ("Do you ever feel frightened by what your partner says or does?"; "Has your partner ever abused you emotionally?") (Brown et al., 2000). The WAST provides a total score ranging from 8-24 and can help with assessing the level of severity of abuse with a cut off score of 13 to indicate presence of abuse (Brown et al., 2000). One of the advantages of the WAST is that it can be shortened to only asking the first two questions about the degree of tension (No tension, some tension, a lot of tension) in the relationship and how difficult it is to resolve conflicts with their partner (No difficulty, some difficulty, a lot of difficulty) (Iskander, Braun, & Katz, 2015). The respondent answers "a lot" to both questions only then does the interviewer ask

the remaining six questions, which can be very efficient in busy healthcare settings (Iskander et al., 2015).

There is significant controversy about the effectiveness of universal screening in detecting domestic violence due to various factors that may limit disclosures of abuse, such as cultural norms and values or fears for one's safety (Arkins et al., 2016). However, many international health care organizations recognize the utility of screening across the health care sector in enabling health care providers to play a proactive role in identifying victims during their interactions with patients (e.g. National Institute for Health Care Excellence [NICE], 2014; World Health Organization [WHO], 2002). Through the screening and identification process, these health care providers could help victims with safety planning, obtaining suitable services for their circumstances, and preventing more serious incidents through connections to intervention for the perpetrators (Garcia-Moreno et al., 201d; Gomez-Fernandez et al., 2019; NICE, 2014; WHO, 2002). However, based on a recent systematic review of available screening tools for intimate partner violence found significant variation in their psychometric properties and suggested that further research is needed to enhance their validity and relevance for working with diverse cultural groups (Arkins et al., 2016).

Assessment of Domestic Violence

Given the potential danger and lethal outcomes for victims of domestic violence, it is imperative for those working within this field to accurately determine the level of risk and help mitigate the potential of further harm (Kropp, 2008). Risk assessment tools developed for intimate partner violence are a useful method for gathering relevant data across a diverse array of domestic violence circumstances which can then be utilized for multiple purposes, such as safety planning with victims, judicial decision making, and treatment recommendations (Kropp, 2008; Messing & Thaller, 2015). Many of these tools can be administered by a number of different

professionals who are involved in domestic violence cases, such as psychologists, nurses, social workers, victim service providers, police and probation officers (Kropp, 2008; Messing & Thaller, 2015). Several types of risk assessments exist for various purposes. Some assessment tools focus specifically on victims to determine the likelihood they will be re-victimized, while others focus on the offender's psychosocial characteristics that suggest probability of re-offending (Kropp, 2008; Northcott, 2012). In addition, depending on the goal of the assessor, some instruments provide information about the "nature, form, and degree of danger" of violence (Kropp, 2004, p. 677), whereas others offer an estimate about the likelihood of recidivism, and some attempt to do both (Northcott, 2012). Despite these varying perspectives and orientations for assessing domestic violence cases, the primary goal of these instruments is to prevent future harm towards the victim (Kropp, 2008).

Risk assessment tools typically fall into one of three categories: unstructured clinical decision making, actuarial risk assessment, and structured clinical interviews/professional judgement. As one of the earliest approaches for assessing risk, unstructured clinical decision making offered the most flexibility of the three methods because it allowed clinicians to collect information deemed relevant to form their professional opinion regarding risk (Kropp, 2008). However, it was highly criticized for being susceptible to clinician bias and producing highly variable findings since no standards existed around clinical training, expertise, or professional designation for conducting these assessments, or for the factors to be addressed or covered within them (Kropp, 2008). In contrast, actuarial risk assessments emerged as an alternative to unstructured judgement and provided evaluators with explicit and fixed procedures to estimate risk (Nicholls et al., 2013). These tools are designed to assess the presence of factors that have been empirically proven to be associated with risk and recidivism and use statistical models to estimate likelihood of future violence for an individual over a specific period of time relative to

their peer group (Kropp, 2008). Actuarial assessments are developed by taking variables related to the behaviour (e.g. intimate partner violence) and testing the correlation of each items with the outcome (e.g. wife assault) (Hilton & Harris, 2005). The items that best predicted the outcome of interest then forms the risk assessment tool (Hilton & Harris, 2005). Some of the most frequently identified variables associated with intimate partner violence include previous history of partner violence, substance use, unemployment or low socioeconomic status, presence of personality or mood disorder, attitudes supportive of wife assault, childhood history of witnessing domestic violence between parents, and past criminal convictions (e.g. Abramsky et al., 2011; Bennett, Goodman, & Dutton, 2000; Buzawa & Hirschel, 2008; Fulu et al., 2013; O'Leary, Tintle, & Bromet, 2014). The most widely used actuarial risk assessment for intimate partner violence is the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA; Hilton et al., 2004), which is a 13-item tool that assesses the presence of factors associated with IPV recidivism. It covers factors related to the partner assault incident (e.g. threats, acts of confinement), prior domestic and nondomestic assault history, substance use, victim's concern about future violence, having more than one child, victim has biological child from another partner, assault of victim when pregnant, and barriers to victim support (Hilton et al., 2004). The original purpose of the ODARA was to assist police officers responding to domestic violence cases but it was recently adapted into an interview format for use by other frontline staff and to assist with coordination of services across criminal justice and victim service sectors (Hilton, Harris, & Holder, 2008). Although the use of actuarial assessments tools has significantly improved the reliability and predictive validity of intimate partner violence risk assessments across assessors, it has been argued that actuarial assessments unduly restrict clinicians from applying their professional judgement to inform risk (Kropp, 2008; Northcott, 2012). Furthermore, while predicting future violence is an important

element of domestic violence assessment, it doesn't offer specific strategies for mitigating risk or provide useful information for violence prevention (Kropp, 2008).

In contrast, assessment tools using structured professional judgement offers a compromise between the limitations of the previously mentioned risk assessment approaches while capitalizing on each of their strengths. Both the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide (SARA; Kropp, Hart, Webster, & Eaves, 1999) and the Domestic Violence Screening Inventory (DVSI; Williams & Houghton, 2004) have used this approach in the development of their tools. The main difference of structured professional judgement from actuarial assessments and unstructured clinical decision making is that clinicians are given a guideline about the specific factors essential for assessing risk but permitted to use their professional judgement when determining the risk level for each item (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2011; Messing & Thaller, 2015). Additionally, the focus of structured professional judgement is on factors that are changeable (dynamic) and amenable to intervention rather than of a mechanical tabulation of the presence or absence of static variables (e.g. demographic information) that are related to recidivism but unalterable (Ward-Lasher, Sheridan, Glass, & Messing, 2017). Consequently, the assessment of risk using structured professional judgement may enhance and potentially mitigate recidivism because clinicians can consider the interaction of both dynamic and static factors and recommend treatment tailored to unique aspects of each case (Campbell et al., 2003; Kropp, 2008; Ward-Lasher et al., 2017).

The SARA (Kropp et al., 1999) is the best known structured professional judgement tool and the most researched in the literature (Hilton & Eke, 2017; Messing & Thaller, 2015). In order to administer the SARA, the evaluator must have a four-year degree and obtain information from multiple sources related to the case, such as police records and interviews with the offender or victim (Yaxley, Norris, & Haines, 2018). It consists of 11 static risk factors (e.g.

past assault history, victim of or witness to child abuse, violation of no-contact order) and 9 dynamic risk factors (e.g. recent relationship problems, recent employment problems, attitudes that support or condone spousal assault) for a total of 20 items that are each scored on a 3 point scale (0 = no evidence of risk factors; 1 = partial presence of risk factor; 2 = presence of risk factor) for a maximum total score of 40 (Kropp et al., 1999). The SARA provides evaluators the ability to identify any of the items as “critical” if it is believed that item is sufficient on its own to indicate imminent risk of harm and has a separate section labelled “other considerations” to identify additional risk factors unique to the case that might inform likelihood of future IPV (Yaxley et al., 2018). While the SARA includes items related to different parts of the Heise’s ecological model it mainly focuses on the individual and relationship level. However, because evaluators are permitted to included additional factors relevant for a domestic violence case that would otherwise be missed, such as those related to the community level (e.g. isolation from the family or cultural group) or within the microsystem (e.g. conflict with in-laws; conflict related to gender role reversals). Nonetheless, many researchers have advocated that more investigation is needed to better assess risk in ethnically diverse and immigrant and refugee populations residing in host countries (Hilton & Harris, 2005; Messing & Thaller, 2015; Milner, Campbell, & Messing, 2017).

Despite the significant advances in domestic violence risk assessments, there continues to be crucial gaps in ensuring available instruments or interviews can adequately assess risk across diverse groups. Many of the available tools have not been evaluated on diverse populations or researched outside of North America, which poses concern about whether findings from these tools can or should be applied to ethnic, gender, or sexual minority groups (Follingstad & Ryan, 2013; Messing & Thaller, 2015). Furthermore, evaluators who have limited grasp of psychometric properties of assessment tools and specifically of their cross-cultural validity, may

be making inaccurate appraisals of intimate partner or marital relationships when working with culturally diverse groups (Messing & Thaller, 2015; Yaxley et al., 2018).

In the past few years, there has been a concerted effort to attempt to adapt domestic violence assessments to make them more applicable to working with diverse groups. For instance, the Danger Assessment was recently adapted for use with immigrant women to include items that reflect the unique factors associated with risk for re-assault among this population (Messing, Amanor-Boadu, Cavanaugh, Glass & Campbell, 2013). The Danger Assessment (DA; http://www.dangerassessment.org) is a structured risk assessment tool developed through both clinical and research to assist domestic violence victims in assessing their danger of being killed by their partner (Campbell et al., 2003). The DA consists of two parts and is completed in collaboration with the female victim. The first portion of the measure the severity and frequency of different battering behaviours by using a calendar to approximate the days when the woman experienced physical abuse over the past year (Campbell, Webster, & Glass, 2009). The second portion of the DA is a 20-item dichotomous response format (yes/no) that cover different risk factors associated with spousal homicide (Campbell et al., 2009). The items include aspects related to the couple such as characteristics of their partner (e.g. “Does he own a gun?”; “Does he threaten to kill you?”; “Is he an alcoholic or problem drinker?”), aspects of their relationship (e.g. “Does he control most or all of your daily activities?”; “Has the violence increased in severity of frequency over the past year?”), and details related to the woman’s personal life (e.g. “Do you have a child that is not his?”; “Have you ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?”) (Campbell et al., 2009). Although the DA is the only assessment tool that is specifically designed to assess lethality it has also been demonstrated to also predict future re-assault and severity of abuse (Heckert & Gondolf, 2004; Goodman, Dutton, & Bennet, 2000; Nava, McFarlane, Gilroy, & Maddoux, 2014).

The DA specific to immigrant women was developed using data from a diverse group of 148 immigrant women residing in the United States (DA-I; Messing et al., 2013). New items were based on research evidence about the unique vulnerabilities of immigrant women and evaluated alongside original items from the Danger Assessment. The final adapted instrument includes fifteen items from the original instrument and adds eleven risk items that are specifically related to the vulnerabilities of immigrant women including marginalization and social isolation ("Has he tried to prevent you from going to school, getting job training, or learning English?"), acculturation level ("Do you prefer to answer these questions in English?"), threats of deportation ("Has he threatened to report you to child protective services, immigration, or other authorities?"), and downward mobility ("Have you attended college, vocational school and /or graduate school?"; "Are you employed?") (Messing et al., 2013). The DA-I was found to have better predictive ability with immigrant women than the original 20-item DA for assessing severe re-assault in the follow-up period, which strongly demonstrates the need for risk assessments to reflect the unique vulnerabilities of diverse populations. According to Campbell and colleagues (2017), the DA-I is being further evaluated on a more diverse immigrant sample (e.g. South Asian and African) than the ones represented in the original sample, which was primarily Latina (Campbell, Messing, & Williams, 2017).

Another exciting recent development is the creation of tools for domestic violence assessment specifically designed for use with South Asian populations. One example is the Indian Family Violence and Control Scale (IFVCS), which was modelled after the widely used Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) and culturally tailored to provide a more comprehensive reflection about the domestic violence experiences of Indian married women (Kalokhe et al., 2016). For instance, the abridged 12-item version of the CTS (CTS-2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) is commonly used in the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) to obtain

domestic violence prevalence rates in India but fails to explore facets frequently identified in the literature associated with abuse, such as violence perpetrated by in-laws, economic control related to dowry, or reproductive decision making related to bearing a male child (Kalokhe et al., 2016). Therefore, the developers created the 63-item IFVCS to determine if it offered a psychometrically valid and reliable tool for measuring control, physical, sexual, and psychological abuse within the Indian cultural context. Using a mixed-methods design the items were informed by surveying the literature regarding domestic violence in India, interviewing key informants who were experts in domestic violence and family counselling as well as conducting focus groups with lay community members to ensure items reflected the local understanding and perception of abuse commonly encountered by married women (Kalokhe et al., 2015; Kalokhe et al., 2016). The evaluation of the data collected from 630 married women demonstrated the IFVCS was a more accurate tool for surveying the full range of abuse experiences compared to existing assessments that are based on the Western context (Kalokhe et al., 2016). The authors determined that all but seven of the 63 items had good internal consistency and the four subscale scores were all significantly correlated (range of Pearson correlations reported between 0.38 to 0.84) (Kalokhe et al., 2016). The IFVCS demonstrated high concurrent validity with the CTS-2 scale ($r = 0.899$, $p<0.001$) and performed just as well or better than the CTS-2 with domestic violence correlates (i.e. age difference between participant and spouse; participant employment; fertility problems), which suggests it provides a more accurate picture of domestic violence experiences in the Indian context (Kalokhe et al., 2016).

Within the North American context, Soglin and colleagues (2019) developed the South Asian Violence Screen (SAVS) which is a fourteen-item screening tool specifically designed to reflect the demographic and cultural factors associated with domestic violence in this community. Items were created based on clinical experiences of assessing and treating domestic

violence in the South Asian community and on factors that have been established in the literature describing the unique experiences of South Asian domestic violence survivors such as social isolation ("My husband/partner has threatened to ruin my reputation or shame my family"), in-law abuse ("My husband/partner's family keeps my jewelry and valuables with them and does not give me access to them"), deportation threats ("My husband/partner has punished me by threatening to deport me"), and forced financial dependency ("My husband/partner does not allow me to have control over money") (Soglin, Ragavan, Li, & Soglin, 2019). Data from 127 South Asian women residing in Chicago were used to evaluate the psychometric properties of SAVS for correctly identifying domestic abuse. It was also validated using the Index of Spousal Assault (ISA; Hudson & McIntosh, 1981), which is 30 item self-report scale designed to detect nonphysical and physical abuse. The results of this study demonstrated that the shorter South Asian specific screening tool had strong internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .913$) and its scores were highly consistent with the ISA physical and nonphysical scores (Soglin et al., 2019). The researchers reported that a cut off score of 9 was found to correctly differentiate women experiencing abuse from those who were not, as evidenced by negative predictive values of 0.99 and 0.97 with ISA physical and nonphysical abuse scores, respectively (Soglin et al., 2019). Furthermore, the factor analysis of the SAVS questions revealed the measure evaluated three unique domains: psychological/emotional abuse, physical and sexual abuse, and in-law abuse. In one case, it was determined that the SAVS correctly identified an individual experiencing in-law abuse whereas the ISA failed to do so because it focuses on partner violence, and the individual in question denied experiencing abuse from her husband (Soglin et al., 2019).

While both the IFVCS and SAVS are new instruments, their development represents a step forward in capturing the unique experiences of South Asians when attempting to assess whether domestic violence has occurred and what forms it has taken.

Interventions for Domestic Violence

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has" ~ Margaret Mead

Intervention for Victims

Intervention approaches with domestic violence victims grew out of a community-based model aimed at providing them with safety and protection from further abuse. Women seeking services following domestic violence incidents commonly present with complex psychosocial needs including acute psychiatric symptoms, unstable housing and finances, assistance with navigating social systems, and fragile social networks (Cerulli et al., 2015; Finfgeld-Conett & Johnson, 2013; Goodman, Epstein, & Sullivan, 2018; Ragavan et al., 2018). The services for victims of domestic violence and their families have primarily emerged out of a community coordinated response (CCR) whereby multiple agencies such as criminal justice, victim services, and health and mental health professionals, work together to provide a unified response that held the batterer accountable and victim safe from further abuse (Cerulli et al., 2015; Pence & Paymar, 1993). Coordinated interventions for victims include judicial system involvement, child welfare evaluations, safety-planning, and emergency shelters (Arroyo, Lundahl, Butters, Vanderloo, & Wood, 2017; Cerulli et al., 2015; Hamel, 2014). Typically, victims of domestic violence who seek services work with advocates who help them to navigate different social systems and to provide support based on the unique needs of their client's circumstances (Arroyo et al., 2917; Cerulli et al., 2015; Goodman et al., 2018). It is important to note that most interventions typically focus on preparing for the removal of the abused person from the abusive relationship, leading to a breakdown of the family system. Interestingly, a focus group study with domestic violence victims who obtained services in the criminal justice system identified access to interventions across all four levels of the socioecological model (e.g. large scale prevention

programs, domestic violence awareness campaigns, better coordination between criminal justice and health sectors, housing supports, educational upgrading, and individualized mental health counselling) as key elements necessary to keep abused women and their children safe from further violence while also allowing them to break away from their abusive partner (Cerulli et al., 2015).

While psychotherapy services are typically offered to victims while they are in abusive relationships or after they exit these relationships, this is an area that has received very little attention in the literature. Hackett and colleagues (2016) point out that despite the large number of meta-analytic studies on domestic violence and effectiveness of batterer programs, none have investigated the efficacy of interventions with victims (Hackett, McWhirter, & Lesher, 2016). Some recent meta-analytic studies have attempted to shed light on this surprising gap in the current discourse. For example, a review of twenty studies that evaluated short-term therapy interventions for domestic violence survivors found improved effectiveness when established therapy approaches (such as cognitive behavioural or interpersonal therapies) were tailored to include issues related to intimate partner violence as compared to nonspecific or eclectic therapies (Arroyo et al., 2017). Furthermore, while group therapy approaches helped reduce mental health symptoms the researchers determined that women who were offered individual treatment fared better because it could be tailored to address the complex and unique needs of the woman seeking services (Arroyo et al., 2017). Similarly, in an attempt to clarify which types of interventions improve outcomes for domestic violence survivors who seek therapy Hackett and colleagues (2016) conducted a meta-analysis on 17 studies about the effectiveness of intimate partner violence program aimed at victims and their children (Hackett et al., 2016). Unfortunately, there was little information included about the specific types of interventions provided to participants as the programs were described either as advocacy, cognitive-

behavioural interventions, or parenting focused. The researchers determined that interventions across all studies produced significant positive effects on the well-being of their participants with effect sizes ranging from medium to high on all six outcome categories (Hackett et al., 2016). Interestingly, maltreatment events (i.e. further violence; returning to the abuser) consistently obtained the highest effect sizes across all studies compared to the other outcome variables, which strongly suggests that interventions for victims are helpful in reducing future violence (Hackett et al., 2016). However, because most of the samples in the research studies included predominantly White women it is difficult to know whether the effects of these interventions can be generalized to women of colour or immigrants.

The past few decades have been marked by the emergence of several South Asian women's organizations that assist victims of domestic violence. Although the staff or volunteers working within these organizations typically do not have formal counselling or psychology training (Abraham 2000; Merchant, 2000), they fulfill several different roles in providing assistance for members of their communities. Abraham (1995; 2000) has written extensively about the work being accomplished by South Asian women's organizations within the United States to address domestic violence and advocate for systemic change. Her findings highlight the wide range of activities of these organizations, including: (a) organizing women around a central issue (i.e., domestic violence, ethnic marginalization); (b) advocating for legal assistance to protect victims from abuse; (c) raising awareness about the unique vulnerabilities of immigrant women; (d) providing emotional support and physical safety for abused women; (e) involving religious institutions and leaders in the attempt to address domestic violence among their community members to prevent such behaviour from being socially sanctioned or tolerated; and (f) educating the South Asian community about the nature and occurrence of various forms of

domestic violence, related laws and policies in the North American context, and available mainstream and community resources (Abraham, 1995).

The main services provided by these organizations tend to be counselling, connection to various community resources (such as women's shelters, food banks, health care system, social services and social assistance etc.), and giving information about applicable laws and policies (Abraham, 1995). A similar survey with twelve South Asian women's organizations across the United States indicated that most of these agencies involve grassroots initiatives and operate on very limited public funding, therefore relying on volunteer work by professionals or dedicated community advocates (Merchant, 2000). Additionally, these agencies gauge the needs of their community and provide services to victims that may not be directly related to addressing the domestic violence, since they do not tend to have any formal expertise in this area. Rather, they most often provide assistance related to interpretation, attending court proceedings, reviewing employment opportunities for women attempting to become financially independent or self-sufficient, and arranging custody visits (Merchant, 2000).

When trained clinicians/psychologists are involved in the intervention process with South Asian abused women, Preisser (1999) recommends intervention strategies are more likely to be effective "when cultural, historical, and ethnic contexts are taken into consideration" (p. 691). This sentiment is echoed by many counsellors who have described how knowledge about their clients' situations and cultures helped to form strong rapport, which in turn allowed their clients to describe their lived experiences and explore other areas of their identity (Kallivayalil, 2007; Singh & Hays, 2008). The existing literature offers some insights about the types of therapy approaches and important considerations for working with South Asian clients. One of the most consistent recommendations centers around understanding how the sociopolitical context of immigration across multiple dimensions has shaped their client's lived experiences, and to

consider differences in these experiences for newcomers versus those from later generations (Das & Kemp, 1997; Shah & Tewari, 2019; Tummala-Narra, 2013). Furthermore, having some knowledge about South Asian cultural worldviews concerning religion, gender roles, family structure, responsibility to family, educational achievement, and maintaining cultural traditions is critically important. This knowledge can assist clinicians in facilitating an open dialogue about how these aspects of life influence their clients' experience of distress and help-seeking behaviours (Ahmed & Lemkau, 2000; Das & Kemp, 1997; Patel, 2007; Shah & Tewari, 2019; Tummala-Narra, 2013). South Asian clinicians have reported drawing on feminist therapy with South Asian clients, due to its consideration of clients' sociopolitical context, and have adapted the feminist approach to incorporate identification of unique practices in their culture that are oppressive towards women and how these practices can be addressed at the individual, familial, and communal levels (Kallivayalil, 2007; Patel, 2007; Sharma, 2001; Tummala-Narra, 2013).

In Prochaska and Norcross' (2014) review of the research findings on culturally adapted therapy, they pointed out that culturally adapted treatment has been found to be significantly more effective than treatment as usual for working with ethnocultural minority groups. This means adjustments to the typical counselling processes may have to occur in order to accommodate alternative ways of relating to clients from different cultures, and to enhance commitment to therapy. For example, because of the pressures placed on South Asian individuals to refrain from sharing family matters with outsiders, many abused women worry their experiences will become a source of gossip in their communities (Singh & Hays, 2008). With this knowledge, the facilitators of a year-long feminist group therapy program for South Asian sexual assault survivors raised the issue of confidentiality with the group members at the outset, but also frequently revisited and re-emphasized the importance of this issue throughout the duration of the group, given the fact that their clients were embedded in a collectivist culture

(Singh & Hays, 2008). The facilitators also took a flexible approach towards group start and end times to account for the notions of time in South Asian culture and the practical difficulties with transportation that these women encountered (Singh & Hays, 2008). Finally, the facilitators adjusted traditional boundaries between clients and therapists in order to respect the interpersonal collective norms in the South Asian culture and to enhance group cohesion by being available for discussions with members following the group, sharing food and chai with one another, and disclosing their own cultural background information. Ultimately, therapists and clients have identified feminist therapy interventions as useful in addressing domestic violence because they provide a different perspective in understanding abuse experiences and supporting women with empowerment strategies (Prochaska & Norcross, 2014).

Intervention for Perpetrators

There are several treatment approaches described in the literature for use with domestic violence offenders. Grouped collectively as batterer intervention programs (BIPs), the treatment approaches tend to be offered in a group format and are embedded in specific theoretical orientations that have various core premises related to violence in relationships. Despite the differences underlying these various approaches, most batterer intervention programs typically include two core principles: (a) building awareness about abuse and increasing accountability for such behavior, and (b) teaching alternatives for abuse (Gondolf, 1997). Although interventions are based on underlying assumptions of the treatment philosophy, most programs incorporate components of skills training, correcting faulty thinking patterns, sex role resocialization, and building awareness about the negative impact of abuse (Price & Rosenbaum, 2009; Saunders, 2008).

A number of different theoretical perspectives have influenced treatment approaches for abusive men, with most programs drawing on aspects of social learning theory, cognitive theory,

and feminist philosophies. Social learning perspectives underlie the skills training component of batterer intervention programs and are based on assumptions that offenders have deficits in behaviours that lead them to act abusively. Interventions include positive role modelling by group facilitators, behaviour rehearsal between members, and conflict resolution skills to enhance their relationships and replace negative behaviours (Saunders, 2008). In contrast, cognitive approaches assume that faulty thinking patterns and belief systems that developed in childhood lead to negative emotions and abusive behaviours. Compared to men with no abusive histories, men who have engaged in violence towards their intimate partners are more likely to magnify the importance of aversive situations, utilize dichotomous thinking, make arbitrary inferences, articulate absolutist demands, and perceive others in an inflammatory manner (Eckhardt, Barbour, & Davison, 1998; Eckhardt & Kassinove, 1998). As such, the focus of cognitive interventions is to assist perpetrators in examining and evaluating unhelpful cognitions and assumptions that preceded their violent behaviour and to also help them monitor and alter their attributions for others' behavior following the incident as a means to enhance responsibility for their actions (Aaron & Beaulaurier, 2017; Wexler, 2013). Furthermore, perpetrators learn to restructure thoughts to reduce anger, identify other negative emotions (e.g., fear, hurt), and uncover belief systems associated with abuse (Saunders, 2008). Feminist oriented philosophies assume patriarchal systems reinforce male domination and permit oppressive practices towards women. Therefore, interventions focus on sex role socialization to raise awareness about negative outcomes stemming from constrictive male roles, rigid gender socialization, and promote the benefits of gender equality (Saunders, 2008). Additionally, there is an emphasis on taking accountability for their intentions to control, raising awareness about different control tactics as mechanisms of abuse (such as isolation, insulting language, and controlling finances), and building empathy for their victims by discussing negative impact of abuse.

Other less prevalent treatment models for treating batterers include family systems theory and psychodynamic/trauma-based orientations. Family system theory applied in batterer intervention programs help men analyze relationship dynamics and communication patterns to create new insights and skills that assist with disrupting repeated cycles of interactions with their partners that lead to abuse (Saunders, 2008). In contrast, trauma-based orientations focus their efforts on resolving abusive men's traumatic childhood experiences, such as witnessing or experience abuse in the home, as a way to build empathy for their partners and/or children that they have abused (Saunders, 2008). Proponents of trauma-based treatments contend that unresolved physical and emotional trauma from childhood leads to abusive behaviours in subsequent intimate relationships as a result of maladaptive coping skills (such as substance use, violence, and controlling behaviours) to avoid negative feelings, neurological deficits, and impaired attachment styles (Dutton, 1998; Saunders, 2008; Voith, Logan-Greene, Strodthoff & Bender, 2018). Interventions using a trauma-focused approach include: (a) assessment of trauma history; (b) strengths-based approaches to enhance safety and trust with the psychological service provider during the treatment process; (c) teach strategies that reduce neurological and physiological arousal (e.g., mindfulness, yoga, breathing exercises); (d) identify and process unresolved trauma, build understanding of their own patterns of violence perpetration; and (e) develop new coping skills for managing emotional and behavioural triggers (Hamberger, Lohr, Parker, & Witte, 2009; Saunders, 1996; Sonkin & Dutton, 2003; Voith et al., 2018).

Research indicates that the most commonly utilized batterer treatment programs incorporate aspects of cognitive-behavioural and feminist therapy orientations (Gondolf, 2004; Saunders, 2008). These programs take a variety of forms and the main differences in their application appear to be related to treatment target (e.g., gender roles, thinking patterns, effective relationship skills) and the specific interventions implemented (e.g., consciousness-raising,

cognitive restructuring, emotion regulation skills). However, research on the effectiveness of these programs in preventing future incidents of domestic violence has yielded inconsistent results, and neither theoretical orientation or approach (i.e., cognitive-behavioural versus feminist) appears to be superior to others, leaving significant room for improvement in domestic violence treatment (Babcock, Green, & Robie, 2004; Stover, Meadows, & Kaufman, 2009). Most importantly, as is clear from the descriptions of the various treatment approaches above, most of them only target individual level factors in the ecological model of gender-based violence (Heise, 2011), with family systems theory-based interventions expanding the focus to address the microsystem. However, all other levels of the abuser and victim's ecology are relatively ignored in the intervention process, despite evidence presented in the preceding sections of this literature review about the wide range of contributing factors for domestic violence in the context of globalization and immigration. These include, for example, experiences of unemployment and underemployment or racism/discrimination, cultural beliefs and practices, differences in country of origin and host country laws and policies related to domestic violence, etc.

One of the criticisms of batterer intervention programs has been that the needs of ethnically diverse men have been overlooked despite widespread recognition by programs that batterers' are a heterogenous group who may be better served with treatments that take into account the variances in their cultural contexts and experiences (Price &, Rosenbaum, 2009). Many scholars have called for a paradigm shift in batterer treatment programs, with an increased focus in designing interventions for specific subsamples of men (Aaron & Beaulaurier, 2017; Babcock et al., 2004; Corvo, Dutton, & Chen, 2008; Stover et al., 2009). There is a growing recognition that if programs want to intervene in a meaningful way with ethnically diverse groups, treatment initiatives need to move away from "colour-blind" approaches and towards cultural competence,

whereby the culture, the context of perpetrators and victims, and the rituals and gendered practices within the culture are at the center of treatment (Cuevas & Cudmore, 2017; Messing, Ward-Lasher, Thaller, & Bagwell-Gray, 2015; Williams & Becker, 1994).

It appears that clinicians and researchers have heeded this advice, because in recent years, several culturally adapted programs for abusers have been developed specifically for various ethnic groups, such as Latino (Hancock & Siu, 2009; Welland & Ribner, 2010), African-American (Donnelly, Smith, & Williams, 2002), and Canadian Aboriginal men (Zellerer, 2003). These group therapy programs integrate several treatment approaches and include men with similar cultural and demographic backgrounds. In contrast to mainstream treatment approaches, these programs incorporate culturally specific forms of healing, knowledge of factors related to domestic violence in their specific cultural communities or countries of origin (including gender roles and the structure of family relationships in those communities), and an understanding of discrimination/racism that men of colour experience from various levels of society.

Unfortunately, there has been little investigation regarding the needs or perspectives of men from Asian, Southeast Asian, or South Asian origins. In an attempt to fill this gap, Thandi (2011) interviewed seventeen South Asian front-line workers (e.g., counsellors, social workers, probation officers, police officers, activists, and elders) from lower mainland British Columbia who have provided service to South Asian men and/or their families. The findings from his interviews strongly suggested that specialized knowledge about the lives and perspectives of South Asian men are needed to intervene in a meaningful way with this population. Specifically, the participants noted that professionals and agencies should be aware of the following factors when working with South Asian men: (a) degree of adherence to patriarchal values; (b) nature of influence by extended family members; (c) pressures from perceived family obligations to send money home or sponsor family members; (d) immigration/acculturation stress, and (e) substance

abuse (Thandi, 2011). In subsequent articles, Thandi (2012a; 2012b) outlined recommendations from South Asian frontline workers for intervening with perpetrators from their communities. From their experiences, it was noted South Asian men express desire to keep their marriages intact for similar reasons that South Asian women have reported in previous literature, such as family pressure to stay married, stigma from community members regarding divorce, and concern for their children's well-being (Thandi, 2012a). As such, study participants expressed concern involving the standard legal and psychological intervention practices of separating victims and abusers because treating them in silos is antithetical to the needs and cultural worldviews of South Asian families. They recommended a phased treatment approach using more culturally congruent treatment strategies. This approach would involve beginning the treatment process with a group therapy program for culturally homogenous South Asian men because of their strong identification with their culture and likelihood of increased comfort in sharing their stories or confronting one another about abusive attitudes in this context (Thandi, 2013). The next phase of intervention after the completion of group batterer intervention programming would be couples counselling and assisting immigrant families with successful integration into Canadian society, such as through peer support or linking new immigrants with other families in their community (Thandi, 2013).

Almeida and Dolan-Delvecchio (1999) describe one of the few domestic violence treatment models that has been developed for use with specific cultural populations, including with South Asian perpetrators and their families. The Cultural Context Model (CCM) was created by the authors to challenge traditional mainstream treatment approaches that frequently "minimized or dangerously misunderstood" the impact of culture in ethnically diverse families (Almeida & Dolan-Delvecchio, 1999, p. 654). The CCM is described both as a theoretical paradigm and treatment approach for working with culturally diverse families to address

domestic violence incidents by simultaneously holding perpetrators accountable for their abusive behaviours and empowering the victims (Almeida & Dolan-Delvecchio, 1999). The structure of this program reflects a collectivist approach for intervening with ethnically diverse families and provides interventions that reflect an understanding of the influence of societal and cultural forces associated with domestic violence, including the impact of immigration stressors on family dynamics. Unlike typical batterer group programs, the CCM utilizes a team of therapists and sponsors to work with the perpetrator and victim(s) as a way to help connect each client with a support person and to assist with holding the perpetrator accountable for non-violent behaviour (Almeida & Dolan-Delvecchio, 1999). Furthermore, the CCM recognizes that family unity and integrity is of central importance for many ethnic groups and accordingly, enrols a therapeutic community to support the victimized family to heal from the trauma of abuse (Almeida & Dolan-Delvecchio, 1999).

The Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) offers a similar domestic violence treatment program for South Asian families within the greater Toronto area. The PCHS has been supporting the South Asian community in the areas of health promotion, domestic violence, and addiction for the past twenty-three years (Chokshi, Desai, & Adamali, 2010; Mutta, 2019). The founding members expressed dissatisfaction with mainstream batterer programs due to their incongruence with South Asian cultural values and norms. They also expressed that these programs often neglect key factors associated with domestic violence in the South Asian community, such as immigration stressors, discrimination, cultural adaptation challenges, socio-economic struggles, and patriarchal gender structures (Chokshi et al., 2010). Furthermore, the exclusion of women in the treatment program and the lack of capacity-building with the entire family unit to mobilize change were seen as weaknesses inherent in mainstream programming (Chokshi et al., 2010).

The PCHS Men's Group (Sahara) is a 12-week program that utilizes a hybrid therapy model that incorporates theoretical orientations from feminist therapy (e.g. Duluth model, Power and Control), cognitive-behavioural therapy (changing faulty thinking, communication skills, managing emotions), and anger management (Mutta, 2019). There are several principles that guide PCHS's domestic violence intervention program, such as a client-centered approach, using culturally informed interventions (e.g., addressing interference by extended family members, supporting conflict mediation between family members, incorporating religious teachings), empowering women, engaging the entire family unit in the healing process, and engaging in efforts to strengthen the family that may have been weakened during the acculturation process (Chokski et al., 2010; Mutta, 2019). Additionally, the program implements community development strategies to engage the entire community in addressing domestic violence and works collaboratively with other agencies to help increase the scope of intervention options available to South Asians (Chokski et al., 2010).

Provincial, National and International Frameworks for Domestic Violence Prevention and Intervention

"I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept"
~ Angela Davis

Several frameworks related to domestic violence have emerged at the provincial, national and international levels, and these frameworks broaden the focus of domestic violence work to include both prevention and intervention, with the assumption that prevention and intervention efforts should be implemented simultaneously in order to address this major social problem. Michau and colleagues (2015) outlined key ingredients for effective policies and interventions for addressing violence against women based on an extensive review of the research in this area and of victim and batterer treatment program evaluations. These include: (a) addressing all levels

of the social ecology to prevent violence, through a multi-sector intervention approach (e.g., addressing social isolation, unemployment, underemployment, immigration-related vulnerabilities, marital and family tensions, cultural beliefs and values); (b) incorporating gender-based power analysis into the assessment process to guide intervention strategies; and (c) use of theory-driven, evidence-based interventions; and (d) development of innovative approaches that promote personal and collective thought to facilitate community activism (Michau, Horn, Bank, Dutt, & Zimmerman, 2015). Other authors concur with these suggestions, specifically highlighting the importance of prevention through community programming that directly assists in shifting social norms associated with violence against women (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2015).

In South Asia, there have been some innovative programs that target men and boys to challenge violence against women. One such example is the Bell Bajao (Ring the Bell) campaign. This national multimedia campaign that reached over 130 million people in India featured video clips of a male neighbour overhearing a man beat his wife. After a moment of deliberation, the neighbour rings the doorbell and asks for assistance (a cup of milk or permission to use their telephone) as a ploy to interrupt and stop the violence and to convey that the violence will not be tolerated (Michau et al., 2015). The impetus behind the campaign was to show that men can be agents of change in challenging other men so that domestic violence is not socially sanctioned in any way (Michau et al., 2015).

The recommendations of the above authors to consider all levels of the social ecology in order to prevent and address domestic violence are consistent with the ecological model or framework on gender-based violence by Heise (2011) already presented in this literature review. This is a theoretical framework for understanding domestic violence with a very solid international research base. The Heise (2011) model can be used to strengthen existing domestic

violence assessment and intervention efforts, by guiding areas of inquiry and individual, group, or community programming at each level of the ecology. As described in the assessment and intervention section of this literature review, many of the prevailing assessment and treatment practices do not yet sufficiently incorporate or address the complexity of factors related to domestic violence in ethnocultural or immigrant communities.

In 2017, the Canadian federal government released its report: “It’s Time: Canada’s Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence” which calls for immediate action on three pillars for addressing gender-based violence: prevention, support for survivors and their families, and the promotion of responsive legal and justice systems (Government of Canada, 2017). The Government’s Strategy uses a gender and intersectional lens to consider all forms of violence against women with a focus on diverse populations, such as newcomers and ethnically diverse women and girls. Some of the recommendations in the report includes engaging key stakeholders in diverse communities and creating culturally appropriate training for criminal justice members and frontline staff in order to increase survivors’ confidence that these various sectors can effectively address their concerns (Government of Canada, 2017). The report stipulates the Canadian government has set aside $100.9 million over the next five years and $20.7 million per year on an ongoing basis towards the implementation of their gender-based violence Strategy. These investments are partially funded through six different government departments or ministries (e.g. Status of Women Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Department of National Defence, Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Public Safety Canada), demonstrating a “whole-of-government” approach for preventing and addressing gender-based violence.

In the first year since the Strategy was launched, the Government accomplished several initiatives across the three pillars such as working with players from the Canadian Football

League to increase awareness about gender based violence within schools, funding the YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs to create a comprehensive GBV training program and outreach materials for national distribution to frontline staff and community based groups, and allocating funding to assist organizations in create initiatives that met the unique needs of newcomers and ethnically diverse women (Government of Canada, 2018). These funding commitments by the Federal Government has the potential to have far-reaching impacts on improving access to resources across the country as well as meeting the needs of local communities. For instance, this funding helped to create the GBV Knowledge Centre (KC) which is designed to better align existing resources across government and to support the development and dissemination of research to facilitate more coordinated, evidence-based action on gender-based violence. Locally, an announcement earlier this year by the Minister for Women and Gender Equality identified the Edmonton based Indo-Canadian Women's Association as the successful recipient of a $450, 000 grant to develop and pilot a program that assists frontline staff to screen for violence when providing services to Indigenous women, newcomers, refugees, and ethnocultural women (Government of Canada, 2019).

Provincially, the Government of Alberta's 2013 framework for addressing family violence incorporates many of the international and national recommendations described above. Developed in collaboration with multiple Government of Alberta ministries and through consultations with community partners, including input from the Prevention of Domestic Violence Unit at the University of Calgary, the framework emphases primary prevention and enhancing interventions with evidence-based practices (Government of Alberta, 2013). The framework acknowledges that diverse communities have unique needs in relation to preventing and addressing domestic violence and identifies working with ethno-cultural communities as one of its five key strategic priorities for ending family violence in Alberta. Additionally, the report

recognizes the importance of engaging men and boys as partners for prevention across the lifespan and engaging faith-based communities as key components for creating a violence-free society.

To summarize, the frameworks described above share similar perspectives for preventing and addressing violence against women. For instance, intervention across multiple levels of society, collaboration with ethnic and gender minority groups, and developing strategies to address the unique needs of diverse populations are key messages from these reports. Furthermore, engaging men and boys in these efforts has been recognized as especially critical to eradicating domestic violence.

Statement of the Problem: The Missing Male Perspective

Findings from international reports and regional and national studies suggest that domestic violence has reached epidemic proportions in South Asia, due to a variety of factors such as decades without legislation to protect victims of violence, a lack of consistent justice system intervention or policing, poverty, lack of education, patriarchal attitudes, and cultural gender role socialization (Bates et al., 2004; Dalal, Lee, & Gifford, 2012; Fikree & Bhatti, 1999; Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005; Koenig et al., 2006; Paudel, 2007; Rani & Bonu, 2009; Zhu & Dalal, 2009). The migration of people from South Asia to North America can be traced back to the early 20th century (Abraham, 2000; Rahim, 2014; Tran et al., 2005). In Canada, South Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka have consistently been the top source countries of immigrants (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2014). According to the national census, South Asians are the largest cultural group in Canada with close to two million people, which corresponds to one-quarter of the visible minority population and 5.6% of Canada's total population (Statistics Canada, 2017d). This community reflects a diverse range of ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups with varied ancestry and immigration experiences (Tran et al.,

2005; Rahim, 2014). Despite these differences, the South Asian community shares several values associated with collectivist ideals, continuing cultural practices, and maintaining a strong family orientation (Assand et al., 1990; Rahim, 2014; Tran et al., 2005). When immigrants arrive in the host country, they also bring with them worldviews and cultural practices that are grounded in their natal country (Abraham, 2000; Alaggia & Maiter, 2012), and South Asia has been identified as having one of the most conservative gender regimes in the world (Das & Singh, 2014). Research indicates that as compared to other ethnic groups, South Asians are more likely to retain their cultural traditions and practices in the host country, as well as maintain strong ties to their countries of origin (Kwak & Berry, 2001; Tran et al., 2005). Western ideologies associated with individualism, flexible gender roles, and personal fulfillment may directly conflict with South Asian cultural values, which has been found to cause difficulties for families and couples during the acculturation process (Ahmad et al., 2009; Dasgupta, 2000; Farver et al. 2002; Hyman et al., 2011; Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990).

Much of the information available about domestic violence among members of the South Asian community in Canada has been obtained through interviews with victims, who have often described chronic and horrific forms of abuse by their husbands and extended family members (Abraham, 1998; Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996; Shirwadkar, 2004). When understood from the lens of Heise's (1998; 2011) ecological model of domestic violence, contributing factors from individual experiences, as well as the micro, macro and exosystem seem to play a role in domestic violence definitions, manifestations, and responses, including immigration-related stressors, gender role reversals in marital relationships when couples move from traditional relationships to dual career families, family pressure to maintain traditional gender roles, and limited support from the cultural community in the North American context (Ahmad et al., 2009; Ayyub, 2000; Dasgupta, 2000; Hyman et al., 2011; Liao, 2006; Midlarsky et al., 2006; Raj &

Silverman, 2007). However, there is also evidence that the limited community resources available to ethnic minorities and lack of cultural sensitivity towards culturally diverse families within the legal system and social services also creates barriers for women experiencing abuse in their help-seeking attempts (Ahmad et al., 2009; Alaggia et al., 2009; Cuevas & Cudmore, 2017; Dasgupta, 2000; Huisman, 1996). Additionally, the available alternatives for women experiencing abuse (namely shelters, involving the police, separating from spouse) are in direct contradiction to the values held by South Asian community members related to keeping family members together and saving face, and accessing these services likely has a differential impact on South Asian women compared to other women, such as ostracism from cultural community, loss of reputation for the family clan, and possible deportation (Liao, 2006; Raj & Silverman, 2007; Shirwadkar, 2004). Similarly, most domestic violence related programs and services for men post-police and justice system intervention focus more on their individual characteristics (e.g., anger management strategies or abuse histories and emotional distress) rather than addressing the various contextual factors contributing to violence at various levels of the ecological model of domestic violence (Heise, 2011), which is not consistent with the experiences of immigrant and culturally diverse men. Heise (2011) has argued for the need to consider interventions at varying levels of the ecological model, depending on the factors contributing to abuse in various situations, such as couples counselling for couples experiencing marital tension that has not yet escalated into abuse due to gender role reversals or differences in acculturation, and increasing social support networks of isolated and vulnerable women. However, more studies are sorely needed to inform culturally appropriate intervention and prevention efforts for specific communities.

Part of the reason for the lack of resources available to ethnically diverse families and limited awareness of the experiences of domestic violence victims across different cultural

groups is that there is relatively little information available in the literature to help inform front-line and legal practice (Dasgupta, 1998; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). This lack of information precludes the development of prevention, assessment, and counselling intervention strategies that better address domestic violence in various communities or the effective adaptation of existing strategies for ethnocultural groups, consequently perpetuating oppression and harm for women from marginalized cultural groups due to ineffective responses by the mainstream community (Abraham, 2000; Cuevas & Cudmore, 2017).

It is a fact that in order to inform prevention and intervention, research must be undertaken to fill the void in the literature to hear the missing voices of South Asian men in the Canadian context, as males are the main perpetrators of domestic violence and also hold the greatest power in this patriarchal culture both before and after immigration (Dasgupta, 1998). Several research studies have found attitudes supporting male domination of females and using violence against women among South Asian men in their home countries (Dalal et al., 2012; Fikree et al., 2005) and these are a major risk factors for domestic violence perpetration (Sambisa, Angeles, Lance, Naved, & Curtis, 2010). Over the past several years, there has been increased consensus between clinicians, scholars, and governmental organizations about the importance of involving men as essential partners in ending violence against women, and this cannot be done without first joining with them to understand their unique perspectives on this phenomenon (Casey et al., 2012; Flood, 2011; Jewkes et al., 2015; Government of Alberta, 2013).

Past research has obtained women's perspectives regarding what does and does not constitute abuse, the various forms it takes, and how to respond to it. The objective of this dissertation study was to understand the perspectives of South Asian men who reside in Alberta, Canada regarding domestic violence in their community. The guiding research questions were: (a) How do South Asian men residing in Alberta, Canada define domestic violence? (b) What

factors do they believe contribute to violence against women in their communities in Canada? (c) What do they see as the most effective ways to prevent, reduce, and treat domestic violence? and (d) What role do they identify for men to play in preventing, combatting, and addressing domestic violence in their communities, if any?

No study in the Canadian (or international context) has incorporated the perspectives of men on all of these critical issues through the use of a qualitative approach. The few existing studies of male perspectives on domestic violence have involved surveys based on researcher-driven definitions of domestic violence and their assumptions about contributing factors. Furthermore, those studies did not consider how men actually defined domestic violence in the immigration context nor did they examine what kinds of solutions they deemed to be appropriate or whether they perceived members of their gender being involved in the solution to this major social problem. The next chapter of this dissertation will describe the methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

"We ask you to make society's problems your laboratory. We ask you to translate data into direction – direction for action" ~ Martin Luther King

This chapter provides a rationale for the use of a qualitative approach to study the phenomenon of domestic violence, and describes the transformative paradigm used to conduct this study with South Asian men. The chapter outlines participant recruitment methods, participant characteristics, the use of focus groups as a data collection tool, and the data analysis procedure, and discloses the researcher's unique positioning in relation to this study.

Researchers suggest that prevention and treatment initiatives for major social problems have a better chance of effectiveness and sustainability when they incorporate local knowledge

from the targeted population group (Liamputtong, 2008; Mertens, 2009). A qualitative research process was selected to help build knowledge about South Asian males' perspectives on domestic violence in their communities in Alberta, Canada to avoid influencing the data through the use of variables or research tools based on pre-existing knowledge of domestic violence that may not apply to this unique cultural population (Creswell, 2013; Hays & Singh, 2012). Creswell (2013) states qualitative approaches allow for in-depth examination of complex issues by directly asking the population group affected and allowing them to describe the problem from their vantage point, thus empowering research participants through relationship-building and collaborative social problem-solving (Creswell, 2013; Mertens, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

"The personal is political" ~ Carol Hanisch

One of the most critical decisions in the research design is to select an appropriate theoretical paradigm to help inform decisions about the inquiry process (Maxwell, 2005). Choosing between various paradigms typically reflects the researcher's belief systems and assumptions about the world, as well as the questions being asked in the study (Crotty, 1998). In recent years, there has been an increased popularity in incorporating social justice or transformative actions into various paradigms, especially within the social sciences, education, and health care domains (Creswell, 2013; Hays & Singh, 2012). Given the importance of advocacy in educational and psychological practice, it is not surprising that these activities are also being adopted in the research context (Hays & Singh, 2012).

The theoretical framework for this dissertation study was selected through careful examination of my personal philosophical beliefs, the purpose of the research study, and the possible implications of its findings (Crotty, 1998). As I reflected on my interest in the current topic and my involvement in addressing domestic violence issues within academic, professional,

and community spheres, I noticed a pattern of pursuing some form of social action. My work in the area of domestic violence has included community advocacy, conducting research, collaborating with leaders from various faith and cultural groups to better understand domestic violence within their communities, participating in initiatives to create awareness about this issue within the South Asian community, and developing treatment programs that reflect the unique needs of immigrant/culturally diverse populations. The transformative paradigm was deemed to be the most appropriate framework for conducting this dissertation study because of its congruence with my values and personal beliefs about the world, the fact that it provides a structure to conduct culturally competent research and utilizes research findings for positive change. The next section will provide a brief history of the transformative paradigm and describe its underlying philosophical assumptions.

Transformative Paradigm: History of Social Justice in Research

There is no uniform literature describing the transformative paradigm. Its application draws from diverse groups of researchers including participatory action researchers, critical theorists, Marxists, feminists, persons with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, indigenous and postcolonial peoples, individuals from the developing world, and members of the LGBTQ community (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2009). The transformative paradigm arose in the 1980s and 1990s partly due to dissatisfaction with the predominant theoretical paradigms –such as positivist and post-positivist – which imposed assumptions that did not reflect the experiences of marginalized populations or address issues related to power, and had limited focus on using research for societal change (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2009). Transformative researchers believe that inquiry is intertwined with politics and should contain an action agenda to change the lives of participants, communities, and the researcher (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2009).

More recent developments of the transformative paradigm have been spearheaded by Donna Mertens (2009) and have largely been influenced by her research and evaluation work with deaf students and other marginalized populations. She argues that our current social climate requires a research approach that addresses inequalities in our society and provides a platform to describe the experiences of marginalized groups to generate knowledge for social change. A key aspect of transformative research is to examine how discrimination and power operate in our society, including within the research domain (Merriam, 2009). As such, there is a conscious effort by transformative theorists and researchers to position themselves consciously and explicitly with those who are less powerful in a joint effort to bring about social transformation (Mertens, 2010). In order to challenge the status quo, transformative researchers engage in research practices that are empowering, such as collaborating with participants, giving voice to marginalized individuals or groups, and using research findings to advocate, inform institutions, or improve the lives of participants (Creswell, 2013; Mertens, 2009).

The transformative paradigm was perceived to be suitable for this dissertation study for several reasons. Firstly, it provided a framework for conducting ethically and culturally competent research with a marginalized and stigmatized immigrant group of minority status where males who may have held a high degree of power in their home countries may have experienced altered family or cultural dynamics leading to a loss of power in their lives in Canada. As described earlier, the South Asian community is an underrepresented group in research in the Canadian context and men's perspectives have been largely overlooked in the domestic violence literature. Including viewpoints from these two groups can further our understanding of domestic violence and provide the necessary insight to improve prevention and intervention practices aimed at the South Asian community, and possibly other ethno-cultural populations. These objectives led into the second reason for selecting the transformative

paradigm, which was to use the research process and research findings as a means to instigate social change. Liamputtong (2010) indicates that ethno-cultural communities may be reluctant to participate in research activities because their previous experiences with researchers were perceived as exploitative and lacking cultural sensitivity. Furthermore, ethno-cultural group members have reported that their research participation did not improve the lives of their community members and consequently, did not view research participation as a valuable activity (Liamputtong, 2010). As such, this study included a debriefing element where participants were provided with psychoeducation about domestic violence in the Canadian context, as well as opportunities for collaborative problem solving where men's input was used to identify possible solutions to the problem of domestic violence in their community. Participants had the opportunity to inform the mainstream society about domestic violence issues in the South Asian community and to suggest interventions that would be relevant for their cultural group, which may influence changes to policy, practice, and program initiatives. Additionally, working in collaboration with stakeholders, community members, and research participants throughout various research activities helped to ensure that the participants saw how their contribution added to the current knowledge base and to have some input about the information that is shared with others (Liamputtong, 2011; Mertens, 2009).

The third reason for choosing the transformative paradigm is that it views communities from a strengths-based perspective, capable of effecting change and serving as resources that researchers can learn from (Mertens, 2009). Often, researchers employ a deficit perspective by highlighting problems and ignoring strengths when examining issues in cultural communities (Mertens, 2009). The negative implications of this stance is highlighted by Chiu (2003) who argues that using a problem-focused research position limits our understanding of issues faced by cultural groups and perpetuates ineffective interventions. Blaming a culture or community group

for problems they experience overlooks the social context in which these issues are situated (Chiu, 2003). Building a strengths-based perspective requires establishing respectful relationships with marginalized communities and including them in finding solutions for the problems they face (Mertens, 2009). This is especially important in the area of domestic violence assessment and treatment, which is largely based on information from mainstream Western relationships and research studies and generalized to culturally diverse families (Bograd, 1999).

Transformative Paradigm: Philosophical Assumptions

Axiology. The ethical practices and values related to research form the core foundation of the transformative paradigm, otherwise known an axiology. The central importance of ethics and moral responsibility sets the tone for the remaining three belief systems (ontology, epistemology, and methodology) in the pursuit of social justice (Mertens, 2009). This includes respecting cultural histories and normative practices within community groups, and engaging in practices that challenge discriminatory forces (Mertens, 2009). The promotion of respect, beneficence, and cultural competency is congruent with the code of ethics for Psychologists in Canada (Canadian Psychological Association, 2017) and the American Psychological Association's multicultural guidelines for working with diverse populations, including during research (American Psychological Association [APA], 2017). This most recently updated APA guidelines take into consideration issues of intersectionality when providing services to multicultural populations and apply the ecological model as a conceptual framework for understanding the multilayered experiences of diverse groups throughout the different social systems. Interestingly, the APA's (2017) guidelines also recognize that psychologists have a unique role in the promotion of racial equity and social justice through their research efforts, which is consistent with the transformative axiological assumption that research should be utilized for some pro-social change.

Ontology. Ontology is concerned about the nature of existence and the characteristics of reality (Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 1998). The ontological assumptions of the transformative paradigm share several similarities with social constructivism, which specifies that reality is largely shaped by our surroundings and interactions with others (Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 1998). However, the transformative paradigm rejects cultural relativism and asserts that certain definitions of reality are given more privilege than others (Mertens, 2009). It is argued that people who hold particular characteristics (such as gender, race, social standing, etc.) are given authority to ascribe the reality of our world, while individuals who occupy lower positions of power are often excluded from providing input (Mertens, 2009), making it critical to engage participants in research whose voices or perspectives have not been heard to mitigate the risk of them being oppressed by a viewpoint that doesn't consider their diverse experiences and contexts (Mertens, 2009). The researcher is also responsible for investigating the prevailing view of reality and to critically analyze what is missing, in order to reveal a version of reality that can lead to positive changes (Mertens, 2012).

Epistemology. The ontological assumption related to the nature of what exists leads into epistemology, which considers what is accurate knowledge about the world (Crotty, 1998). The epistemological stance in the transformative paradigm is heavily focused on relationship building between researchers and stakeholders, which serves two interrelated purposes. Collaborating with community members provides access to cultural knowledge that may help researchers to build credibility and to establish good rapport by demonstrating cultural sensitivity (Liamputtong, 2008; Mertens, 2009). This knowledge not only helps the researcher to build cultural competence but also informs them of who to include in the inquiry and how to understand the information being collected (Mertens, 2009). Establishing collaborative relationships with community groups and their members also serves to frame the information

being obtained within an insider (emic) perspective for understanding the phenomenon (Mertens, 2009) – as accurate knowledge in this paradigm is defined as knowledge that is informed by cultural, social or other "insiders".

Hays and Singh (2012) suggest that a study's success or failure can depend upon the careful consideration of important players in the research inquiry. They distinguish between three different types of informants: (a) gatekeepers are people who have access to the participants and/or site of study; (b) stakeholders are people or organizations who are invested in the research findings; and (c) key informants include individuals who not only serve as important contacts for the research study but who can also provide important information that could shape the study, either through informal exchanges with the researcher or by participating in the study. The authors stipulate that there may be overlap between these three groups of individuals but that each offers their own contribution and perspective regarding the research study. While identifying key individuals is an important aspect of collaboration, it does not take priority over building rapport and trust with these individuals (Hays & Singh, 2012). While collaborating with community members, the researcher also needs to critically evaluate whose voice and perspectives are being included in the inquiry in order to minimize biases or agendas that gatekeepers or key informants may hold with respect to the phenomenon under inquiry (Hays & Singh, 2012). Accordingly, careful attention is paid to understanding the historical and social contexts of the community group as well as understanding how power operates within domains such as gender, race, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, and nationality (Mertens, 2009), so that the obtained insider knowledge is framed in terms of its socio-political and historical origins.

Methodology. Transformative approaches can vary on the type and degree of community involvement, nature and length of research inquiry (e.g., cyclical, short-term, long-term), type of investigation (e.g., descriptive, interventionist), and data collection procedures (e.g., quantitative,

qualitative, mixed-methods) (Mertens, 2009). The methodological assumptions of the transformative paradigm are informed by its axiological, ontological, and epistemological underpinnings. Incorporating a qualitative approach is considered an essential component of the transformative paradigm, but no other prescriptive set of methods or practices are provided (Mertens, 2009). Instead, "methodological decisions are made with a conscious awareness of contextual and historical factors, especially as they relate to discrimination and oppression" (Mertens, 2009, p. 59). Research activities are focused on forming partnerships with the community and engaging in a meaningful dialogue with community members and participants about their experiences (Mertens, 2009). Additionally, methods for inquiry are adjusted to respect cultural norms of the community and sampling procedures reflect inclusive practices so that diverse perspectives are incorporated (Mertens, 2009).

Inquiry Methods

Focus Groups

Qualitative data was based on transcribed audiotaped recordings of four focus groups conducted with South Asian men residing in Alberta. The purpose of using focus groups was to include a range of participants in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of South Asian men's ideas and attitudes about domestic violence in their community. Focus groups have been used for research purposes since the beginning of the 20th century in both public and private sectors, but the popularity of this approach in social sciences has increased in the past few decades (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Researchers state that the "intent of focus groups is not to infer but to understand, not to generalize but to determine the range, not to make statements about the population but to provide insights into how people in the groups perceive a situation" (Krueger & Casey, 2009; p. 66).

Stewart and Shamdasani (2014) recommend using focus groups for exploratory research and when little is known about a phenomenon of interest. As participants respond to each other, they introduce varied perspectives, and stimulate and extend one another's thinking, which can yield a broad range of opinions (Efron & Ravid, 2013). In recent years, focus group methods have become an acceptable tool within qualitative research and identified as an appropriate method with culturally diverse populations (Colucci, 2008; Liamputtong, 2011). Focus groups are also being increasingly used in transformative research studies (Chiu, 2003; Mertens, 2009).

Sample size and number of focus groups. The issue of sample size is a contentious debate within the qualitative literature. Typically, most researchers recommend terminating fieldwork once data is saturated, which means that no new information is being generated from the sample (Creswell, 2013). However, others argue that saturation is a nebulous term and sample size should be congruent with the research purpose or theoretical paradigm (Hays & Singh, 2012; Merriam, 2009). Depending on the complexity of the topic and the participant characteristics that are of interest, multiple focus groups are conducted for the purpose of identifying trends and patterns of perceptions (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). Krueger and Casey (2009) indicate that three to four focus groups can usually result in saturation, that is, the point when no new insights are emerging from the data. The suggested number of participants in each focus group ranges between five to ten people (Carey & Asbury, 2012; Krueger & Casey, 2009). However, some authors recommend a maximum of eight participants when investigating sensitive or complex topics and to effectively manage transcription data (Barbour, 2007; Carey & Asbury, 2012). Similarly, Krueger and Casey (2009) indicate that "mini-focus groups" that contain four to six participants are becoming increasingly popular because people are usually more comfortable speaking in a smaller group format and these groups are more suitable for topics that are complex and likely to elicit strong feelings from

the members (p. 67). Based on the recommendations in the literature, this dissertation study involved conducting four focus groups that included between three to six participants each.

Focus group composition. Researchers recommend group members be homogenous to some degree on a few demographic characteristics such as age, gender, social status, occupation, and education, or on some key variables related to the topic of interest (Morgan, 1998). When researching cross-cultural populations, it is important to consider cultural variables when arranging focus group discussions in order to create comfort and enhance fluid discussions between participants (Liamputtong, 2011). The researcher purposely arranged focus groups based on commonalities among South Asian men who hold unique perspectives regarding the research topic and reached out to express an interest in participating in this study. For example, older South Asian men community leaders and members from a seniors' organization were put together in a focus group due to their similarity in age range and the associated power of being in family or community leadership positions. An attempt was made to recruit South Asian men of various ages from a variety of countries of origin/religious affiliations, with varying lengths of residence in Canada, and to include some community leaders or seniors, as well as men who occupied front-line helping roles or worked in the area of domestic violence, such as therapists, police/RCMP, clinic directors, or lawyers.

Focus group setting and location. The researcher arranged focus group meetings in the two largest Alberta cities: Edmonton and Calgary. The settings and locations of the focus groups were chosen for their suitability in providing privacy to participants and a quiet space to limit outside distractions or interruptions (Morgan, 1998). The researcher collaborated with stakeholders and gatekeepers from the South Asian community within these two cities to secure a neutral venue that provided a comfortable space for the participants, such as a classroom or boardroom at a community agency, public meeting room, or cultural facility (Liamputtong,

2011). Permission was obtained for conducting the focus group discussions and the researcher assessed possible facilities beforehand to determine the appropriateness of the venue with respect to size, access, parking, and public transportation.

Research Journal

In qualitative research, the researcher is seen as an active participant in the inquiry process and the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Reflexivity is a term to describe the process whereby the researcher demonstrates awareness and acknowledges how his/her own perspectives, experiences, and positions shaped the research study (Efron & Ravid, 2013). Considered to be the hallmark of qualitative research, reflexivity involves awareness regarding the reciprocal influence between the researcher, the research settings, and the participants (Mertens, 2009). Within the transformative paradigm, the researcher's ability to build honest and respectful relationships with community members is essential to achieve the goals of transformative research (Mertens, 2009). Ongoing self-reflection helps the researcher to evaluate their interactions with the community group and to better understand their personal reactions, assumptions, and meanings that surface throughout the research process (Mertens, 2009).

For the duration of the research project, the researcher kept a journal to record experiences, thoughts, feelings, questions, and beliefs that emerged. The researcher's personal immigration experiences and South Asian ancestry provided a certain level of insider perspective with the targeted research population. However, the researcher also occupied an outsider perspective because of her gender and professional experiences as a treatment provider for abusive men, which will be further explained when describing her unique positioning in relation to this research study. Therefore, personal reflections not only catalogued experiences of navigating the research terrain but also provided an outlet to document thoughts and feelings about holding a

dichotomous insider-outsider position. Journal entries began prior to data collection to reflect on personal motivations regarding the proposed topic, the community under study, timing of the research, and benefit to self or community (or both), as these presumptions may have influenced the expectations of participants and the data being collected (Hays & Singh, 2012). Subsequent journal entries recorded insights about different aspects of the research process, such as: (a) possible meanings of what was observed, (b) insights or emerging interpretations, (c) reflections about the data collection methods and process, (d) any problems or issues that emerged - such as confrontations between focus group participants, and (e) descriptions about the researcher's frame of mind (i.e., attitudes, expectations, and biases) (Efron & Ravid, 2013). Information contained in these reflections was used as data to illuminate critical hypotheses, assumptions, and points of insight that were relevant for the study (Mertens, 2009).

Researcher's Positioning

"What we know matters but who we are matters more" ~ Brene Brown

Within the transformative paradigm, researchers must be critically self-reflective and demonstrate a high level of awareness about themselves and others (Mertens, 2009). The researcher is considered to be an instrument for accomplishing the study's objectives and accordingly, must exhibit principles associated with social justice and engage in critical reflection throughout the research process to evaluate whether knowledge being generated can be utilized for systemic change (Chiu, 2006). Efron and Ravid (2013) suggest that researchers should strive for "*disciplined subjectivity*, which is demonstrated by acknowledging: (1) values, beliefs, and commitments related to the study, (2) past involvement with the topic, and (3) relationships with participants" (p. 57; emphasis in original). They suggest that making these connections both personally and publicly may mitigate subjectivity and prevent bias from negatively influencing the study (Efron & Ravid, 2013). In response to these recommendations,

the next section describes my personal journey and how it relates to my interest in pursuing this dissertation study.

My interest in this research topic is a culmination of personal and professional experiences to date. I am a 35-year-old first-generation Punjabi woman who comes from an educated, middle class family. I identify myself as a liberal feminist who strives to raise awareness regarding multiple dimensions of oppression such as gender, race/ethnicity, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and citizenship status. I was born in Chandigarh, India and moved to Edmonton, Alberta when I was four years old. Beginning in childhood, I was keenly aware and curious about my surroundings. I knew from an early age that there was something unique about my experiences and background within both Indian and Canadian contexts, which had both positive and negative consequences. I believe these early experiences built a life-long appreciation for diversity and openness to multiple perspectives for functioning within our family, community, and society. They also provided first hand experience of being marginalized and how one's position in society is tied to power over one's surroundings, including the ability to challenge or contribute to knowledge espoused by the mainstream community. I believe that the immigration experiences in my childhood played a significant role in my passion for advocacy and social justice.

Whether by conscious design or not, most of my adult experiences have centered on advocating for equality and challenging mainstream perspectives that ignore experiences of marginalized groups. I have frequently pursued unconventional issues and advocated for populations who were often overlooked in the current discourse. Perhaps due to my own experiences of invisibility, I am often drawn to activities that bring awareness to gaps in knowledge and attempt to create initiatives that fill these gaps. My interest in domestic violence initially developed during my undergraduate internship practicum and subsequent employment at

an outpatient forensic program. At this agency, I was involved in the assessment and treatment of domestic violence offenders (mainly men) and my understanding about relationship dynamics was greatly expanded through my clinical involvement. I became increasingly curious about the role of cultural beliefs and values in abusive relationships, as well as the relationship between immigration-related stressors and domestic violence. Around this time, I became involved in a research project with Dr. Merali who was conducting a study on experiences of abuse among South Asian foreign brides who were sponsored to come to Canada by their husbands in international arranged marriages. As a research assistant, my main role included translating and transcribing audio-recorded interviews into electronic formats. Listening to victims' stories of abuse provided a different perspective on domestic violence issues from people who had been direct targets of the violence. It also helped me realize that the perspectives of both men and women are needed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of domestic violence. Combined with the information I gained from my work with culturally diverse violent men and the stories of victimization from immigrant women, I became concerned that existing assessment tools and treatment protocols in most clinical and community settings, as well as most domestic violence prevention efforts, do not adequately capture the experiences of ethno-cultural couples and families. I was given the opportunity to develop a treatment program with a clinical psychologist and social worker that better addressed the needs of immigrant men convicted of assaulting their partners through my workplace where I was employed as a Forensic Counsellor. Through consultation with different ethnic community organizations and leaders from various cultural groups, we developed the 16-week Mosaic Domestic Violence program, which was the first culturally responsive domestic violence treatment program in Alberta specifically designed to meet the needs of immigrant men.

During my doctorate, I became more interested in cultural factors associated with domestic violence and more specifically, how this issue is conceptualized within the South Asian community. I conducted presentations at domestic violence conferences to discuss the cultural factors related to domestic violence and began to co-facilitate a batterers group therapy program at Changing Ways specially designed to address treatment needs of ethnically diverse men. Seven years ago, I started volunteering with PARIVAAR, a grassroots community group that raises awareness about domestic violence within different South Asian cultural groups and advocates for the needs of South Asian families to local community organizations. My work with PARIVAAR (which literally means "family" in Hindi but is also an acronym for Peaceful Alliance Rejecting Injustice, Violence And Advocating Respect) has included attending various cultural events in different South Asian community groups and engaging children and adults in discussions regarding family conflict. I have also attended meetings with community leaders, directors of social agencies, and front-line staff to understand the challenges of providing services to South Asian families and to advocate for the needs of this community. Volunteering with PARIVAAR and conducting treatment with ethnically diverse men were especially helpful for conceptualizing this research project.

Participant Selection and Recruitment

Focus Group Participants

Data was collected from a diverse group of immigrant and Canadian-born South Asian men who met the following criteria: (a) adults over the age of 18; (b) South Asian background with origins from countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, or Fiji, which are the top source countries of the South Asian population in Canada as per the most recent national census from Statistics Canada; (c) able to give verbal or written informed consent; (d) are proficient in English or a South Asian language, such as Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Gujrati, etc.;

and (e) for those who are foreign-born, have resided in Canada for a minimum of two years. Efforts were made to include men from diverse backgrounds in citizenship status, religious affiliation, relationship history, occupations, education level, and generational status. A focus on adults was selected because individuals over 18 would likely have more experience and solidified views to describe their perspectives related to relationships, views on domestic violence in their community, and perhaps compare and contrast any cultural variables in their community with mainstream Canadian views related to violence against women. The criterion for length of residency in Canada for immigrant participants aimed to capture a sample that had the opportunity to become familiar with the South Asian community in Alberta so that they were able to comment about their experiences or perspectives regarding domestic violence, and compare them to the practices in their home country. Research suggests that there are several individual characteristics and aspects of the social context that influences the length of time it takes for newcomers to settle into the host country (Berry, 1997). Two years was selected because this length of time provides individuals with sufficient opportunities to develop some level of familiarity with their new surroundings (Samuel, 2009).

Recruitment Strategies

Participants were recruited from Edmonton and Calgary, as these two cities have the largest South Asian population in Alberta and experienced the greatest increase in South Asian immigrants across Canada in recent years (Government of Alberta, 2017a). This study adopted a purposive sampling strategy to recruit a maximal variation of South Asian men residing in Alberta. Purposive sampling allows researchers to include participants who can best provide information about a phenomenon and to give voice to individuals who may not have been heard otherwise (Creswell, 2013; Mertens, 2009). This was accomplished by collaborating with

gatekeepers and key informants such as clinicians or community/religious leaders in the various South Asian communities for assistance with recruiting participants.

Given that the target sample was presumed to be a difficult population to reach, a multimodal recruitment approach was used in order to gain access to potential participants (Liamputtong, 2011). For instance, the researcher utilized various sampling strategies, such as: (a) opportunistic, to recruit potential participants from cultural events by informing people about the study at these events or distributing study descriptions at these events, with researcher contact information for interested potential participants; (b) snowballing, where stakeholders and members of the community (including research participants) referred other potential participants who meet the inclusionary criteria into the study; and (c) study advertisements, distributed at religious venues, South Asian community associations, or via email attachment on various South Asian community association list serves. Liamputtong (2011) suggests that having a familiar person attend a focus group may help participants feel more comfortable and provides another mechanism to recruit hard to reach populations. Therefore, individuals were given the option to bring a male friend or relative with similar characteristics to attend the focus group meeting as a fellow participant.

Stakeholder organizations that provide services related to immigration and settlement, domestic violence intervention, or serve a large number of South Asian clients were approached to discuss the objectives of this research study and asked for permission by the researcher to distribute or post study descriptions within their organizations/agencies, or settings. South Asian cultural organizations and religious facilities in Edmonton and Calgary were also contacted for this purpose. A study description (Appendix A) was provided to staff at various community agencies and posted with permission on the agency’s event bulletin board. Potential participants were given the option to contact the researcher directly or to put their name on a sign-up sheet

held by a specific staff member or association member at each agency. Agency staff then referred these individuals on the list directly to the researcher or informed the researcher when individuals have signed up. The agency contact person kept these sign-up sheets in a locked filing cabinet until the researcher retrieved them. The sign-up sheets were periodically retrieved from agency staff by the researcher and destroyed once individuals on the list had been contacted. All organizations and community associations that permitted the researcher to distribute or post study descriptions on their premises were asked to inform potential participants that their involvement in the study was voluntary and would not impact their receipt of public or private services. Although the researcher also provided this information in the informed consent process, it was anticipated that receiving such information from trusted agency staff members and community members would increase prospective participants' willingness to take part in this research study.

Participant Profiles

A total of 17 South Asian men participated in the study. The participants' ages ranged from 24 to 74, with an average age of 53. Except for one participant, all of the other men reported their marital status as married and consistent with South Asian cultural norms, all participants lived with their family. Most participants resided with their spouse and children (9 men), five resided only with their spouse as they had no children, two men reported living in a joint family arrangement, and one male reported residing with his parents. Fourteen of the 17 South Asian men were not only husbands, but also fathers, with 7 also being grandfathers.

Only one participant was born in Canada, whereas the remaining 16 men were foreign-born. Most men (13) originated from India and three originated from Pakistan, which are the two most highly represented source countries for South Asian immigrants to both Alberta and Canada as a whole. The participant's length of residence in Canada varied widely, spanning

between four years and forty-five years with an average of 25.7 years. Fourteen participants had Canadian citizenship, two had permanent residency, and one had dual citizenship for both Canada and his natal South Asian country. The participants represented a variety of religious affiliations including Sikhism (9), Islam (4), Hinduism (2), Christianity (1), and Other (1). They were also a multilingual group, with thirteen participants reporting fluency in at least two South Asian languages (Hindi, Punjabi, or Urdu). Hindi was the most commonly reported first language (17), followed by Punjabi (10), and lastly Urdu (4). All of the participants also reported being proficient in English.

The sample was relatively well educated with most obtaining some level of post-secondary education. Twelve men reported having graduate degrees (Masters or Doctorates), 2 had undergraduate degrees, 1 had a college diploma, 1 had partially completed a college/university degree, and 1 partially completed a high school diploma. Of the 13 participants who reported having college/university diplomas and degrees, a diverse range of educational training backgrounds were represented, such as Engineering, Technology, Law, Economics, Political Science, and Human Services (e.g., social work, psychology, development services). Nine of the participants were employed full-time at the time of the study, whereas 5 were retired, and 1 was employed part-time. One participant reported being unemployed and another did not provide an answer about his employment status. There was a diverse range of occupations identified among the participants, including a mixture of manual labourers (e.g., heavy-duty mechanics), professionals (e.g., company executives, banking, supervisor, project coordinator, transit scheduler) and front-line service workers (e.g., security, police officers, mental health therapist, lawyers, interpreters). However, three participants did not identify their occupation on the demographic information form used in this study.

Of the fifteen participants who shared details about their education and occupations, there were five participants who appeared to be experiencing underemployment. In other words, their educational attainment was far greater than what was required for the specific jobs they were doing in Canada. For instance, these participants reported having advanced graduate degrees (Masters; PhD) but were employed as heavy-duty mechanics or working in roles that were unrelated to their education (e.g., working as a parking or security attendant). These disparities were most frequent for some of the older participants and one participant who recently immigrated to Canada, whereas there seemed to be more consistency between education and occupation in Canada among younger or middle-aged participants based on their responses to the demographic information form used in this study. There were six group participants who self-identified and/or were identified by South Asian stakeholders as being community leaders serving in various capacities in their respective communities such as interpreters, community liaison workers, therapists, or educators.

Across the four focus groups, attempts were made to arrange for participants with relatively similar backgrounds to be in the same group to promote group cohesion and a sense of comfort in sharing their opinions with others. The South Asian community tends to adhere to a traditional and hierarchical structure. Therefore, having significant disparities in age or status could prevent group members from participating freely compared to a situation in which they are placed with similarly matched peers. Keeping this in mind, one focus group included six elders or seniors within the South Asian community from India and Pakistan, a few of whom were in community leadership or clergy roles. They varied in terms of their educational backgrounds and employment status. Another focus group consisted of four middle-aged to older men who were mostly in frontline service provider roles in mental health and social service delivery, and justice and policing (e.g., a lawyer, police officer). There was also a focus group consisting of three lay

persons who were middle aged South Asian immigrant men who were all married with children, some of who were professionally employed and some of whom were experiencing unemployment/underemployment due to the lack of recognition of foreign educational qualifications. The last of the four focus groups also included men who were lay people, including four South Asian men who were relatively younger than the men in other focus groups, and who were either unmarried and living at home with their parents or who were recently married and did not their own families yet.

Inquiry Process

Initial Contact with Participants

During the initial contact, the researcher provided all interested participants with the consent form (Appendix B) and information sheet outlining the purpose and procedures of the study (Appendix C). Individuals recruited from community agencies were assured that there would be no impact (positive or negative) on their services if they agreed or declined to participate in the study. The researcher also explained to interested individuals that the referring member or agency would not be notified about their decision to participate and any information shared in the study would be kept private and confidential. The researcher screened all interested participants to ensure that they met the inclusionary criteria, understood the purpose of the research study, and were aware of the risks/benefits of research participation. Participants were informed that the duration of the focus group could be between one and a half to three hours, depending on how the group conversation went and that food and light refreshments would be provided.

In the initial contact with participants and again in the focus group context, the researcher provided an overall description of the purpose of the research study, including an overview of the data collection process, such as how information will be kept, who will have access, transcription

arrangements, and the dissemination plans. Participants were informed their focus group session would be audio-recorded for quality assurance and to capture the participants' comments, but that no real names or voices would be included in any reports of study results or publications (Carey & Asbury, 2012). Since informed consent is considered a process rather than a singular activity, participants were encouraged to ask questions about any aspect of the research study and the researcher took steps to ensure information was being understood throughout the entire research process. Individuals who provided informed consent were asked about their availability, as well as their preferred location and language, which the researcher utilized to schedule focus groups. Although participants for whom English was not their first language were provided the option of attending a focus group facilitated in their first language, for which the researcher had planned to hire and train a bilingual co-facilitator, they all indicated that they would prefer to attend a focus group facilitated in English as they felt comfortable with their communicative abilities in English as a second language. Therefore, all four mini-focus groups were conducted in English. The focus groups lasted between 1.5 to 3 hours in length, depending on the nature and level of group participation and dialogue.

Pre-Discussion/Introductory Phase

Before the start of each focus group, the contents of the informed consent form were re-reviewed with group members, any questions posed were answered, and the forms were signed. The researcher highlighted the importance of maintaining confidentiality about the information shared by members in the group, so that whatever is discussed in the meeting does not leave the room (Liamputtong, 2011). In addition, the focus group questions asked participants to comment on domestic violence as a construct rather than to recount any personal experiences. However, the informed consent form reviewed by the writer also made it very clear that any disclosures of spousal or child abuse made in the context of this study could be shared with the appropriate

legal authorities. Part of the introduction included guidelines for group discussion and the importance of respecting diverse perspectives, rather than agreeing on a specific viewpoint (Carey & Asbury, 2012). Participants also completed a demographics form (Appendix D), that included questions about age, ethnicity, country of origin, religion, etc., in order to capture the characteristics of the research sample.

Focus Group Discussions

Each focus group discussion began with an ice-breaking activity to increase cohesiveness between the participants. Participants were asked to introduce themselves with their chosen pseudonyms and to identify a fictional family (such as a family from a South Asian movie or television program) or non-fictional family that they admire, along with a brief description of the salient characteristics of the family/couple's interactions or relationships. The researcher subsequently launched the focus group discussion with the participants by having them consider and share what makes a good marriage and what makes a bad marriage. Drawing on a semi-structured interview guide that included open-ended questions to explore research participants' perspectives about marital relationships and understanding of domestic violence in their respective communities, she gradually asked them more direct questions about the research topics and questions. The focus group discussion began with questions inquiring about attributes of martial relationships in their community, types of relationship conflicts, factors that contribute to marital problems and violence towards wives, and examples of what constitutes domestic violence. The remaining focus group questions focused on possible strategies to prevent marital violence, strategies for intervening with abusive men from their community, and the role men can play in addressing domestic violence.

Focus Group Interview Guide

- What makes a good marriage? (e.g., qualities, aspects, or behaviours of the husband, wife, or their relationship with each other, other family members, etc.).
- What makes a bad marriage? (bad can be defined in any way participants choose to interpret it – in terms of husband or wife's roles not being a certain way, certain types of problems occurring in the marriage like problems with in-laws or marital conflict, two people not respecting each other etc.)
- Some people think that one kind of bad marriage is a marriage where there is abuse. Wife abuse happens in every community and culture. Do you think this is a problem in your community? Why or why not?
- In your opinion, what types of behaviours or actions towards women in marriage are abusive? (i.e., How would you define abuse or domestic violence?)
- What types of things, circumstances or events do you think cause abuse towards wives in your community here in Canada? (e.g, stress, immigration, in-law problems, gender role expectations, cultural beliefs, etc.)
- What do you think can be done to stop abuse towards women in your community?
- What should be done for or with men or family members who hurt or abuse wives?
- What should be done for or with women who are abused by their husbands?
- What role do you think men can play to try to prevent violence against women and to stop it when it happens?
- What are some ways you know of that men in your community have prevented, stopped, or dealt with abuse towards women?

Before concluding the focus group interview, the researcher briefly summarized the main points that were generated from their discussions and provided an opportunity for participants to give any additional information or insights that they may not have had an opportunity to share. Once the focus group discussions concluded, the researcher provided group members with information about how domestic violence is defined and addressed in Alberta, how the justice system typically handles domestic violence cases in Alberta, and the resources available to individuals, couples, and families who may be experiencing domestic violence or related family/marital stressors (Appendix E). The objectives for providing this information to participants was not only congruent within the transformative paradigm to use the research context as tool for creating immediate change with members of the target population through consciousness-raising, education and action, but also demonstrated reciprocity whereby the researcher shared mainstream knowledge about domestic violence in exchange for men providing their local knowledge about this issue (Mertens, 2009). This research presented a unique opportunity to give South Asian men who occupy an important role in their communities information about local laws, procedures, and resources that could challenge or expand upon some existing ideas so that it may be shared within their personal and community circles. Seizing this opportunity also allowed the researcher to minimize any harm to the participants by virtue of being exposed to or influenced by viewpoints of any group members that did not recognize domestic violence as violent behaviour or criminality.

The Use of Interpreters

The transformative research places a high priority on inclusivity and reducing barriers that may prevent individuals from participating in research (Mertens, 2009). The inability to converse with participants in their preferred language not only keeps their voices silent but also limits their ability to describe the full range of their experiences if certain expressions do not have an

English equivalent. Therefore, the inclusion of interpreters was a crucial aspect of the planning of this dissertation study in order to accurately capture the participants' perspectives in their preferred language. The researcher's first languages are Hindi and Punjabi, but she does not have the full linguistic range in either language to accurately and effectively communicate informed consent or lead focus group discussions. Therefore, the researcher was prepared to have an interpreter available to provide information about the study to potential participants, to review informed consent procedures, and/or to assist with facilitating focus groups. Regardless of their English proficiency, all participants were offered the option to have an interpreter review informed consent procedures and/or to attend a focus group that was moderated by someone who spoke their native language. However, all participants declined these options and opted instead to participate in the focus group led by the researcher in English, which they expressed was due to their comfort with their communicative abilities in English.

Data Handling and Analytic Procedures

"There are no wrong turns, only unexpected paths." ~ Mark Nepo

Data Recording, Transcription, and Storage

Focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. In the analysis process and final research report, the participants' chosen pseudonyms were used to represent their comments and to protect their anonymity and confidentiality. Voice files from the digital recording device were deleted once downloaded electronically and burned to a CD after each focus group. All electronic data (including transcriptions) were stored on encrypted devices (researcher's personal computer) and password protected, whereas the focus group CDs with the participants' voices and hard copies of participants' informed consent forms were stored in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher's home office. In compliance with the University of Alberta's procedures, all audio recordings and transcriptions will be kept in the locked filing

cabinet in the researcher's home office for a period of five years after the conclusion of the research study.

Data Analysis

One of the unique characteristics of qualitative research is that data analysis occurs concurrently with data collection. That is, researchers begin analysing data once the first piece of data is collected and continues with this process until no new information is being obtained from the data sources (Hays & Singh, 2012). Activities during qualitative data analysis include preparing and organizing the data, reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally illustrating the data into a meaningful format (e.g. tables, figures, discussion) (Creswell, 2013). Interacting with data early in the research and throughout the process also assists with informing subsequent data collection procedures. Additionally, conducting data analysis simultaneously with data collection allows the researcher to address any ethical implications that may arise during the research process (Hays & Singh, 2012).

The selection of a data analytic approach for this dissertation study was based on its compatibility with the aims of the transformative paradigm. Accordingly, thematic analysis was chosen for its flexibility across theoretical approaches and its ability to provide a "rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006; p. 78). Thematic analysis is commonly utilized for exploratory qualitative research studies to describe patterns in the data and to report the experiences and perspectives of participants. Braun and Clarke (2006) provide six phases for conducting thematic analysis, while emphasizing that analysis is not a linear process, but rather a recursive one whereby the researcher moves back and forth through the phases.

Data analysis began with a detailed description of the South Asian male participants in each focus group, the physical environment and situational context. The initial stages of the

analysis was to become familiar with the data by actively reading each source of data in its entirety and then re-reading to understand the depth of the information (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) consider transcribing interviews as a facet of data analysis – as opposed to a simple act of putting spoken word on paper – because it helps the researcher to familiarize themselves with the data and to begin initial interpretive considerations. While being immersed in the data, the researcher attended to general impressions, recurrent themes, differences and contradictions, new ideas, and other areas of interest that may provide useful information to better understand the cultural group and research topic. Many researchers recommend writing separate notes (sometime referred to as memos) for each data source to capture speculations, reflections, tentative themes, hunches, interesting ideas, and possible areas to explore with the next data collection (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Hays & Singh, 2012; Merriam, 2009).

The second phase consisted of creating initial codes and organizing the data into meaningful groups. Braun and Clarke (2006) distinguish coded data from the unit of analysis (themes), which are often broader than codes. In contrast, codes identify a feature of the data considered to be the most basic element of the data that may help to understand the phenomenon and something that may be of interest to the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data can either be coded using specific theories or questions in mind (theory-driven) or categorized based on what is contained in the data (data-driven) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher used an inductive or bottom-up approach to analysis by assigning codes in conjunction with the data itself rather than from prior theory. This decision was based on the fact that this dissertation study is exploratory and the aim was to have South Asian male participants' ideas and perspectives about domestic violence in their community be the basis for reporting the data, rather than imposing a particular stance onto the data. It was hoped that by staying as close to the data as possible during analysis, the researcher would keep the participants' ideas and

perspectives at the forefront. The researcher employed a flexible approach to identifying codes, by looking for information that answers the research questions while also being open to other information that could be helpful to understand the phenomenon (Hays & Singh, 2012). While working systematically through the data, equal attention was paid to information within and across the data sources, reflecting the different subgroups of focus group participants, age cohorts of males in the South Asian community, varying acculturation levels of participants, etc.

After data was initially coded and collated, the next phase involved focusing on the broader themes that more fully described the phenomenon. It involved sorting the codes into meaningful segments of information and then gathering the coded data excerpts within the identified label or meaning unit –which constitutes a theme. Following this phase, the researcher began to critically evaluate the themes to determine if there was enough data to support them, if some themes could be collapsed into each, or whether themes needed to be broken down further into sub-themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The fifth phase of thematic analysis involved further refinement of themes so that each captures the "essence" of what it represented and selecting aspects of the data to best reflected that theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). Each individual theme had a detailed written analysis that demonstrated how it fits with the entire data story. This phase also included thinking about preliminary titles or names that best encapsulate each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The last phase focused on writing the final write-up of the report and evaluating whether each theme provides sufficient evidence within the data. The authors recommend selecting vivid examples or excerpts that best encapsulate the essence of the point you are trying to illustrate. Braun & Clarke (2006) advise that "extracts need to be embedded within an analytic narrative that compellingly illustrates the story you are telling about your data, and your analytic narrative needs to go *beyond* description of the data, and make an *argument* in relation to your

research question" (p. 93; emphasis in the original). The following chapter describes the results of the thematic analysis process.

CHAPTER 4

VOICES OF SOUTH ASIAN MEN ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THEIR COMMUNITY

"The improvement of understanding is for two ends: first, our own increase of knowledge; secondly, to enable us to deliver that knowledge to others" ~ John Locke

The purpose of this study was to understand South Asian male perspectives on domestic violence in their communities. The research was guided by four questions: (a) How do South Asian men define domestic violence, and more specifically abuse of women in marital or intimate partner relationships?; (b) What factors do they believe contribute to violence against women in marital or intimate partner relationships among their communities in Alberta, Canada?; (c) What do they see to be the most effective ways to prevent, reduce, and treat domestic violence occurrences?; and (d) What role do they identify for themselves as men in preventing, combatting, and addressing domestic violence, if any? This chapter presents the collective perspectives of the male focus group participants in this study in relation to these four research questions, highlighting common themes that emerged from their focus group dialogues, and exemplifying them with illustrative quotes. These themes are graphically depicted in Figure 2 below. The chapter begins with the men's positioning of the problem of domestic violence as their community's shameful secret. Transformative dialogues that occurred among men in the focus groups that led to them to challenge and confront each other in relation to their understandings of domestic violence and the role they need to play in addressing it, leading to expanded consciousness and responsibility to combat this problem, will be presented at the end of the chapter, drawing on excerpts from participant focus group interchanges.

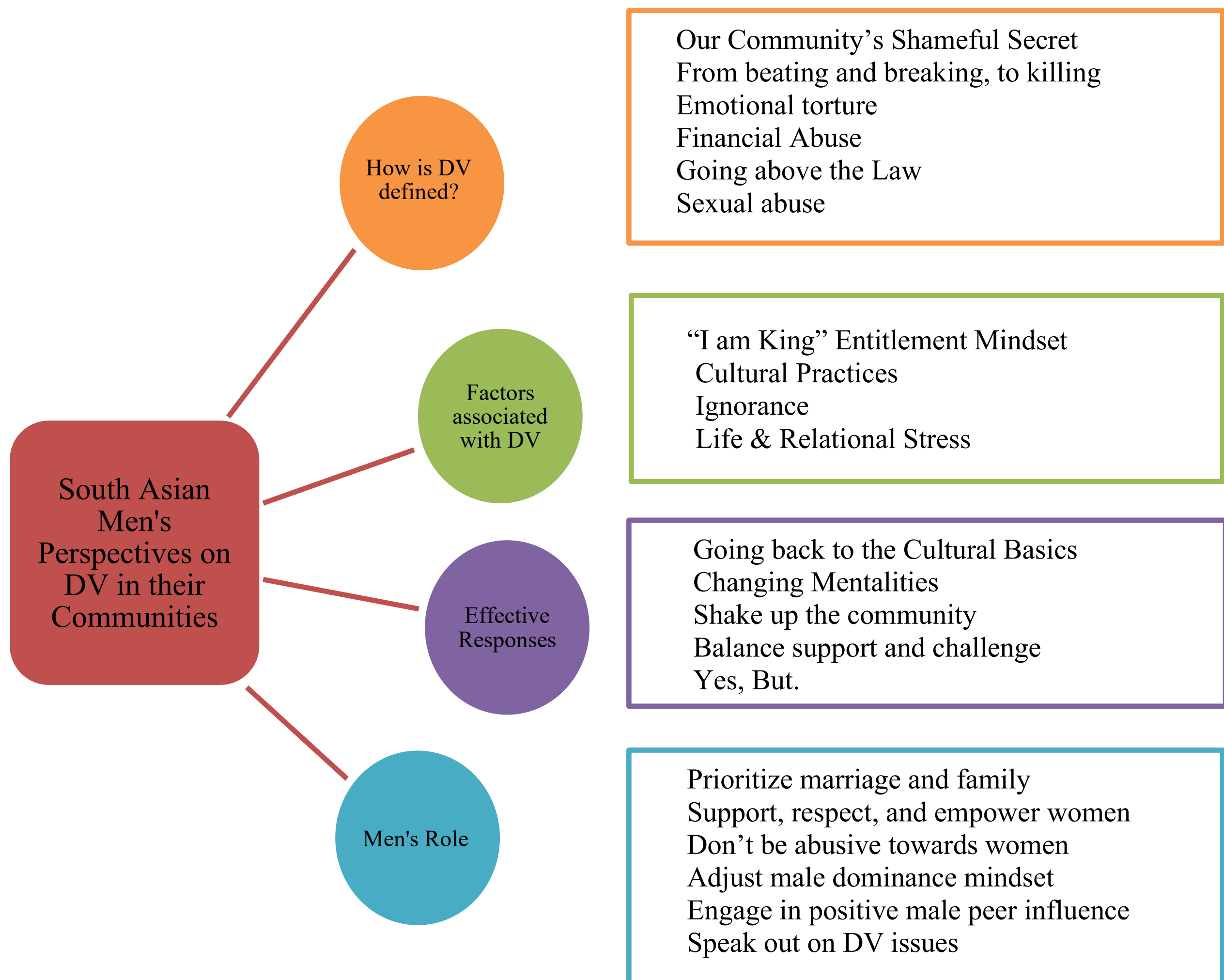

Figure 2. Dissertation Research Questions and Associated Themes

Our Community's Shameful Secret

Overall, the majority of the participants in this study recognized that domestic violence is a problem in the South Asian community, although there were some tensions amongst the participants in their level of acknowledgement of the issue based on: (a) differences between laws and policies and definitions of abuse in their home countries versus in Canada; (b) concerns about impression-management in relation to how accepting this as a problem could lead their

communities to be viewed by the dominant culture; and (c) the levels of acculturation of men and women in their communities, and how that influenced their awareness about behaviours that could be considered abusive. The men were keenly aware of their community's reluctance to openly recognize domestic violence as a problem and identified this issue as the community's "hidden" and "shameful" secret.

Across all focus groups, participants recognized that domestic violence was a serious issue in their respective South Asian communities. For example, Jeet stated: "Yes. I work in an environment where I come across examples of these situations. Yes, there is abuse." Prabhjit, another participant, elaborated: "It is a very serious [issue], that it has reached now." Chakesh corroborated: "It does happen!" as did Mani, saying it is "Definitely a problem", which was echoed by Raj and Prem. Similarly, Balvinder explained, that in some marital and intimate partner relationships in the community "like they do abuse". Despite acknowledging that abuse does occur, participants expressed that domestic violence is not acceptable in their communities or families. Balraj's focus group disclosures echoed that of many other participants when he explained people may become accustomed to abusive behaviour if it is happening on a regular basis, but then clarified that "it's not accepted, doesn't matter what culture it is. And unfortunately, it does happen and it's sad because it shouldn't go to that point".

Interestingly, without any direction from the researcher, the men supported their opinions by providing real life examples either from their personal lives or other lived experiences such as witnessing or hearing about other people's experiences within their community or social network, direct exposure to domestic violence through their service delivery roles, and information from the media or other formal reports given by external sources (e.g., news, police). At various points during focus group discussions most participants disclosed domestic violence

incidents that they personally faced or dealt with in some way. As one participant summed up: "I tell you one thing… why I was saying violence in the Punjabi community is rampant because I am seeing it!". Others shared experiences within their own family, like Maliq, who shared "yah…my Uncle. Sometimes on like the dumbest things, like he gets very upset right… he'll beat her ass!"

Participants noted domestic violence towards women could be perpetrated by family members other than the husband. There were many responses or descriptions provided by participants across all four focus groups where several in-law relatives were identified as potential perpetrators of abuse toward wives in their community. For instance, Jeet described his niece's experience of abuse from her father-in-law:

> I have example of my own niece, she was married and … living with a joint family. For some reason, the father of her husband won't let them even interact with each other. He would escort her to work, bring her back, every fourth night he will get the cheque and deposit it. He would charge her rent living in her own house!

Despite overwhelming confirmation by participants that domestic violence was a problem in their community, there seemed to be some tension in admitting it was an issue. Several participants noted "domestic violence is often hidden" and there is some "reluctance to acknowledge its existence because it is shameful". They described the community's attempts "to protect itself from close scrutiny by the mainstream community, or avoid asking for help". As Raj explained, "…police told us, the figures are coming in and the East Indian community has got quite a bit [of] problem with [domestic violence]. Its hidden somewhere – but the problem with our society is that we don't ask for help". Many were quick to point out that domestic violence was present in many other communities and cultural groups, and not something inherent to their community. This sentiment was expressed by Hakim, who noted "I think it's an issue

again of every community. If I just say it's an issue of [the] South Asian community then I [am] saying that it's only this community who has issues". Still, there were participants who disagreed with the perception that domestic violence was a problem in the South Asian community. In all of the cases where participants either denied issues of domestic violence or expressed some defensiveness, other group members were swift to challenge and provide counter arguments. Following a group member's statements regarding certain cultural communities being unfairly targeted by mainstream society as having domestic violence issues, Adil spoke up and cautioned against taking a defensive stance:

> We have to be careful about becoming defensive about protecting our culture against the big bad world outside which is going to define us in certain terms...because by doing that, and even though there is a fact or truth behind that, what it does is that it allows domestic violence to flourish in those isolated silos.

Nonetheless, many participants noted whether particular behaviours are considered abusive depends on a person's reference point, such as their cultural lens for defining abuse or what types of behaviours would be persecuted in their home country. Gulraiz, a participant in the first group, acutely noted:

> … when you say abuse, a western perspective definition of abuse is very different. So they would … look at everything as abusive behaviour. As I said, if women are restricted at home, the whole culture is considered as an oppressive culture. And naturally, the marriage and everything becomes oppressive, right? But generally, in majority [of] cases if you don't apply the abusive definition of western society, the marriages are ok. If you look at the lenses from the western society and you look to that relationship, it becomes very abusive.

He later clarified that some South Asian women freely adopt certain traditions or roles due to their important positions as "custodians" of their culture but "Western" people may see these practices as being oppressive or even abusive, even though it may not be perceived as a form of female power by community members. Similarly, participants indicated that some forms of abuse may be missed by the mainstream society because of their lack of understanding of how their culture operates. Again, Gulraiz gave an example of husbands having a second wife, which is "acceptable" practice in his community, but imposes certain expectations on these husbands that if not done, is perceived as "abuse of power" and "unacceptable". He explained husbands who take a second wife are required to treat both wives "equally" and will be criticized by the community in situations where men take wives who are "much younger" than them. Additionally, other participants (Chakesh, Gulraiz, Adil, Gurvir) shared examples of "powerful women" in their lives and types of influence women have on their families and community, whereas outsiders may see them as "passive people" due to differing expectations of women in the two communities.

Another factor that may play role in lack of understanding about domestic violence is newcomers' lack of awareness of what behaviours are abusive because there are differences in how abuse is defined in their home country. Participants suggested this occurs across both genders. For instance, Prabhjit explained:

> …back home in India and in Canada there is a difference, an *apparent* difference, in the execution of law [for domestic violence]. Execution of rules and regulations are different! There, back home in India …if the husband man handles his powers, bodily harms her, it will go unnoticed.

The Diverse Nature of Abuse: From "Beating" to "Hostage-Taking" to "Servicing Men"

Participants identified various types of abuse and illustrated their definitions with real life examples. There were five main themes described by participants that related to abusive behaviours perpetrated towards women in the South Asian community in martial or intimate partner relationships: (a) From Beating and Breaking to Killing (Physical Abuse), (b) Emotional Torture, (c) Hostage-Taking (Financial Abuse), (d) Going Above the Law (Control), and (e) Serving Men's Needs (Sexual Abuse). Each theme, including any subthemes, is described below.

From Beating and Breaking to Killing

Participants reported a range of violent behaviour as being abusive towards women. They provided descriptions that ranged from "beating", "hitting", to "sludge" as well as throwing items such as a "weapon" and "breaking" or "throwing away" wives' property. Prabhjit explained that aggression can be in "so many forms" and offered the following description: "…violence can be verbal, violence can be silent, violence can be through body language, violence can be things lying here and throw it there… although I may not hurt anyone, but I am showing my violence!" Similarly, Mani noted the following types of physical violence by husbands towards wives in his community: "…the man who is beating her, manhandling her, and hurting her…"

Other participants discussed how threats of violence could also be harmful and considered criminal. For example, Balvinder indicated "…even telephoning and threatening [wife] is taken very seriously here!" Participants recognized physical assault could result in "bodily injury" to women and have a negative impact on children who may have witnessed the incident. For instance, Balraj noted:

> …if I'm beating my wife – what's my son seeing then? He's seeing my dad is hitting mom and so therefore it's acceptable if I don't get my way, if I'm mad or if something goes wrong, then I can hit.

A few participants also recognized that violent behaviour can extend into extremes to the point that wives can be killed, as noted by Hakim in the following response "…there were real examples where there were homicides, where the victim actually left [and] went to her parent's house and said 'I don't want to be there' but she was sent back. And then later on she was killed."

Emotional Torture

The most varied and frequently cited form of domestic violence across the focus groups was psychological abuse, or "emotional torture" as Chakesh called it. The three different forms of emotional torture described in the participants' focus group discussions included: (a) Insults, (b) Restrictions, and (c) Taboos. Each one of these is further described below, along with exemplifying quotes from focus group members.

Insults. Several of the men described various ways that wives are abused through "verbal taunting", "name calling" or "insulting their character". Different examples of how wives could be insulted were shared, such as criticizing: "Her skills in doing household chores or cooking" (Jeet, Chakesh, Raj, Maliq), "physical appearance" (Vikram, Prem, Adil), "personal reputation" (Amir, Raj, Gurvir, Adil), or "family background" (Gulraiz, Raj, Mani, Chakesh). Balraj further described the taunting and name calling and how he's witnessed it being played out:

> …the way you're talking to your partner… the way you're cutting them. I've seen it where they're mocking the [wife] when they are expressing their point of view, and they're just shutting it down. Just taunting non-stop… they're even doing it in a social aspect and you

> realize, 'hey that person always cuts down his wife in everything she says, like, how odd is that?'

Additionally, Jeet shared how criticizing cooking coincided with the wives being abused. He shared a co-worker's disclosure to him about the abuses she suffered by her husband and in-laws: "if she's not making the food well - then the husband can become abusive". This was corroborated by Chakesh who shared how mother-in-laws can participate in similar abuses to wives:

> …if the daughter has cooked something, the mother in law, though the salt is not bad and the spices are right, she will say 'no no no, oh – it was very less. Don't you know that in our family we take more?' or, if it less – 'you know, we take more'. Just to find fault to put you down. So that kind of attitude, these are all emotional type of tortures.

Likewise, Gurvir shared an example of a woman in his community who took a stand against unwarranted criticism and broke her engagement after overhearing the mother-in-law say "…she's not good looking but its ok because she'll bring a lot of money…". With respect to "bad character", Raj gave an example of husbands engaging in inappropriate and unwarranted insults about a wife's reputation based on benign behaviours or interactions with other people on the wife's part:

> Maybe she talk to somebody [some male co-worker or relative] and they just blame her. 'She's a bad character' and has a bad family background. [But] you never heard anything! Whether she's talking about the business or other words, but we have a jealousy. 'We don't like her and we want to put her down'. We find the fault. We look at the qualities less. That's why fights happen…

Furthermore, Maliq elaborated about how religion could be used as a tool to threaten or instill fear in wives if they don't oblige their husband's or his family's requests: "like when

people say 'if you're not a loyal wife you're going to go to hell'. Like weird kind of stuff like that".

Restrictions. The second subtheme under emotional torture was restrictions placed by husbands or their family members' on the wife's thoughts, movements, and freedoms to maintain full control over her and disallow her to exert any personal control. Fazel summarized how this plays out, which echoed other research participants' responses about how wives can be controlled by putting: "restrictions of her move(ment) and almost her thoughts! Like, 'No, this is the way you have to think and be. You will stay home, you'll do this, you'll do what I tell you to do…'". Many participants stated immigrant wives were "most vulnerable" to this form abuse because "husbands preventing them from adapting to the new environment by restricting their independence". Balvinder elaborated on this in his focus group responses:

> They don't want to see their wives going outside to meet their friend or going outside to the party without husband, right? Or meeting with other people…[they] don't send their wife for driving license, or to the college or …university for higher education, or to upgrade.

Taboos. The last form of emotional torture reported by the focus group participants as occurring against wives in the South Asian community involved men engaging in "taboo" behaviours, such as engaging in extra martial affairs or misusing substances, such as alcohol or drugs, and using or flaunting such behaviours to torment their wives. Amir explained, "sometimes you feel like you have the right to those options… Let's say people who start having relationships outside the marriage… affairs…. They don't want their wives to have those things but they want to have it for themselves". He later provided a personal example of a woman he helped who had faced these challenges to illustrate his point,

> She was like, 'my husband doesn't work anymore and… he spends too much on alcohol' and stuff like that. [So]… it seemed like he's an alcoholic or something else. So these kind of abuses…he's not physically abusing but he's into other things, like relationships with other women…

Other participants described how wives could be threatened with affairs or marrying another woman (which may be acceptable in certain subcultures) because the husband perceives some fault in her, that she was likely insulted for in the previous forms of emotional torture already described. Gulraiz described this as an "act of revenge" by the husband, for example, "if the wife was unable to produce a male child or something else about her or if you're not in a good relationship, [then] you can threaten your wife that I will bring another woman". This was echoed by Maliq in another focus group who noted, "…the man may just crack and he'll just be like 'you're always tired, you and I never go out and do anything so I don't want to do this anymore, and I'm going to meet other women'."

"Held Hostage" (Financial Abuse)

Another form of domestic violence identified by participants involved wives in their community being prevented from having access to or information about the household finances, having their money or credit misused, or not being informed or included in financial decision-making. The financial abuse described in the study extended to manipulation of the system in terms of marital property rights, access to credit, etc., as well as to dowry demands and pressures imposed on entire families. Fazel recapitulated the group dialogue on this type of abuse in the following way: "…then there's financial violence as well. Where you're maybe the main breadwinner but you don't share any of the finances. So basically, she's held hostage without any sort of financial means". Another participant, Hakim, expressed how perpetrators often go as far as manipulating the system (in terms of land titles and division of marital property) to prevent

their wives from accessing property or money that they would be entitled to if they were to divorce: "…the abuser, like they play all this tricky games - how they transfer the whole house to the sister's or parent's name - so that when they go through the separation - they don't have to give it to them (i.e., their wife)". He also shared how manipulation and control can also occur in relation to women's access to credit, including ways the abuser may implement the abuses to evade police and authorities about what is happening, which intensifies the psychological trauma faced by wives subjected to it:

> That's where the *huge* trauma is happening to the victims because of the way they are being abused financially, and as I said it's a joint account and the money is coming here or [the wife] has been asked to get a credit card in their name and now they are the one who is withdrawing the money and bringing it to the abuser – the police won't be able to know what is happening or do anything. You know, I have seen people going bankrupt on that, and that's a huge abuse, the financial abuse.

One of the most significant effects of financial abuse that participants discussed was wives' "inability to liberate themselves from the abusive marriage" because they are reliant on the perpetrator for money in these hostage-taking situations. This point was highlighted by Amir, Fazel, Raj, Prabhjit, Hakim, Maliq, and Adil. Other participants (Raj, Chakesh, Gulraiz, Adil) noted that economic pressure in hostage taking situations could extend onto the wife's family, who may be expected to provide various gifts or amounts of money either in advance of the marriage or following the marriage as a dowry. Culturally, it is customary for the parents and family of the wife's side to provide gifts to the husband and his family as a dowry, but dowries and dowry demands can also go in the opposite direction as Raj pointed out:

> …so there is economic pressure on the girl's side too. Like if my daughter is getting married, she has to bring the clothes (multiple expensive outfits), she has to go to her

> parents and put the pressure 'we have to do this, we have to give them this and that [what they are asking for] – some card (credit), or whatever we call it'. And that's wrong in our society – if they happily want to do it then its ok. But it shouldn't be compulsory.

Going Above the Law

This type of abuse described by the South Asian men in this study involves situations where the husband and/or other family members use whatever means available to them to manipulate the legal system in their favour, or exert their power over the wife through illegal means. For example, participants described situations where wives who are sponsored to come to Canada are being taken advantage of either by forcing them to engage in chain migration to bring other family members into the country, or are being left in their home country by the Canadian spouse. Raj described this type of misuse of immigration laws:

> I have heard so many stories coming to immigration and I am hearing it, my son got married and he brought a girl there. Then my other brother is still back home so I will ask my wife to divorce and marry second, third time and bring both people, and that girl doesn't like that idea. The beating started. Everyone started beating her.

Many other participants (Amir, Prabhjit, Raj, Hakim, Adil) disclosed incidents where family members pressured the wife who disclosed the abuse to police to withdraw the charges, suggesting that this is a "common thing that happens". Yet other participants described the alarming practice of perpetrators and their families reacting to wives who had been abused and who were trying to seek justice or legal system intervention for it, "by framing them as guilty for crimes they did not commit" and then getting "revenge" by landing them in legal trouble or to be incarcerated. Amir shared a story of this nature:

> They basically started very abusive behaviours, you know, threatening her, this, and that. When she brought someone else into it [to help], they came up with some type of solution

> - so what they did was a criminal thing- but this is what happened: They brought her back to her village abroad, and they hired a criminal. Basically, physically abused her and *then* they put this on *her*. Like she was in a relationship with this guy. Unfortunately, because of the law she had to go behind bars. She has to prove *her* innocence because adultery is against the law in her home country.

Gulraiz explained that the sad fact is that sometimes the illegal punitive actions taken towards women who are abused are taken by members of their own families, rather than by the perpetrators' families. He gave the following example:

> One day, her father left, went to Saudia Arabia, and she went from her home to one of the shelters in Lahore. She went in that shelter in her shirt. The father was not concerned about the daughter - he was concerned about the bad name [family reputation]! So ultimately, she was killed by her parents in the shelter…

Serving Men's Needs: Sexual Abuse

Only participants in one of the four focus groups (Adil, Hakim, Maliq, Balraj) openly identified "sexual abuse" and identified behaviours in which men or other male relatives force sexual activity on wives or other women in the family without obtaining their consent, as abusive conduct. In all the remaining focus groups, participants didn't mention this type of abuse at all or described it in more vague terms, such as Gulraiz who gave an example of a father-in-law "taking" his daughter-in-laws away to "to serve him while their husbands are away from home". Given that participants in the fourth focus group also described sexual abuse as "serving", it may be reasonable to assume that Gulraiz was referring to sexual abuse in his example. With respect to the prevalence of sexual misbehaviours in the South Asian community Adil noted:

> Sexual abuse is huge you know! There's this whole culture of this is how it needs to be and you need to --- especially in a dysfunctional environment--- you need to *serve my needs* and all of that. But there's no build in or 'I'm going to work on it'.

His ideas were echoed by other participants in the group such as Balraj, who elaborated this idea with the following remark: "[the belief is that] 'I can relieve whatever tensions I want.' But you know what? - It's not healthy when the other person is not in agreeance and you're forcing yourself upon them." Additionally, Hakim shared how sexual abuse can be perpetrated by multiple members of the husband's family in extended family living arrangements and can even extend to the wife's own sister if she is brought into the abusive family situation:

> …if this guy gets married and he brings his wife [into his family living situation], and that's where there's more risk of sexual abuse towards the wife now. Not just from the husband, but the brother-in-law too. And then the sister comes here and now the sister is becoming a victim of some kind of abuse, and that could be sexual abuse as well. The sister of the victim is coming, and now the abuser is not just targeting the wife but he starts targeting his sister in law as well.

The following section describes the contributing factors the men across all the focus group identified for violence against women in their communities.

Contributing Factors for Domestic Violence: Entitlement, Ignorance, Culture & Stress/Tension

Across all focus groups, participants provided a wealth of information regarding the factors they perceived to contribute to domestic violence against women in their communities. Their responses reflected not only an understanding of the various factors associated with domestic violence in their communities, but also the complex ways in which they intersect and interact with one another. There were four main factors or themes that emerged from their

discussions: (a) "I am King" Entitlement Mindset, (b) Cultural Practices, (c) Ignorance, and (d) Life Stress.

"I am King" Entitlement Mindset

The South Asian men who participated in this study described a prevailing attitude among husbands in their communities that reflects male dominance or chauvinism, and perceived this attitude to be one of the most potent contributing factors for violence against women in marital and intimate partner relationships. One of the participants, Fazel, labelled the attitudinal stance that leads husbands to enforce their will onto their wives with little tolerance for any challenge to the husbands' wishes or authority as the "I am King" entitlement mentality. Another participant, Jeet, described husbands with this mentality as "dictators", who wielded all the power in the marriage, and act harshly against any violations of their power and authority, stating:

> When you have this opinion that it's my way or the highway, like whatever I say should be listened to and whatever the other person, your partner's opinion, doesn't matter anymore or your kids' opinion doesn't matter anymore, you're more of a dictator in the house, instead of part of family. That causes friction and abuse.

Several participants (Gulraiz, Balvinder, Prabhjit, Raj, Adil, Maliq) noted this "I am King" mindset might be more acceptable in their home countries where gender roles are more differentiated and there is a degree of acceptance for male dominance. However, when people immigrate to other countries such as Canada, where gender roles are more fluid and there is less tolerance for gender inequality, continuing to maintain male privilege in the household can manifest in abusive and violent behaviours towards wives and children. As Amir explained,

> … If I think I have the power and can exercise that power, and if I abuse those powers, no one is there to stop me! Especially if you're talking about South Asian or East Indian cultures … versus here (in Canada) obviously where you're not using those powers.

Given that compliance or agreement by all family members (especially by women) is a necessary component to reinforce the "I am King" entitlement mentality, several participants astutely noted that any threats to male power could be negated through abusive behaviours. For instance, women's independence or gender role reversals in the marriage could threaten the husband's authority, and he may respond by re-exerting his power through violence or other oppressions towards his wife. Prabhjit described this pattern:

> …financial independence also causes issues because once a woman gets money, the man will feel insecure that this woman will no longer listen to him... It's why sometimes the reason a man does not want his wife or his spouse to be financially independent. So that's why they don't let them work or don't let them go out.

Jeet agreed that women's financial contribution to the household might make her more willing to voice opinions on decisions or question her husband, but believed that this is not for the reason of instigating conflict but rather to open up dialogue:

> …when wives get independence, economic independence, they start to exert themselves. Because, 'what is the difference between you and me? I am part of this house, why should I have to listen to you only? Why don't you listen to me as well?' So there again, for husband it is a one-way dialogue but wife wants two-way dialogue.

However, the South Asian men in this study noted that husbands with the I am King mentality may perceive their wives' assertiveness or contributions to family dialogues and decisions as retaliation, rather than as a reflection of benign intentions to participate equally in family life after migrating to Canada, as captured by Gurvir's quote:

> …they have this macho-ism that 'what I say it goes'. 'I am right all the time'. That's when the violence and other things come out. You want to express your views as a wife or partner in life, [but] it's not accepted because it's seen as 'she's mouthing back at me'.

Cultural Practices

During focus group discussions regarding male dominance, it was evident from the participants' responses that this mentality prevails in their communities because it is supported by the larger cultural context. Participants identified many ways in which male dominance is learned, such as through cultural practices of preferring male children, seeing daughters as temporary property, lack of family support for women to leave abusive marriages, instructions on male superiority/female inferiority expressed through cultural proverbs/idioms, and watching men in their families exerting power over women. Examples from focus group dialogues are provided below.

Prabhjit highlighted how treating children of each gender differently in their upbringing contributes to eventual abuse: "…boys are given more importance than the girls, and that is very wrong because this [imbalance of power results in] such kind of violences later on". Likewise, Fazel shared how abusive behaviours towards women can be transmitted across generations by watching parents' interactions: "I think that a child or children who grow up in a violent relationship and witnessed it, there's a propensity for a repetition of that…". Balvinder echoed this point by disclosing what he witnessed growing up, and how that has affected him as an adult:

> I saw my parents – dad sometimes – and thought 'you can't do it' to mom, right [abuse her]? And uncles or my other family relatives… they think like 'we are men, we are on the top', so we have to - you know how they say (verbalizing cultural idiom in native language) - we have to keep our wives below our feet. But this mentality is still there! And that's the mentality they have here! After all, we got birth from there, we're their kids, right? We got something from them and we try to judge our wives according to that.

Participants shared multiple other cultural proverbs that reinforce gender inequality and oppression of women through male power. Some of the sayings were disclosed in a humorous manner to demonstrate the trivial ways women (especially wives or daughter-in-laws) can be scrutinized regarding their appearance or behaviour. Chakesh explained: "…you see, how do you find a fault in daughter in law? … If you can't find anything, say 'when you covered your face with the chunni (*head scarf*) you left part of your face uncovered'." He highlighted the fact that this phrase is meant to illustrate how petty the criticism of daughter-in-laws can be, but also typifies the extent husbands or relatives will go to harass women even when there is no reason or when they have not done anything wrong. The group dialogues involved participants sharing various examples of how petty some of the complaints could be, such as women not parting their hairline perfectly in the centre, or their chin moving too much when chewing their food. These sayings were given in the participants' native languages and their direct translations into English would not adequately represent the humorous connotation behind the phrases, but the laughter in the room during these exchanges seemed to reflect the absurdity of the criticisms.

Other participants shared more troubling phrases and proverbs that exemplified how cultural practices can permit domestic violence incidents in South Asian families. Jeet identified how "Kismet" or fate is sometimes provided (and accepted) as a rationalization for women being subjected to abuse in their marriages. In such cases, participants highlighted that women are therefore encouraged to "endure their troubling fate". Other phrases communicated that a wife's place is in her husband's family and that she was only a temporary part of her family of origin, suggesting that "she will no longer have the support of her parents" if anything goes wrong after marriage (Gulraiz, Amir, Raj, Adil). For instance, multiple participants (Jeet, Gulraiz, Amir) highlighted the saying in their South Asian cultures that "daughters are someone else's wealth", which suggests that daughters are property that will be valuable to their husband's family and not

to their family of origin. In disapproval of this saying, Amir exclaimed: "so first of all, they are not something or just your wealth, they're human! And then, what do you mean by wealth? You're not selling it to someone! This is the core issue…". However, many participants (Gulraiz, Raj, Chakesh, Adil) acknowledged that "women's behaviour directly impacts the reputation or honour of her biological family" and since marriage breakup can "tarnish a family's reputation", the family of origin is often reluctant to support her leaving the husband even in situations where there is abuse. Gulraiz shared a disturbing cultural saying that basically attests to parents' refusal to help their daughters in leaving abusive marriages and means something to the effect that "it would only be acceptable for the daughters to return to their natal home as a dead body". He elaborated:

> …So they say, that is the only time that we would receive you. So, if something happens there, an abusive relationship or whatever, you stay there. Because it is an insult to the family and an insult to the tribe to come here, when you're not in a good situation.

Jeet backed up this expression by providing a personal example of a female relative attempting to leave her abusive husband:

> …ultimately, she couldn't take it anymore and she went to her parents, and after sometime the parents [said], 'No, that is your husband, you have to adjust'. So she went back! But ultimately it started again. Basically, instead of her family, her friends helped her.

Ignorance

The focus group participants argued that ignorance on the part of both women and men contributes to domestic violence. Ignorance on the part of women focuses on their levels of personal awareness about their rights in Canada, and ignorance on the part of men focuses on definitions of abuse in Canada and how the justice system and legal system responds to it. Furthermore, the South Asian men in this study emphasized that people's attempts to resist

integration into Canadian society and focus on interacting with only members of their own cultural or religious communities perpetuates ignorance on the part of both sexes.

Many participants (Jeet, Balvinder, Sahil, Maliq, Hakim) identified women's lack of awareness about their rights and laws in Canada to address domestic violence as another contributing factor for domestic violence towards women in their communities. Most of the discussion centered on newcomers and immigrant women being unaware of their rights. Balvinder illustrated this point by noting,

> … if someone or the husband slaps her or did some abuse, maybe [the wife] just thinks 'this is just our culture'. The ladies, they do not know. They just take it. After a few years they come to know, 'no this is domestic violence'.

Another participant, Jeet, identified how women's lack of awareness can delay getting help or recognizing abuse: "…women are not aware of their rights here. They don't know where to go, they have not been given enough education, so they suffer silently."

Differences between how domestic violence is conceptualized and addressed in the countries of origin of South Asians and Canada was described as a key factor that contributes to male ignorance about how Canadian laws and policies respond to abusive behaviours. Consequently, these abusive husbands impose limits on their wives for what they can and can't do after immigrating here. For instance, Prabhjit discussed how newcomers may not be aware how serious domestic violence is taken in Canada because they are using their home country as a reference point for what is considered abusive or for what extent of problems that may lead the legal system to intervene:

> …but those guys who come here, the majority they are from India where the law is a loose end. Now the same guy, when he come here - he tries to hurt his spouse, you know, the little children, 8 year or 9 year old, are seeing that his or her mom is being harassed…

> being bodily injured, and they call 911. The police appear on the scene and they apprehend the man, you know. When he's apprehended and he comes to the court, and he says … 'the system here is very wrong here, I hadn't done anything - I just took the bottle and put it here. I only hit like this'. So, the law says once I hold this trash and throw this to the other person, it's a weapon. It's a weapon! But it may not be a weapon for us because the law is not there. The law is there, but it is not executed properly [in the country of origin]. It is executed to the teeth and nail here!

While many participants acknowledged that community members' "ignorance is due to lack of education about rights or laws in Canada" (Jeet, Prabhjit, Balvinder, Sahil, Maliq, Hakim), others believed this ignorance is a consequence of avoiding interactions with other communities or wanting to safeguard their culture (Jeet, Adil, Fazel, Raj). For instance, Jeet commented on the extent to which some people in the community resist integrating with others:

> I have noticed, that even if they have come to this country, they still live in our own society – they do not interact with other people at all! Punjabis will interact with Punjabis. Sikhs will interact with Sikh families. Muslim families will interact with Muslim families. What to talk about interacting with Canadians!? They don't even interact with people in their own community… we have built this wall, the wall of religion or whatever… we don't interact with each other. That's the problem.

Adil shared his perception of why there could be reluctance to integrate and how this impacts women in the following quote:

> …you would see the old generation of immigrants coming and because they are losing their culture, they become that much more hard core by holding on to it and that especially comes down to the woman folk, and you would see all that… a lot of guys, older people,

> *absolutely* trying to control their daughters even up to a much, much, much old age, and they would not do the same thing with their sons.

Life Stress

Another dominant theme across all focus groups related to the various stressors or pressures a couple may be faced with stemming either within their relationship or outside of it, that exacerbate marital tensions and contribute to violence against women. Stress associated with the adaptation or acculturation process in Canadian society was commonly identified, as well as stress related to poor relationship quality. This theme is divided it into three subthemes to reflect the internal and external stresses couples in the South Asian community may face, as well as specific stressors related to the relationship itself. The interaction between the various types of stressors in contributing to violence against women are highlighted through descriptions of various critical incidents by focus group participants.

External stressors. South Asian men described a variety of situational factors that may lead a couple to experience pressure or tension in their relationship, which may impact the husband the most adversely, and eventually contribute to abuse. Difficulty adjusting to a new society was the most cited stressor across all four focus groups. Participants shared the challenges immigrant males experience in seeking satisfying or validating employment and in obtaining the respect of members of the dominant culture instead of being a victim or racism or discrimination based on one's skin color or other factors can create "a combination of feelings of insecurity and frustration" among the men. Then, "male frustrations are taken out on their wives". Fazel summarized the thoughts shared by many men in the study on this topic with the following remark:

> Maybe he doesn't have job satisfaction. Maybe he's not respected at work or he doesn't have a job --- so he takes it out on his wife who is there to be his partner in life. So, the

> abuse can manifest itself then, but usually there is some sort of insecurity with the guy. The guy…he's short, he's dark, he's not strong, he's not validated at work – there's so many things that play into his insecurity, and who do you have at home? Your wife.

Other participants identified pressures associated with keeping up appearances of having high status in the community and prioritizing materialistic things over quality of life as being another external factor exerting unnecessary stress on the marital relationship, through the financial pressures it places on the couple and particularly the husband. Chakesh's comment best illustrated the impact of internalized pressures of living in a materialistic society on violence against women in the South Asian community:

> I think one cause of conflict is also the modern life, the stresses of the modern life. Particularly the physical achievements – everybody thinks they should be rich quick. 'I should buy a big house quick. I should get good car'…So that creates lots of stress on relationships. Particularly the modern ones. The older generations had much satisfaction with whatever they had, but now? Everyone wants to have more. More and more. See that creates a stress…so that any small trigger, there is a fight or argument, the result is the physical abuse, thrashing, or whatever…

Negative family influence was another commonly cited type of external pressure that could create stress or tension in marital relationships that results in domestic violence. Many noted how the joint family system (i.e., extended family living arrangements) and the complex relationships between daughter-in-laws and their in-laws are somewhat unique to the South Asian community linking these to a high vulnerability among women to face abuse. Balvinder elaborated:

> …like in a joint family with father in law and mother in law – they live together, right? So, in that they start like 'your mother said a small thing, why she said to me like this?'

> Conflict! Most of the conflicts in our families start like this. Joint families are kind of little problems these days…Then the daughter-in-law ends up getting hurt.

Another participant, Prabhjit, expanded on this point by saying, “these are the external pressures-- the relatives. I classify them under external forces. So, the external forces are also responsible in making marriages failure or successful.” With respect to pressures posed by extended family members, a few participants noted that when the couple have very close connections or ties to people, property, or situations in their home countries, this can also put undue stress on the marital relationship, thereby increasing the probability of conflict and abuse. Hakim described how this dynamic plays out:

> …ninety percent of the people are still connected to people back home through the families, or through friends or siblings, or whatever…if there’s some issues going on over there, back home, whether with the relatives, parents, or siblings, that’s going to impact their life over here. That’s going to impact the relationship with their spouse… So I think, anytime we study these things, family violence or spousal violence, there are all these social issues connected with that, and we cannot ignore those things.

Some participants (Prabhjit, Balvinder, Mani, Adil) discussed cultural socialization processes that instruct sons to believe that it is more important to be a good son and serve their parents than it is to be a good husband as representing an external stressor that strains marital relationships to the point of abuse. The participants emphasized that males may be placed in double bind situations where they are expected to show loyalty or service towards their parents and the requests for showing that loyalty or service may pit them against their wives, leaving them confused about how to be both a good son and a good husband at the same time. Gulraiz explained how this tension manifests in marital discord:

> The cultural or religious expectations are that [men] are fully serving their parents - Even sometimes at the cost of my relationship with my wife! And it's happening here too. So, cultural and religious obligations - they sometimes bring constraints to relationships.

Likewise, Adil acknowledged how this pressure to oblige one's parents may include abusing the wife upon the family's insistence:

> Some of those guys who are involved in domestic violence feel like they are caught between the loyalty structures to their parents versus to their partner they have. And invariably because they have to be the dutiful son, they will choose the position of their parents and they will go after her.

Internal stressors. The internal stressors that participants in this study identified as contributing factors for domestic violence related to how South Asian men reacted to some of the external pressures described in the section above, as well as how they perceived their own life situations, as will be discussed below. Several participants identified experiences of self-doubt when men are unable to provide for their families, fears around uncertain dangers from the mainstream community that may afflict their families, and engaging in personal vices to combat any combination of the various stressors. Raj pointed out that:

> Back home, I am the custodian of the family and take care of my wife (financially), and my wife is not taking care of me. It's very rare. And I am taking care of the children (by being a provider). So, when we come here, I feel very vulnerable. Vulnerable in the sense... now I have a very uncertain future [because of problems with employment or finances]… so, where I could explode? In my home.

Other internal stresses identified by participants that contribute to domestic violence are negative emotionality or depression on the part of men in response to gender role reversals after migration. These occur when women who stayed home in their countries of origin find jobs to

help the family financially survive after migration, while males remain unemployed. In these situations, participants suggested that "men may become depressed and unwilling to accept the changes to their role in the family". The participants discussed how men may then exert their power and control through other means, as described by Gulraiz:

> … [If] she becomes breadwinner and I'm not -- I'm sitting at home. So, I'm psychologically depressed. When she has dollars in her hand, she's going to feel more powerful since she wouldn't have those dollars at home…and she may do things that aren't as per my cultural norms. So I'm not accepting the realities here, the different realities where I don't have gainful employment as a husband, where things are changing and maybe not in my control… It's a lot of frustration to challenge my power – and [some men] think 'I will indeed set her straight!'

Relationship tension. Another commonly cited factor associated with domestic violence perpetration by husbands towards wives in the South Asian community was lack of compatibility between spouses. In South Asian cultures, marriages are perceived as a union between two families and therefore parents, as well as other relatives, are often heavily involved in the spousal selection process. However, many participants (Prabhjit, Chakesh, Gurvir, Hakim) noted the criteria being used to select spouses for their children do not reflect cultural values and blamed parents for incorrect or "misguided matchmaking". Furthermore, some (Raj, Prem, Chakesh) even acknowledged that parents were covering up "vices" or otherwise bad behaviour of their children when they went overseas to their home country to find a spouse. Typically, the mate selection process is long and arduous, with various complicated traditions and rituals practiced in order to adequately assess the characteristics of each potential spouse, and their family members. However, participants described short cuts to this process due to limited time available to return home and fully engage in the selection procedure. As Prabhjit described:

> …there is a mismatch you know… the girl has MSc coming from India and married a boy here with grade 12 only just for the sake of getting certificate and getting citizenship to the country. [Also], man is 60 year old and getting married to a 19 year old girl, and bringing here. This is also a mismatch – a serious mismatch! But, you know, those marriages are useless, futile, and violent.

Other participants noticed marriages being turned into business ventures just to enable the spouse from abroad to be able to immigrate to Canada. As Hakim explained "…the same people if they had been living in India or anywhere, they might not have married each other. But over here they are making those compromises, because again… I would call it more of a marriage of convenience." Because of the spousal incompatibility in such marriages occurs because the marriages have not been arranged according to the original intent of arranged marriage (where compatibility of the couple in terms of family and educational background, cultural values and behaviours, appearance, etc. are taken into account) there is a "tense" home environment where abuse towards wives may be more likely. Raj noted this in his focus group comments:

> They [parents] don't find out what the son or daughter really values, or the qualification they want. Daughters are always kept far educated than the son, and then it doesn't work. When those girls come here-- that's why we have problems in our society. Compatibility is not there. We don't go for real values – we go for, 'ok, what the people will say'.

Likewise, Chakesh explained how issues related to poor matchmaking and differences between each spouse's family's priorities could compound marital tension:

> Now suppose the marriage has taken place. Again, the grounds for conflict get multiplied. On the ground of 'poor family', 'she didn't bring much dowry', 'she's not good natured', 'she's not very educated'. So, again the husband and wife take the sides. One will be prosecuting and the other will be defending. The marriage will change. You see –these are

> the grounds for conflict. There you see that we forget the respect for each other and abuse happens.

Balraj also emphasized this point: “[domestic violence] can be based on educational difference, it could be personality difference, it could be trust issue differences, it could be a whole variety of things of why it gets to this whole violence thing.”

Lastly, participants described issues around how power and control are manifested in the marriage by the husband and other family members as being intricately related to domestic violence, with collective enforcement of patriarchy by the husband and in-laws being the most conducive to abuse. This was best illustrated by Adil’s comment below:

> There are a myriad number of reasons why [domestic violence happens]—and majority of it is disenfranchisement. People feel powerless. They gotta control what their situation is and all that stuff, from the dad on, from the father-in-law or mother-in-law, and all that kind of stuff happens. They feel they don’t have the control and they want to have the control over somebody else.

Hakim explained how creating a strong family patriarchy is easier when the wife is a new immigrant than when she is born in Canada or is acculturated, because in the latter circumstances, she would have both a better understanding of her rights and some level of social safety net:

> To me, the domestic violence or spousal abuse, whether it is we’re talking about the family or couple, it’s about power and control. When the victim is an immigrant, the power [difference] increases… that’s why we see more abuse in South Asian or immigrant communities. Obviously, there might be some cultural thing that may be playing a role but at the same time, the power, the abuser has more power now… If the victim is an

immigrant, then obviously…they don't have that understanding or they don't have that circle that they can talk to or reach out to.

Preventing and Responding to Domestic Violence:

Going Back to the Cultural Basics, Changing Mentalities, and Challenging Individual and Community Resistance

In addition to describing their understandings of domestic violence and contributing factors for this problem among their South Asian communities, the participants shared their perspectives about how domestic violence could be prevented and the types of intervention that would be most effective in addressing it. Participants' discussions on this topic provided a wealth of information, which often included lively debates and brainstorming proposals that could make a difference in their communities. The men also shared stories about people they personally knew who have made a difference and described their own direct experiences of working to combat domestic violence in various capacities within their communities. The themes that emerged from the participants' dialogues about how to prevent and address domestic violence in the South Asian community closely paralleled the factors they believed contribute to this serious social problem, as described earlier in this chapter. There were five main strategies they indicated would be most useful and effective in preventing and responding to domestic violence: (a) Going Back to the Cultural Basics, (b) Changing Mentalities, (c) Balancing Support and Challenge, (d) If Push Comes to Shove: Corrective Actions or Restorative Justice, and, (e) Yes, but: Challenging Individual and Community Resistance. Each of these strategies will be discussed below along with any corresponding subthemes and participant quotes. Participants acknowledged the critical role of men in domestic violence prevention and intervention, and their views about what roles men can play and what steps they can take to address this issue are interwoven within each of the strategies described below.

Going Back to the Cultural Basics

The South Asian men in this study recommended that families should return to practicing their cultural traditions and norms in the way these traditions and norms were originally intended, with embedded positive family values to impart for future generations, including respect for women. Many different people in the family were identified as the ones needing to return to these values such as parents or parents-in-law, but the participants focused heavily on the male relatives, including husbands, fathers, and brothers playing a key role in leading the cultural change process. The following subthemes related to going back to cultural basics emerged from the four focus groups and will be further described below: (a) Marital Matchmaking for Compatibility, (b) Prioritizing Marriage and Family, and (c) It Starts at Home: Teaching Children.

Marital matchmaking. As mentioned earlier, many focus group participants linked improper matchmaking practices and mate selection criteria in applying cultural customs related to arranged marriage to the occurrence of domestic violence. They acknowledged that basing spousal matches on materialistic ideals, such as for increasing one's family's status in the community or by giving or taking dowries, or for the purpose of chain migration rather than focusing on the compatibility of the spouses, negatively impacts the quality of the marriages and increases women's vulnerability for abuse. Furthermore, arranging marriages for children in this way was identified as the reason that "inaccurate or dysfunctional" cultural values and any ensuing abuse can get passed down to later generations. Therefore, it was fitting that participants recommended families should resume typical matchmaking customs for their children by selecting spouses for their children based on compatibility among the potential mates, and choosing families that reflect the positive cultural values that the arranged marriage practice intends to uphold. Accordingly, the participants recommended parents should prioritize qualities

such as “morality”, “honour and respect of women and girls”, and “understanding of values” in the potential spouse and their families. Mani shared his perspective as a father when deciding on a marital partner for his daughter to exemplify a father’s role in arranging marriages:

> …if I’m looking for somebody in another family, I should worry where that person is coming into my family or if my daughter is going to someone else’s family, are they going to fit? Do they have the same level of understanding? [Is there] liberalism in the family? … Do they have open dialogue with husband and wife, suggesting respect?

Raj stressed the importance of searching for good values and compatibility between the spouses, as well as careful assessment of the parents:

> …compatibility should be between the husband and the wife – the boy and the girl. Not compatibility with the parents! If the parents have good values it goes a long way. It means most probably the kids will have good values.

Compatibility was also highlighted by Gurvir, a father himself, who identified the role of parents in not only taking the time to understand their children, but also to pay close attention in choosing a compatible spouse. In the following excerpt, he shares his views about matchmaking and how it is practiced in his own family, regardless of the child’s gender:

> Parents [should] pay a little more time to know your son and daughter, what kind of behaviour they have, what kind of thought patterns they have... A number of examples I can give – personally, related to our own families… we look for the value system, what your own household has and the other people. Not just the girl, but the boy too. How educated they are, what background their parents and grandparents have, what value system they carry – it all carries more than money. And then we try to match them. Both parties, yes. My daughter or my son, so they are in line [and] they have the same understanding. This way we can help them to some point.

Furthermore, Gurvir talked about refusing to apply the dowry system in marriages, as a way of moving towards respectful interpersonal and gender relations:

> That's the theme we're talking about today – the value system. In the parents – I have done with my two kids. Right? Son went to visit and somebody introduced, and they got married in India. We didn't take a thing from that girl. My father in his marriage didn't take a thing. I, myself, my wife only had five thousand when I married – and [I took] nothing. My grandfather the same, my great-grandfather the same. This starts marriage on equal foot for husband and wife.

Prioritizing marriage and family. Participants emphasized the importance of prioritizing marital and family relationships rather than focusing on keeping up appearances or "trying to look good to others" or striving "to be the best person in society", as a key vehicle for preventing domestic violence. They also spoke about how males can work collaboratively with their wives to identify new roles and ways of executing the marital partnership with changing family responsibilities, and how men can actively support women and challenge the entitlement mentality that was passed down to them from their fathers.

Raj highlighted how keeping up appearances impacts marital relations in adverse ways:

> …we're trying to look good and we worry about the people outside. If I'm in the Gurdwara, I want to look my best there. In the society, I want to be the best person in the society but I don't see what I'm doing at home – I heard a story, that people have great respect outside, but when you find them at home they don't treat their daughters right, they don't give the respect to the partner, they take them as granted.

Other participants commented about needing to "adjust" and "modify" roles in the family and marriage, especially for those who are emigrating from their home countries. For instance,

Gulraiz described marital roles back home as being “very well defined”, whereas the ones in the adopted country are more fluid. He suggested couples:

> …need to modify, you need to change that. So change of your environment of course brings some more dynamics. Successful marriages means how you would get adjusted and how the two partners accept that adjustments by working together to see what’s right for them.

Another participant, Balvinder, disclosed changes within himself and how he perceived his wife after they came to Canada, he explained:

> I was like that before – when I was in India, like honestly, right? I changed here because I realized one day, I learned, like I got obviously something from my parents, my dad: ‘I’m king of the house’ right? Then one day I realized, ‘No, she’s doing everything, she’s taking care of kids, she’s going to job, and she wakes up early in the morning, like 6 o clock, 5 o’clock, doing everything for me – making breakfast, lunch or everything, even after that, after job and then taking care of kids’… suddenly everything changed in my mind.

The focus group participants shared several useful strategies husbands could use in their relationships to move towards healthier and positive marriages and to manage daily stressors, such as “conflict resolution”, “not reacting right away”, and being “understanding”. Prabhjit suggested husbands should be more active in the family by doing the following: “…they should do good parenting, spending time with the family, or at least take them away, take them to picnic…religious places… to some malls, and all that. These things brings more closeness in the family…these are very important.” Interestingly, many shared strategies based on their own practices or what they have learned from other family members. For example, Mani shared his father’s teaching about marital relationships and dealing with disagreements:

> My father told me for marriages if you go 50-50, there is always fighting. One is 49 and the other is 51. When you always go 'I'm right, I'm right' then it's always fight. You never go right. So somebody go up, somebody go down. Sometimes you have to see you are wrong.

The participants even proposed the role they could play in challenging masculinity within the household, which may underpin oppression of women. Many men openly shared examples of their behaviours in the home with the group members regarding "sharing parenting duties" (Jeet, Prabhjit, Balraj, Adil), "supporting your wife's decisions" (Adil, Raj, Fazel, Mani, Prabhjit), and "openly expressing love or appreciation for their wives" (Gurvir, Raj, Chakesh, Balraj).

It starts at home: Teaching children. In line with focusing on family, participants also identified the importance of parents teaching their children the correct cultural and family values in order to prevent domestic violence. In the previous section, many participants remarked how witnessing violent and abusive behaviour in the household increases the likelihood of children becoming inappropriately aggressive in the future. Their responses to the questions posed in this study heavily focused on men's role in teaching children through their actions and verbal instructions about how to treat others, including women. They even went as far as to describe incidents and examples in which men should give up or transfer some of their power in the family to women as a way of teaching and modelling "respect and equality in marriages" for their children.

As a starting point, Balraj stressed the importance of educating children to not use violence and about how to treat others in the following recommendation:

> …we need to teach our children that hey it's NOT OK to hit. It's NOT OK to be supressed. Yes, vocalize what your thoughts are…treat everyone as equals, just things that normally

> we take for granted, [because] we think that everyone should know these rights. But you know what? They don't.

On a similar note, Gurvir shared how children are more likely to advocate for correct cultural values if they witness their own parents standing up for them and modelling respect for each other and positive family relationships:

> How will we correct it? We give them the right values and [the children] will break down these walls. They'll come down - if they follow it and see it in the house. If it's not happening in my house and in my time, it's not going to happen in my kids' time. It starts now – it starts with us.

Several participants acknowledged the role of men in their family or community in promoting the virtues of marriage and respecting women through their actions. Most importantly, they identified the significance of not being abusive towards their wives as a major factor for preventing domestic violence. For instance, Raj noted:

> …[men] should not to be abusive –that's why the men are the main role. Who's physically more powerful when it comes to violence? Wife can hit me - but I won't get hurt that much. If I get her, she will get hurt. So, it's my duty that I don't go that way.

Others gave ideas about husbands and fathers demonstrating healthy relationships and sharing power in the household. For example, Hakim shared some ideas for how he and his wife plan to parent their children:

> I want to touch on something as men in the family. What is your role as a father, as a brother, or whatever you know? You are not always sitting on the dining table and expecting the food, you know. You are cooking, you are in the kitchen, cooking with your daughter, or you're cooking with your son. Or if you have a son and daughter, your daughter and mom are having a date today, [while] you and your son are the ones who are

> taking over the kitchen today. Or you and your daughter are taking over the kitchen today – so, those kind of things in the family. And even like, personally when we have kids we can go in a circle over here (pointing around the table), where everybody would have right to sit on *that* chair (pointing to the head of table). It's going to rotate – today is this person who would start the conversation, what they have to tell about the day – next it's the other person's turn. Like playing those kind of small things – you know, giving up power and authority to everyone for that moment. It's not 'oh I'm the dad and I'm going to be the one who tells about the day today, and I'm only the one who is sitting on this chair', you know? So those kind of things – that starts at home.

Prabhjit gave an example of how women in the family can also participate in the education process, so it is initiated jointly as a family venture. He shared how his daughter corrected her son's behaviour towards his sister to illustrate the importance of teaching children proper values at home:

> The other day, [my grandson] said something to his sister and his sister talked to her mom: 'my brother has spoken to me like this'. Immediately my daughter called him [and said] 'ask forgiveness from her … – why did you behave like that? Do you behave like this? Are you going to behave in the school like this with the girls?' See… it starts from the home too.

Changing Mentalities

The South Asian males in this study strongly asserted that their community and its members need to change their mentalities with respect to gender inequality, domestic violence issues, and male domination in order to prevent and address violence against women. They identified four different strategies for challenging these mentalities, labelled: (a) Shake Up the

Community, (b) Upgrade Knowledge, (c) Hey Listen, and (d) Empower Women. Each of these will be outlined below.

Shake up the community. The South Asian males in this study suggested that their communities need to openly address issues associated with domestic violence. Several participants acknowledged that South Asian communities tend to "sweep [domestic violence] under the rug" and this reaction only reinforces the problems further. During a particularly heated discussion between group members, Adil expressed his frustration about the reluctance by some members of the South Asian community to acknowledge domestic violence as a problem:

> I think we need to wake the community up, Man! We need to make them realize and smell the roses that this is what's happening over here. Sometimes we got to shame our community and say, 'come on Man, what is going on here' to a certain extent… to our brothers and sisters, that all that stuff is happening, you know, it's all hidden in there! This is a dysfunction and as a community we need to start healing ourselves.

Chakesh astutely noted that for change to occur in the first place, the community must accept "these problems and recognize that it is a problem!". His response occurred during a series of exchanges between the focus group members discussing factors that perpetuate abusive behaviours, and he spoke about the difficulty in fixing problems that are not seen as such by others. Perhaps this is why many participants suggested using a public forum to provide information about domestic violence to not only begin the process of changing people's mindset, but to also raise awareness about the issue in the first place. Prabhjit explained: "somethings do need to be talked publicly, you know. So that the mindset can be changed everywhere." Likewise, Raj shared how educating people could result in changes within families:

> …One thing I will say is that the person who has the wisdom and the knowledge, they can help. Because I have seen in the family - is that nobody knows about that problem or issue

> – nobody has the wisdom. They might have the education, but they don't have the wisdom to advise properly. That's why we can't take the next step.

Focus group participants identified several different segments of the South Asian community for either needing to lead these discussions in their community or being the recipients of information to alter their mindsets. In many responses, religious and community leaders were frequently singled out for needing to use their "podiums" to start shifting the change in their communities. Fazel emphasized the far-reaching impact of religious institutions on their parishioners: "…religious leaders have to [say] '[domestic violence] is unacceptable in this country and you have to change your thinking and your mindset'. You really have to because it affects the generations". In a similar vein, Hakim noted the importance of religious venues being used to communicate messages against domestic violence, especially since perpetrators may be among the crowd of attendees. He stated:

> … another thing is all the offenders of domestic violence, whatever they may be doing, but you would still see them going to the Mandir and Gurdwara or to the Mosque on Sundays. I think that's why the religious leaders need to be on board as well because [perpetrators] may not listen to me or any other therapist or service provider.

Raj shared a similar sentiment and included the importance of religious venues collaborating with local organizations to help address family conflict and domestic violence issues:

> I think that our society should work through the agencies like yours or something, to have some classes like people go to temple, ok. I go to temple, but there is nobody there to preach how to live with one another. We all talk about our Gurus and Prophets, but they're gone now! … But what difference it would make if I had a big problem in my family, I'm beating my kids and I'm beating my wife – what is the Guru going to do to me? The

> Gurbani (scripture) isn't going to do anything – I'm not saying we shouldn't listen to the Gurbani, we should listen to it, but we should have more emphasis on practical [information] in religious places, to help the society in that way.

Other participants identified additional key targets who could use their influence in shaping their communities and to lead the change process, including youth (suggested by Maliq and Prem), elders (suggested by Adil, Gurvir, Raj), politicians (suggested by Hakim), and women (suggested by Adil, Jeet, and Chakesh). Amir conveyed the importance of engaging various sections of the community to form a united message against domestic violence:

> … you bring all kind of folks together, they [can] come down to a consensus and as a consensus, to move the larger community .... So, it's not just the religious leaders - it's the politicians that we've got, it's the lawyers, it's the judges, its yah… the advocates, it's the social workers, it's the person who is doing a medical degree somewhere in the school – the students and all that kind of stuff. It's all those people that the people who have a voice and have the *ability* to have that voice, they should be getting together in the community and speaking as a collective, and a common voice.

Additionally, his response included an example of community led change regarding misuse of the dowry practice and sati (an obsolete funeral custom where the wife is expected to commit suicide on her husband's pyre, suggesting that her life is of no value after the husband's death), to illustrate how people can band together to orchestrate meaningful change:

> I think as a culture we have to be able to be open and non-defensive enough to critically look at ourselves and our own culture and say what works and what doesn't work. I mean at one time, people used to think the dowry and sati and all that kind of stuff was a good practice, and then somebody came in and said it was all bullshit and they cancelled it and made it into a criminal offence, right?

Although participants understood the barriers women face when coming forward to disclose abuse, they also talked about how significantly the community could be transformed if the open dialogues just described also paved the way for women to "rise up" and "speak out" about their abuse experiences. Jeet expressed this sentiment in the following response when the focus group was asked to identify what could be done to address domestic violence in the South Asian community: "First thing is that women have to rise and understand that this abuse is not acceptable". Similarly, Chakesh identified the "difficult" but meaningful role of women in the family to challenge gender inequality practices:

> …It's mothers of the female gender in the families who need to take a leading role, *with lots of courage*. There are ladies who have taken this role – when she was carrying a female [fetus], and she said 'yes I will carry whatever you do, is whatever you do, but I'm not going to drop her'. Abortion. They say female feticide is a problem that we have. [But] there are women who have taken that stand [to not abort] …and stood against any abuse that could happen to them for that.

Upgrade Knowledge. Besides increasing open communication about domestic violence, the South Asian males in this study talked about the importance of educating members of their communities about cultural and marital adaptation, domestic violence, and laws in Canada concerning wife abuse. Gurvir offered a metaphor in describing the process of changing one's beliefs to the appropriate context and upgrading knowledge in order to create meaningful solutions: "just like working on a computer, [the] same software doesn't work for a different application. That's how it is – you have to have the right tool, the right software, and the person [should] have the knowledge to apply it." Several methods and venues for dissemination of information about modifying one's behaviours and roles for the cultural context and domestic violence laws in Canada were outlined, including brochures/pamphlets, workshops, giving

presentations for existing educational/religious programs, formal education, and social media campaigns. Participants identified discussing topics such as personal rights and laws, availability of community resources, explaining adjustment processes, and upgrading formal education as possibilities.

Maliq identified the importance of disseminating information for recognizing abuse and how this could help people begin the process of changing their relationships:

> …we should also show people or give them pamphlets, educational materials to understand like if they are even being abused. Like people need to know how to see the signs of themselves, not just on other people…it's easier to say that lady or that guy is being abused or whatever, but it's harder to take a look at yourself like, 'hey, was I raped on that day?' Or, 'did that person take advantage of me? Why did I not speak up for whatever reason – like I have rights you know. I should be able to speak up and he should know to respect my decision and not bother me'.

Providing information to the South Asian community was also echoed by Adil, who suggested how workshops with community members would not only increase their awareness about domestic violence issues, but also put them into direct contact with service providers:

> …those workshops again, you can have subject matters from many different agencies who can actually talk about real life and real scenarios that have happened you know, and giving an example that this is what happened, that's where people think 'oh this is starting to happen to me as well now'.

One of the most frequently mentioned topics to educate the community about was domestic violence laws, how the legal system may respond to abuse in Canada, and an individual's right to be able to access counselling and support. Many participants acknowledged the significant difference in the "execution" of domestic violence laws in their home countries as compared to

Canada, and how raising awareness about the laws in Canada may prevent abuse from occurring in the first place. Prabhjit suggested informing the community about how seriously domestic violence is taken in Canada: "awareness and also education – it should be told to the people amply, 'this is not India, this is Canada and the law will take its own place. The law will take its own actions and the consequences will be drastic'."

Another focus group participant, Hakim, identified how having studies like the one being conducted by the researcher was another way to help people in both the South Asian and mainstream community understand domestic violence issues:

> One thing that we lack in South Asian society is this kind of a study – when we study society, the sociology and all those things, that's where the society and the mindset of the people actually starts growing [because] they start understanding society from a sociological perspective or psychological perspective.

Similarly, in another focus group, Balvinder identified how the results of the current study could help his community, "you should find the way maybe in your study like HOW we can get the people out and attend the seminars". There was also discussion in one focus group about how the researcher's gender and disseminating information about domestic violence could be influential in altering the mindset of community members. Adil stated: "hearing women like you speaking in a [workshop], will give [women] a sense of power – 'look here's another woman, she's done pretty good for herself, men are listening to her, she's got power or authority… I can do it too'."

Although participants discussed the need for widespread modification of community members' mentalities, they also highlighted specific targets for needing to change their mindsets, such as parents (as identified by Balvinder), mother-in-laws (as identified by Chakesh), local or mainstream counsellors (as identified by Gurvir, Gulraiz and Hakim), newlyweds (as identified

by Raj and Maliq), and newcomer spouses (as identified by Sahil and Balvinder). Some even acknowledged the importance of men needing “education” to recognize and respect the rights of women. This sentiment was expressed by Balvinder, who stated: “I think men need to get educated. We need to give them more education that women have the same rights in Canada”. Similarly, Raj noted: “It’s just a matter of realizing [wives] value and we should go 51/49, but we [don’t] even go 51! Sometimes we’re 99 and she’s only 1. But some men in our society…are having a problem adopting that ladies are equal.”

Interestingly, a few participants also focused their attention on individuals in the mainstream community for needing education about the South Asian culture in order to best help those affected by domestic violence, such as therapists and other front-line staff who may come into contact with either the victim or perpetrator. This notion was expressed by Prem who stated, “…the counsellor should be wise enough to understand the culture – the psychology of our side, the South Asian.” Gurvir shared a similar sentiment, “those who want to be a counsellor - they have to understand the culture and how it functions, first of all. Then they can help somebody or otherwise their degrees, sociology and all this, it’s not going to help.”

Hey listen. Participants offered several mediums for changing their community members’ mindset. For example, positive messages about marriages and family through social media or film that community members already listen to or watch were seen as good mediums for getting the attention of and reaching a large segment of the community. Other mediums where community members would already be engaged and attentive that were mentioned included ESL classes, immigration centres, community events, and health care practitioners.

South Asian-based television shows and Bollywood movies are one of the ways that members stay connected to their community and culture, so using this format could potentially having far reaching effects for people who have immigrated here, as well as those watching from

their home countries. Participants in focus groups identified several positive South Asian media examples that specifically targeted men in their community. For example, Balraj gave an example of a South Asian movie that tackled issues around sexual consent:

> … now more of these movies are coming out where we're teaching the public, 'Hey listen – it's not ok to put your will upon women, it's not… even if she says yes initially and then changes her mind, No means No – no matter what'. And that's a famous line he has, No means No, no matter what. You know, 'No is no'. No doesn't mean 'yes' or No doesn't mean 'maybe', *No means No*… So that's something that is just now [happening]. It was all over media that 'Hey, we need to learn this now' as men especially, with what happened in Delhi and all the others, you know, the unfortunate events that happened with rapes and stuff like that. Now we need to learn even with couples in a relationship that it is important if the other spouse is not in agreeance, then we're not going to go ahead and do anything, right?

There were also suggestions for using community venues and places that South Asian people typically congregate such as faith centres, community leagues, and sport leagues. Hakim shared his views about how well-informed community and religious leaders can challenge misconceptions regarding the South Asian culture accepting/tolerating abuse towards women or assuming the law is biased against men in Canadian society. He noted:

> …when communities are coming together, and they are telling them 'no, this is not acceptable in our community'. What I hear most of the time when people – especially offenders – 'oh, the system always takes sides of women, you know'. But if it's coming from the own community leaders and the religious leaders, they won't be able to say that.

Others recommended that information about identifying domestic violence, laws addressing it, and resources that can be accessed to deal with it should be given to newcomers

before they even land in Canada through brochures or pamphlets or by incorporating this information into educational workshops for any existing programming immigrants commonly take, such as ESL or settlement programming. Balvinder captured this sentiment in the following response:

> Let's say, if any girl is getting married and she is coming from India to here, when they are sending the landing papers, there should be a small booklet where everything is written – like, what's your right, if something is happening in the, like, on the airport - where you supposed to call if nobody is coming to pick you up, here's where you're supposed to call. And second thing, if any foreign educated, like they are going for upgrade in education – let's say, English, ESL, or whatever classes, there should be a small lecture about that too because they are newcomers. That's the right way the woman can get education.

Sahil corroborated the same sentiment about receiving information about the "rules and regulations of the Canadian government" but suggested that it should be provided to both genders. In fact, he shared his frustration about the lack of education for women regarding domestic violence and legal information, and suggested wives may be more willing to accept information from authority figures:

> I attend lots of meetings and I know… but why the men only? Why the women not? Why is the Canadian government not giving any information or any kind of awareness programs [to women]? I have also spoken to many times my wife, lets come with me and join the classes…lots of times when I came from after the finishing class, I talk to my wife, 'you know today the nurse and the girl she given us some good ideas about how we spend time with kids'. But she avoids. Because, I'm the husband, right? I'm not the doctor, if doctors or some other person, if they can teach her, I think she can understand better [than from me].

Empower women. Several participants commented about the need to support women's empowerment in their community in order to address factors associated with domestic violence. Their responses reflected an understanding of the barriers women experience due to patriarchal structures that limit their autonomy. The suggestions for empowering women incorporated the role of men in helping with this endeavour through fathers and husbands encouraging female independence through education or employment, as well as actively opposing cultural practices that reinforce gender inequality. Given their earlier comments about beliefs supporting male domination in the South Asian community being associated with domestic violence, having men contribute to women's independence/autonomy and demonstrating healthy behaviours would no doubt be helpful in promoting female empowerment. This sentiment was captured by Chakesh, who noted the role of husbands in supporting wives, both in the marriage and publicly, with respect to decision making: "…he can stand by her side, say if any issue started. He can take her side, 'yes she's right. Yes, we should do it!' And try to convince the other people who are against it!".

Similarly, Maliq identified the role of men in positively "influencing females" in their lives by being good role models for how women should be treated and educating young women about abuse:

> So at least within as a capacity of men…like [with] your sister or your daughter, or your niece you can try to set a good example in the sense that you treat your wife a certain way, and you also tell them-- especially if they're young and they haven't started dating or meeting guys or anything, you can kind of teach them, 'OK once you start meeting boys or men, this is what you should expect' you know, 'if somebody calls you names or if they bother you or tell you to just run away from home and let's go do something else. If they are telling you to do self-destructive behaviour - this isn't a good thing'.

Other participants discussed the importance of women having financial independence and for family members supporting this by encouraging her employment, including her in financial decision-making, and completing educational upgrading. Prabhjit noted how supporting women's employment serves as a way of educating her, particularly for newcomers:

> If she doesn't work, then her knowledge bank will be limited and she will not be able to educate the children with those ideas. These ideas always come when you're in the field you know… when you're working. When you are working, you meet different people. When you meet different people, you will have lots of inputs of the knowledge and that makes ultimately a richer woman, from the point of her thoughts…

To illustrate how this could be achieved, Balvinder shared a personal story about cautioning a friend who wanted to prevent his wife from working because of the belief that her independence may challenge the status quo in their relationship. He relayed the following story about how he intervened with a friend:

> …his wife is working right, he said, 'I think I should take my wife out of the job and let her take care of the kids'. I said, 'why?' He said, 'Uhh, you know she's thinking she's just… maybe she becomes a financial independent, blah blah blah, and its better if she stays at home and takes care of kids'. And I said, 'You know what? This is totally wrong – if she's sitting at home, she's not doing anything, she's not, like upgrading herself, she's not getting exposure outside, she cannot upbring your kids properly. She'll be lagging behind and your kids will lag behind'. And this is proven already – working women's kids and working husband and wife's kids are more intelligent. Yah…so I told him, 'don't do this'. Like he said, 'No - people are talking - Why is she working till 8, 9, 10?'. I said, 'What's wrong? My wife, she works in the call centre, and finishes her shift around 11 o'clock and then takes the train. I don't care!' Right? He said: 'But like she's coming home

> late and I don't know where she does go and all that stuff'. I said: 'Don't do this mistake'. I watched his brain and mind, like 'No, don't make this mistake buddy!'

Finally, another crucial aspect of empowering women that participants discussed focused on the community changing cultural practices that reinforce gender inequality. Many noted how gender inequality in various practices ranging from female foeticide (mentioned by Chakesh), male birth celebrations versus female births (mentioned by Jeet, Chakesh, and Prabhjit), marriage traditions (mentioned by Raj and Gurvir), close monitoring of females (mentioned by Amir, Adil, and Gulraiz), access to basic rights (mentioned by Jeet and Gulraiz) and treatment of wives/daughter-in-laws in the household (as mentioned by Jeet, Raj, Prem, Adil, Chakesh, and Gulraiz) only serve to oppress women to the "shackles" of their abusive situations. Prabhjit captured this sentiment shared by others by exclaiming, "Moreover, there should be no difference between boy and girl. That is a big [issue]… always done in our community here". Likewise, Mani identified men's role in contributing to gender inequality but also the changes that are occurring:

> … my reading is that most of the problem comes from the men - Yah. Because we are not giving the girls their values, the wives their values in the home. We're not respecting them as equal – but this society is changing now. Maybe those days are going…

Other participants also shared recent changes to cultural practices that were typically held for boys, like celebrations of their birth or puberty, which are now being practiced with girls too, both in Canada and back home. For example, Balvinder shared his participation with a Punjabi group from Toronto to celebrate both genders: "…I think the same Nach Balliye group from Toronto were here and last night I did the event [with them], Lohri for the girls and the boys". Similarly, Prem noted changes with respect to celebrations for both genders starting to be more common:

> …a very important step they have taken here in Canada is ‘let us celebrate Lohri for the girls and the boys. Back home in India too also – there is awareness coming and they are celebrating Lohri for the girls too you know, so the things are changing…

Typically, “Lohri” is an annual Punjabi festival that is celebrated by many South Asians in their home countries and abroad in the month of January to commemorate the winter season. However, in the present day, Lohri is also seen as an opportunity for celebrating the birth of a male baby, but the celebration is not typically held in the event of female births. This practice of neglecting the female child is against Sikh principles, but is one way male child preference is reinforced in certain parts of South Asia, as it is a cultural rather than religious practice. Balvinder noted how the preference for male children contributes to abusive behaviour towards wives: “Maybe another cause, like, looking for a kid or child to be boy is also the reason for the bad marriages. They just want to see a boy for a child, right?” Therefore, initiatives like the one discussed above being spearheaded by the South Asian community and having men’s participation and support were seen to be critical in changing the mindset that contributes to wife abuse.

Balance Support and Challenge

The South Asian men in this study emphasized that although initiatives to change community beliefs and practices are important, in order to address domestic violence, wives who have experienced abuse need to be provided with support and resources and the men or families engaging in the abusive behaviours need to be directly challenged. This was echoed by participants across all focus groups conducted in this study. Participants offered a range of examples relating to *who* should provide support, but also the *types of support* that should be given. Their dialogues addressed both providing support to victims and perpetrators. Two key

subthemes that emerged related to support provision included: (a) Give Resources and Counselling, and (b) Potentiate Informal Community Networks for Man-to-Man Accountability.

Give resources and counselling. Across all focus groups, participants identified the importance of having resources and formal supports available to women who have experienced abuse as the "main thing to get darkness out of their lives". Maliq noted the impact of giving resources to victims of domestic violence as a catalyst for making changes in their lives: "…you give [abused wives] a bit of resources or you tell them 'hey, if you want to talk come in, or ask us more'…then slowly over time you empower the person enough that they're willing to help themselves". Various resources were suggested, such as "education" or "vocational upgrading", "financial support", and "counselling". Many acknowledged the importance of providing women with financial resources and education, especially if they are planning to separate from their husbands. For example, Gulraiz noted:

> …so it's not just to talk, but we need a system in place where if it's getting worse and it comes to a divorce - you need to have a system in place to have money to pay fee for the attorney, or meet the expenditure that is coming if the husband is gone, to take care of the family. If the woman is uneducated or not trained, in most cases we have these issues…

The lack of culturally appropriate services was identified as a barrier for the South Asian community by many participants, but the men in the study provided solutions to this perceived problem. For example, Adil suggested that helping professionals reach out to the South Asian community and engage community members in speaking more openly about issues faced by the community, so there is collaboration between the community and mainstream organizations: "So I think the more we talk about it - the more likely there's resources to open. And as a community, we need to start talking about it because that's the only way we're going to be able to change it". Similarly, Gulraiz provided some suggestions about how culturally responsive

domestic violence services could be established by incorporating both community-specific and mainstream perspectives:

> …So, a neutral body and an informal system…. where it would have a Western perspective, a cultural perspective, you have religious perspective that are sitting together…there would be a very neutral people, who are aware of the culture and value system. I think, we can effectively respond to any abusive situation.

Providing counselling services following domestic violence incidents was one of the most common entry points for intervention identified by the participants. The participants recognized the need for a "safe place" to support women who are experiencing domestic violence, "where they can take refuge, and sit down, and are economically and socially supported", as stated by Hakim, and echoed by Amir. Providing some counselling to perpetrators of abuse was seen by the men to be critical in moving towards any kind of successful or long-term resolution of the social problem of domestic violence, as captured by Chakesh: "…we have to bring to his mind, that whatever he is doing is not the correct way". Gurvir shared his opinions about the different types of counselling that would be appropriate for perpetrators: "If it's the boy, they should have counsellor one-to-one and make them comfortable. Have a good therapy with other people, you can have them together, so they can openly talk. Once they start talking then they will understand…" Maliq acknowledged needing to prioritize counselling services for victims, but explained why offering counselling to male perpetrators is crucial for stopping abusive behaviours in his quote below:

> …it might seem kind of weird or strange, we have to some extent – not to the same extent as the actual victims – [but] to some extent - we also have to try to counsel you know, talk to the abusers and see what exactly happened to them… Because if you just help the victim, without kind of like actually fixing the actual source, which is like the abuser, then

> it's kind of like he might leave that victim alone, but he'll go to somebody else. Like, he'll leave his wife alone, but he'll go to his sister in law or somebody else and hurt them, right?

Potentiating informal community networks for man-to-man accountability. Another dominant conversation across all the focus groups involved the role the South Asian community can play in supporting and encouraging wives who are experiencing abuse. Participants in the study identified the role of family members, as well as the larger cultural community, in offering support, rather than responding to domestic violence incidents by "shoving it under the rug". Support was described in several ways, such as having community members "speak up" about issues of domestic violence and to challenge abusive behaviour on the part of others, by saying "No, this is wrong", and even engaging in direct interference of abusive behaviour chains. Of utmost importance in this informal support strategy, was the role of South Asian men in challenging and interfering with incidents of violence against women in their community, in re-educating abused women's families about their worth (not only in their relationships, but also in the event that they were to become divorcees), as well as in connecting the women to appropriate formal supports. The men espoused the idea of treating other women in the community like their own sisters or daughters, and in correcting or ostracizing the behaviour of men who engage in abuse.

Following an exchange between the group members about speaking out against domestic violence, Adil astutely identified the danger of community members being silent about issues such as domestic violence:

> …people who are not saying something, like they're quiet about it – I think that's one thing with too many good people remain silent for too long - what you end up doing is what happened in Germany during Nazis and all that stuff - because it allows bad actions to continue unabated.

The discussions across the focus groups highlighted participants' recognition that in order for community members to adequately support domestic violence victims and challenge factors that support abusive behaviours, their mentalities have to be changed first and they have to be educated about domestic violence and Canadian laws. However, there was also recognition that even a small opposition or defiance to the status quo could be influential in changing the larger community, especially when it comes from male members. This was expressed by Balvinder who noted: "sometimes maybe you are the only one in ten people who is on one side, and nine people on the other side. Then in that case, you can still impress them that 'No, this is NOT the right way'."

In this respect, many participants disclosed personal examples of standing up against domestic violence or helping wives who have been victimized. For example, Prabhjit shared a situation where he assisted a young woman who had been "confined to the home" by her husband and in-laws and was prevented from interacting with anyone. He was able to provide some money to contact family abroad and also directed her to local domestic violence services. Interestingly, when the woman's parents contacted him to express appreciation, he spoke in defence of the woman and chastised the parents for being "careless" in their selection of a spouse for their daughter. He expressed his disapproval:

> …before disconnecting the telephone, I said 'You people are very, very, careless - you sold your girl to someone and just for 50 lakh or 35 lakh, or whatever you gave to him, just because you want to send your daughter to Canada. You know your girl was qualified; she was a graduate or something like that! So, you people are so careless! Now your daughter is in a difficult situation because of you'!

Participants in the focus groups highlighted that when encountering victims of domestic violence, it is important that they provide information to these women about "where people can

go for help", so the help provided does not stop with their informal supports; rather, their informal support becomes a bridge for help-seeking from professional counsellors or organizations. Additionally, participants acknowledged the importance of community members being willing to listen to those who are experiencing abuse. As Hakim noted,

> …if someone is coming up and they want to talk about [domestic violence], as a society we need to understand that we shouldn't just withdraw ourselves, like 'Oh I can't be in this conversation because someone is having a stress and anxiety - I can't listen to you'.

Again, many participants shared personal examples of helping victims or couples who were having difficulties in their marriages. For example, Jeet shared his story of helping a woman obtain a "restraining order" from her abusive husband, while Gulraiz revealed how he helped a young couple in his community after the wife reached out to his family. Gulraiz relayed having a conversation with the husband and disclosing his own challenges with adaptation:

> …I did not mention his wife, what happened to her, but I told him what a good husband is expected to do and what your duties are to your children and to your wife in this society, where you don't know, and you don't have relatives. So, there may be a lot of tensions, and economic tensions. But, that's the most important thing - you have children and you have a wife. Like I was giving my example to him, not to just tell him to be a nice father, but how I have dealt with those kinds of issues and challenges when I was new immigrant.

In discussing a related issue, several participants (Raj, Chakesh, Adil, Maliq, Jeet, Mani) identified the importance of the community moving towards greater acceptance of marital separation and divorce, and treating women who have separated with "respect" rather than "gossiping or taking advantage of them". They noted how this type of acceptance may increase the likelihood of women leaving marriages that threatened their livelihood or that of their

children, since they would perceive their family and community as “morally supporting” them. The nature of the group discussion on this issue was best captured by Prabhjit’s comments:

> …a woman who is victimized and now parted with her husband should not be stigmatized. She should be given a respect - because that is very important! It is also the reason that women do not want to say they are separated from my husband, fearing that what people will say. So, again, the society has to open up their brains. They have to open up the windows, let the fresh air [and] fresh ideas should come in, so that such kind of [domestic violence] cases can be handled.

Similarly, some participants (Prabhjit, Balvinder, Gulraiz, Balraj) shared their perceptions that some men perceive separated women with “bad eyes”. They pointed out “the need for men to hold other men accountable for being respectful” as a form of supporting abused women. Balvinder shared a personal example of supporting a female friend who was looking for employment after ending her marriage. Her appreciation for his support appeared to surprise him, as he explained:

> …after a few days she called me --- and I had just talked to her twice over the phone. She said, ‘You know what, you’re the first person who called me and behaved with me properly’… she said, ‘Bhahia (brother), you are the first person who treated me as a sister’. Right? Then, it was shocking for me – I was like, ‘What?!’… Again, this says community people - they are trying to exploit the women.

Across the focus groups, participants frequently identified the importance of men challenging each other on issues related to male dominance, chauvinism, and abusive behaviours. They acknowledged their “influence” with other men and the importance of using this privilege to “call out” any misbehaviour or misunderstanding within their “peer group”. Gulraiz noted,

> …peer and friends have a greater influence on each other. We value each other's opinion and suggestions, and advice… So, if we are bold enough, we can go and knock on the door, and say: 'Friend, this is not right'.

Similarly, Balvinder stated, "again that's the peer network… though right? We can tell them: 'No, no, this isn't the right thing to do, whatever you're doing'.", whereas Maliq suggested that sons should challenge their father's misbehaviour, as they would have "more power to do this than the lady in the family". Although they discussed the "difficult task" of speaking up and challenging other men, this didn't seem to deter them from the idea of engaging in man-to-man behaviour correction. For example, Amir relayed:

> It's difficult to do, but if you come across and hear a guy saying: 'My wife is like this and I'm trying to teach her a lesson, and this and that.' Just think from the other side, right? Rather than saying 'You're doing good man! You have to keep this control!' You can say, 'No - this is wrong. This is the law here. She is somebody's daughter… and not even that she's somebody's daughter - she's human!'

Perhaps the most impassioned speech about man-to-man correction and accountability came from Fazel, who exclaimed "…WE as men need to look out for somebody that is doing wrong. Way before the police get involved!". For situations where people are unwilling to change their behaviour, he suggested needing to make a difficult, but important decision, about not socializing with them:

> ... I'm not going to allow myself to associate with a guy who is maybe violent towards his wife and family, so, I have to show him that, what you're doing is not acceptable to me. You have chosen that, and now you've chosen to wreck our friendship – when you could have done counselling for your alcoholism or anger management or something, you could do something!

A large majority of the participants in this study also emphasized the merits of parents of both genders opposing domestic violence and intervening when incidents occur in their families, as another way the power of informal support networks can be harnessed to address this serious social problem. Participants emphasized the need for parents "on both sides" to step in and express disapproval for domestic violence behaviours, as well as offer any necessary resources to keep the wife safe. This sentiment was best captured by Hakim who noted:

> Nobody wants to be a victim of abuse for years and years, and nobody wants to be treated like this in front of their growing up kids and all that. Sometimes they want to hear this from their own family members, like their own parents you know, 'Get out of this – we are here for you, we are going to help you' rather than hearing from a service provider. But those family members, like the parents of the victims, they need to support them as well…

In this respect, several focus group participants expressed the significance of fathers as "head of the family" in supporting their daughters, and if necessary defending them, when they are experiencing abuse. Adil best encapsulated this attitude in the following response:

> Dads need to step in for their daughters and say: 'You know what, she doesn't belong to that family, she belongs to herself! She is a human being – she is my daughter. She is always going to be my responsibility till the day that I die', and THAT kind of tradition be darned! I'm going to step in here and you can always come back to me', and often times you have Dads - when you have women who get murdered - saying: 'Why didn't I stand in? Why didn't I pull her back? Why did I always make her go back to that sort of situation?' Because [otherwise] they become supporters of this *dysfunctional* aspect of tradition, all that kind of stuff, which, as far as I think, that part should die, honestly!

If Push Comes to Shove: Corrective Actions or Restorative Justice

The South Asian males in this study were reluctant to suggest the use of the police or legal systems for "minor issues like verbal abuse or when there is no injury to the victim". They discussed "punishment" needing to match the severity of abuse and provided examples where police or legal involvement was warranted, or alternatively, where community-led restorative justice interventions may be most appropriate. This section includes two subthemes, (a) Corrective measures involving the police/legal system, and (b) Restorative/community led approach.

Corrective measures involving the police/legal system. Among many study participants, there was a clear acknowledgement that domestic violence incidents need to be swiftly addressed through appropriate intervention. Many expressed the belief that education is crucial to changing behaviour rather than legal system intervention, as reflected by Raj's comment: "We can put people in the prison, but it won't help. Education, education, education". However, participants' suggestions for correcting abusive behaviour depended on the "degree of abuse". For instance, Prabhit noted some useful ways of remedying abusive behaviours that do not yield serious harm to the victims: "…instead of sending a person to a jail, they [should] try to help him to cope up with his anger and give him some advice to deal with same kind of situation in the future…". Other participants (Balvinder, Raj, Sahil, Vikram, Maliq) noted the importance of interventions matching the severity of abuse, as captured by Amir's opinion below:

> It depends on the degree of abuse. If it's just you know, verbal abuse, or – I'm not saying that verbal abuse is a good thing, but if its verbal abuse because [the couple] is going through some difficult times getting jobs and settling down, then I think there is a time maybe they need some support…So, if that is the issue, then we need, I think, maybe a social worker, or community leaders – in those kind of things they can involve them…On

> the other hand, if it is a pattern of abuse and getting out of hand and he is violent consistently and wife is hurt badly, that's totally different.

For the latter situations, participants in the focus groups generally agreed that legal intervention "is the only right thing to do", as mentioned by Fazel. Jeet elaborated:

> …corrective measures, such as legal is very important. Once someone hurts his wife, then the matter becomes a criminal case. That's the reality you know. The law takes its own decisions and after coming to the conclusion, the judge gives the punishment. So, [the abuser] should be punished, he should be corrected – legally corrected.

Other participants explained how justice system intervention in domestic violence cases can help get to the root of the problem and end up being very beneficial to the perpetrator and family system as a whole in the long run. For example, Prabhjit shared how the court system takes various things into consideration to determine the most appropriate sentence for domestic violence perpetrators:

> …If the judge sees that someone has you know minorly hurt his wife…Of course when he will be punished, and all that, he will be asked to do counselling. That is the alternate measures going on – if he's drinking, if he was under the influence of alcohol [then] he is advised by the court that you cannot drink alcohol, you cannot use drugs and all that. If he's addicted, then he'll be detoxified. If he's angry, then there will be anger management there or counselling here, and then he'll have probation all the time you know…. So this is the way that it is being done here

Restorative/Community-led approach. Some participants discussed ways the community could intervene by having respectable community and religious leaders "come in", and "deal with these issues". Many offered examples of how this was accomplished back home or shared strategies they heard from other cultural groups in addressing domestic violence issues in their

communities. The support around community-led interventions seemed to reflect an understanding that the South Asian community was "different" from the larger Canadian society due to being "family-oriented", where there is a collective responsibility on the part of the family and community members for having a functioning family system or for keeping marriages intact. This was highlighted by Hakim who suggested: "…when we're bringing the family members, we need to think about both the families, and also the abuser and the victim". Within this sentiment, many shared the importance of not "shunning" abusers or "alienating them" but rather work with them to "find the root cause of that violence" and "bring to his mind that whatever he is doing is not the correct way". Gurvir even shared an idea of having perpetrators in the community be in a group together: "…those who have problems they have to get into a group, they will feel comfortable you know, talking about this problem if other people have this problem. The root cause can be found out. 'What has triggered this?'".

There were different ideas for how the community could intervene with couples that are experiencing abuse. Some suggested community/religious leaders should meet with the couple "separately" to "win the trust of both parties" in order to "learn from each party", whereas others believed this task should be left for counsellors who shared the "same background" as the couple or perpetrator. Some participants even offered examples of how traditional interventions could operate in the South Asian community. For example, Gulraiz shared how domestic violence issues are addressed in his community:

> There is a system of law that is responding, that is a traditional system…where the religious person is supposed to deal with these issues or you have the head of the village who is supposed to deal with these issues.

He shared how family members or religious leaders would separate the couple, and work with the husband while the wife "goes to her parents' home [and] away from this abusive situation"

until "slowly this [husband] goes back again and takes her home…". Understandably, this situation would only be appropriate if both spouses were agreeable to stay and improve the marriage, as well as permitted to leave the relationship without any repercussions.

In contrast, Adil, suggested the idea of "restorative justice" as being more appropriate for "family/community-oriented cultures" like those in South Asia, which was novel to many of the group members. He explained:

> …you get together as a family – the whole family sits down and all that kind of stuff. So, if you're thinking of community shaming, well that can be a form of community shaming. And I know that people don't like shaming and all that kind of stuff, but you gotta think about who has the maximum impact and who they are really listening to – right? I mean therapy is good, you can sit with someone one on one and the therapist can be perfect person …but if the person from the Mosque or the Gurdwara comes along there, and they come and as a community come along over there, they will listen far more to that person than the therapist …So [with] restorative justice you actually sit down with [perpetrators] and the whole community comes along, and you involve them in the process. [The perpetrators] are told, 'we don't hurt our women, we don't do those kinds of things but what are you doing? Come on!' and then they try to find a way for him to address his injustice to his wife.

Regardless of the approach, participants acknowledged the importance of privacy for any community-led response to domestic violence. Focus group participants acknowledged the barriers South Asian community members may have in accepting support from leaders in their own cultural group due to the tendency for people to gossip. Raj identified this issue in the following response, "…This is the bad thing in our society, that we talk about this [to others in the community] and that's why nobody want to talk to us, because it will be known next week".

For this reason, the participants described the importance of any traditional responses to domestic violence to be kept completely "confidential" and "win the trust of the people in trouble".

Yes, But: Gaining the Courage and Challenging Resistance

Despite the various ideas offered above and the relative optimism of the participants in relation to achieving the daunting task of addressing, preventing, and treating domestic violence in the South Asian community, they also acknowledged a number of barriers. Their responses demonstrated insights about the challenges both within their own cultural communities and the limitations of mainstream services for addressing domestic violence among South Asian families living in Canada. Two subthemes emerged in relation to barriers or resistance to addressing domestic violence: (a) Where Is the Courage? and (b) Unresponsive System, which will be described next.

Where is the courage? This subtheme reflects comments participants made about their perception of the reluctance and unwillingness of some people in their community to openly tackle domestic violence issues. Participants most commonly spoke about religious and community leaders' reluctance to address domestic violence due to "insecurities" that doing this could upset their congregation or the leaders', or their own desire to "preserve tradition without changing it". Balvinder expressed his views on this, stating: "…that is a big challenge to our so-called priests, right? President of our association, like the Gurdwara communities or mosque communities, because they probably will not [be] allowed to talk all this stuff. That's the big challenge for us". Likewise, other participants reiterated support for having discussions about domestic violence in a public forum within their communities but affirmed that this is not happening in their communities or places of worship. Prabhjit shared his experience:

> …from the religious podium, they must say that domestic violence is very wrong. You have to respect [the laws], which is not being done as I have seen. I am going to Sikh temple for the last 13, 14 years and I never heard a speech like this…

Participants also spoke about the difficulty of reaching the target population of community messaging or dialogues, such as men perpetrating domestic violence, when trying to arrange seminars or presentations through their communities. This was best captured by Raj, who stated: "… the problem is that we are not reaching those people. The real people who are in trouble they are left behind". Participants shared possible reasons for people's reluctance to either attend community events or educational sessions on topics like domestic violence, such as a possible backlash they may encounter from community members. Chakesh made the following observation in his community: "…we do realize there is something wrong – but when the time comes to set it right, we lose the courage. You will feel or find the opposition even when you are moving in the right path".

In contrast, there were others in the study focus groups who believed the reluctance to openly discuss domestic violence in community venues reflects a deliberate attempt to protect the community from unwarranted scrutiny and racial profiling by mainstream Canadian society. Some noted the discrimination and racism that they or members of their community have experienced, as well as examples of the media focusing on culture or race in domestic violence cases for non-mainstream groups. A few participants discussed the importance of including "context" when the media describes domestic violence issues in different cultural communities and not "otherizing" cultural groups, which in turn increases defensiveness or reluctance of community members to openly discuss issues. Hakim noted:

> …there have been cases in the past from the South Asian community and kind of the community got pressure by the mainstream media, 'Why is the community not talking

> about it?', you know… I'm just saying that if [the same case] came from any other mainstream community, how much would they mention about that? Especially about their background, you know -- Where were they from?

Similarly, Adil commented about how experiencing discrimination and feeling disempowered as a community may result in minimizing the problem or shifting blame onto others:

> …as immigrants, when we came over here, there is that dynamic [where] we willingly joined in [shifting attention] because we wanted to join the power area and not the disempowering area because we don't want that spotlight here [on us]. We want to mix in ourselves and have less coming out. You know a lot people just want to be as White as White can be… they don't want the spotlight to come on themselves. And domestic violence is a touchy subject! Ok? And especially because again, if you're trying to get away from racial discrimination… might as well go against [another group] so you don't come against me...

Some participants identified one way of opposing this reluctance: Resisting participation in the "cover up" of domestic violence in the community or their family, by actually "sharing direct encounters with abuse in one's own family or one's social network with others". A few of the participants who were front line workers also expressed the need to share knowledge and experience related to domestic violence with their community, recognizing they may have information that is inaccessible to others. In this regard, Fazel compared the difference in awareness about the prevalence of domestic violence in the South Asian community between members who work front line versus those who do not:

> … these other guys [in the South Asian community], the professionals or whatever, they don't know. They are not going to see [domestic violence] as, 'Oh my god this is a problem' until it is made public. That's why [front line] need to talk about it.

Similarly, Raj shared the importance of being open with service providers in order to receive help:

> …If I have a problem - I have to give the honest problem to [others] – 'this is my problem, see if you can help it'. If my son is the problem - I should say 'my son is the problem' to [counsellor], 'See if you can help him'. Not lie and cover up…

Prabhjit shared a similar attitude and suggested the following in his focus group:

> …So [if] I am caught for my misdemeanour in the family - I have done it, then I should have the guts to tell others also, please beware of it, save yourself, save your family, try to control yourself. So, this is very important, it is again a saintly thing by telling people about it and all these things– it's very difficult also!

Interestingly, there was a fellow participant in that focus group who disclosed his own involvement with domestic violence against his wife with the following statement. He shared "I also have a problem under domestic violence - so the law given me to attend the classes, it's mandatory". After this admission, many of the group members commended his courage and praised his disclosure, noting how little this actually occurs. Fazel shared his support for the participant: "[domestic violence] is a hidden problem, it's a shameful problem – so I actually salute you for raising your story, that takes a lot of guts to mention that."

Unresponsive system. As described earlier, there was strong support from the males across all focus groups in this study for the idea of providing resources for those who are involved in domestic violence (victim or perpetrator), and for having informal family or community networks act as a bridge to direct people to these resources. However, there were

several participants (Guraiz, Sahil, Balvinder, Raj, Hakim, Adil) who raised awareness about the limited availability of these formal supports, difficulties people experience in accessing them, and the effectiveness or cultural appropriateness of mainstream services in responding to domestic violence among the South Asian community. Gulraiz communicated:

> You have a system where women can go, but it creates more problems because the helpers don't understand our culture. They cannot go to the community because, again, it would bring bad name to the community, as well as to the family, right? And this is what is happening. If you call the police, you break [the family] – and you don't talk to community because you won't be open [because] you'll be very vulnerable to the community. So, this is a big gap. We don't have anything in place.

Prem further described the challenges that may be faced when people decide to access mainstream services:

> …well the bigger system – accessing that system is crazy! You apply for social assistance in trying to get out of abuse, [but] 99.9% you will be ineligible. So, of course things are in place, but we deal with all those people where the system is not responsive.

Hakim remarked about how victims and service providers might have different opinions about treating domestic violence and that could be "another barrier in getting adequate intervention". However, he recognized that when frontline service providers are "understanding the cultural context of their clients and are being upfront about the range of outcomes for their situation", effective support can be provided to South Asians in their time of need. He elaborated:

> …when a South Asian female is coming for help…they think the police or the court are going to resolve [their situation] over night...So they sometimes in the back of their mind they are seeing you are an educated person, that you have all this power and you're linked

> to all the professionals and you would be able to solve something for them in one session. As a therapist, or anything, I think we need to be upfront with them especially when they are going through a separation now, and the husband has been taken to the jail or whatever. Just be upfront with them that 'your station is not going to get better right away. You are going to start facing more challenges, and those challenges are going to relate to these-these things.' Just being upfront with them and not giving them the false hope because otherwise they are going to withdraw after a couple sessions, or whatever… because we're the ones who are actually going out and telling the communities: 'Hey report this, we are here to help you'. And they come out and we are not able to provide that help. If they end up going back to the abuser, they will never come back again to get the help. I think as a service provider we need to be up front and be honest…

There were also concerns about the manner in which the police and legal system intervene in domestic violence cases. Many participants shared fears that involving police could possibly "break apart" marriages and families in their communities. Some even expressed concern about the wife's well-being if the husband is taken away, which may not be the result she wanted, and she may not have control over "what action the system takes". For example, Fazel shared how wives may be reluctant to proceed with legal intervention because "… he's the father of my children… I'm not going to have him go to jail, we can work through our problems…" Similarly, Adil discussed the practice of separating the couple after a domestic violence incident, without considering what the victim requires or the best interest for the family. He talked about the potential risk this creates for her experiencing further maltreatment:

> …women need to be brought into this discussion and ask them [what they want] …because a lot of them want solutions, but they don't want the family to break. So, often times the solution is you know, 'He's a bad guy leave him and go away'. But that doesn't necessarily

> work for them – they want the guy to change his behaviour, but they don't want the *badnami* (shame) or the insult of the family breaking down and *them* being the cause of that breaking down - because there's a huge taboo against that, which is a generational taboo! 'This person broke the family… they are a bad person and they brought us shame'. And shame is something they don't want to bring because they also want to support the traditional honour, respect, loyalty, and all that too, right?

The possible danger of removing the wife was also expressed by Hakim, who described the possible outcome: "… when somebody wants to emancipate themselves, there's greater risk of violence, death and murder. When somebody suddenly says 'you don't have the power and control on me.' 'Oh yah? I'll show you how much, I'm going to kill you'." In contrast, Gulraiz raised awareness about the impact on the immediate and extended family if the typical mainstream processes were employed with South Asian families:

> …when you involve the police, naturally, as per the law to ensure safety, they have to remove one of the family members. And if you happen to remove a female from the house… that family will never come together. If that woman spend even just one day outside in the shelter or in someone else's home, even if that home is very protected and everything is fine, that family will never come together!

Additionally, Balvinder shared men's fear of police intervention and the consequences that could follow by having a standard response for all domestic violence incidents:

> …like, as a man I'm very good. But I don't know if it's a bad day for me or something happened outside, like any kind of pressure or stress – I get involved into an argument with the wife and I just pushed her or whatever, right? 'Please stay away from me' – like, if she called 911, but for last 10-15 years you're a good husband, and [then] everything is finished.

The South Asian men in this study expressed optimism that these various challenges to effectively addressing domestic violence in their communities could be overcome through collaboration with mainstream organizations. As Balvinder put it: “Nothing is impossible. There’s big challenges for us, but it can be done - proper response for wife abuse”. Some suggested strategies for pressuring community organizations and leaders to discuss issues around domestic violence included “telling them” directly “to bring up this issue” or “threatening their domain” by voting against those in power who are reluctant to raise awareness within the community.

The next section will describe the discussions between the participants that illustrate some sort of transformation with respect to their perspectives and beliefs regarding domestic violence in their community and their role in addressing it, through the simple act of participating in this study and interacting with each other and the researcher. The section will also describe the researcher’s personal transformation process during the study from facilitating and witnessing focus group discussions.

Transformative Conversations

One of the major strengths of the transformative research paradigm is its focus on “dimensions of culture, power, privilege, and social justice” (Chouinard, 2010, p. 266). Furthermore, working closely with community groups who are frequently at the margins of inquiry and having members of these groups demonstrate ways they are “addressing seemingly intransigent problems” (Mertens, 2007, p. 87), was another incentive for this researcher employing the transformative paradigm in her doctoral study. The notion of “transformation” in this paradigm addresses changes or modifications in perception, thought, or action, which can be internal or external or both (Mertens, 2007). Focus group dialogues in the study allowed for consultations, ideas, and corrections to organically emerge in the participants’ spontaneous

conversations. Across the focus groups, there were multiple examples of transformative dialogues and debates between the participants. Exchanges between the participants that were identified as transformative were marked by changes in the conversations, ideas, thoughts, and locus of responsibility in addressing domestic violence that become apparent in the participant dialogues immediately following those exchanges. The following sections will provide a few examples of some key types of transformative exchanges that occurred in the process of conducting this study related to: (a) participants' awareness about the prevalence of domestic violence among their communities (with the exchange labelled: "You Don't Know"), (b) the question of who is responsible for addressing the problem of domestic violence among South Asian families in Canada (with the exchange labelled "It is We"), and (c) participant ideas about how to raise or discuss this problem among community members (with the exchange labelled "This is Amazing").

You Don't Know

This section describes a conversation between focus group members that led to the correction of some participants' misconceptions about domestic violence in the South Asian community. Adil discussed the danger of domestic violence continuing to be perceived as happening only in "isolated silos" if the community reacts defensively rather than acknowledging that the problem is widespread. In contrast, Vikram denied that domestic violence represents a problem among the South Asian community, and tried to displace the issue onto other cultural groups by saying "this doesn't happen much among us, it happens more often in other cultures". The five remaining members of this focus group collectively challenged Vikram, stating: "domestic violence definitely happens in our community". When Vikram continued to minimize domestic violence issues and spoke about other cultural groups, Raj remarked "You don't know" and helped the researcher re-focus the conversation on abuse

towards wives in the South Asian community, by saying “she’s talking about us as South Asians”. Additionally, other participants (i.e., Prem, Mani, Gurvir, and Chakesh) explained how misinformation about the prevalence of domestic violence in their community occurs because it is “hidden” and “we don’t talk about it”. As a result of these direct confrontations, Vikram’s subsequent contributions to the group dialogues changed; his minimization of the issue of domestic violence stopped and he even provided some culturally specific examples of abuse towards wives in the South Asian community as the dialogue progressed. He was also observed to listen more attentively to what his peers were sharing. What the transcription did not capture was his facial expressions of surprise when participants shared examples of domestic violence they have encountered, and him nodding his head in support when the men shared strategies for addressing this issue in their community. He even piped up and suggested during conflict, couples should learn to “be quiet” and “not respond right away to take some time to think before they act”, so members can avoid escalating arguments and not act abusively or in anger. The changes in Vikram’s understanding of domestic violence and responses to it are a testament to the power of the focus group process in consciousness-raising among participants.

In the second focus group, a participant, Sharuk, made a comment about how Canadian domestic violence laws are “unfair” for men, and pointed out that there is an ever-present danger of women “exploiting the law”. A few other participants (Sahil and Balvinder), joined the conversation, indicating that they shared this perspective and the laws should be “amended to be less biased against men”. Prabhjit disputed the group members’ claims that laws should be changed because of the potential they could be misused. He stated:

> …this gentleman has said domestic violence laws should change. We are living in this country, so we have to go by the law of the land you know. We cannot change the law here or we cannot suggest them to change the law according to our culture! No, why should

> they! … We are living in this country, so this law will remain, Man! We have to understand that some things men can get away with back home are not really OK.

This prompted two participants (Sahil, Balvinder) to retract their previous comments about "amending" the laws here. However, later in the conversation when they reiterated fears about laws being misused to harm men, Prabhjit addressed their concerns by explaining how police investigate domestic violence allegations, while continuing to maintain his support for the current Canadian legal system:

> …generally, the people from South Asia, they say the law is heavily favouring women here - it's not like this. [The police] Also see the things…when the police officers make an inquiry they can say she's just fudging! This is the reason. So, it is not blind. Although the law takes care for women and for children, and they take it very seriously - no doubt about it. But at the same time, it doesn't mean that we men are being poked around. That we are being pinned down by this law, no. They check and listen to what the men say too.

Following this exchange, the participants shifted their focus on educating their community members about the current legal processes, with Sahil suggesting there needs to be

> …awareness if something happens in this country, like, you know the involvement of the child services, the involvement of the police, the involvement of the laws, and involvement of the society, so men coming here from our countries understand how the system works here.

This example not only demonstrates how a lack of awareness about domestic violence laws can fuel misunderstanding, but also about how even one person in a group process can initiate an educational intervention or corrective action to remediate such misunderstandings. Prabhjit's interjections interrupted the dialogue, which if allowed to continue, would have only served to

reinforce unsubstantiated fears about the Canadian policing and legal systems. Instead, the conversation became an opportunity for positive transformation.

Lastly, there was an exchange between the researcher and one participant (Gulraiz) about a contradictory statement about abused wives having the option to return to their parents' home for support. However, in an earlier discussion, he and some other participants indicated that parents are reluctant to accept daughters when they have left their marital home. In fact, they shared a common saying that means something to the effect that after marriage, only her dead body could be received by the parents. When the researcher raised awareness of Gulraiz' contradictory statements, there was a brief pause and then he clarified his statement that acknowledged the complex nature of responding to domestic violence issues in the South Asian community:

> …you're absolutely right…So, the thing is that there are families in a very conservative environment where they are told not to come, but in a very educated or modern city, they can come home, and they can talk to their parents, and say what has happened. And their family can protect them.

The exchange that followed between Gulraiz and his group members acknowledged how the victim's social context influences what resources and options are available to remedy their circumstances, and how these nuances create additional complications for mainstream providers to fully understand the experiences of South Asian abused women. Highlighting the contradiction also appeared to shift the group members' discussion towards South Asian community members participating in widespread "cultural shifts" to address factors that increase women's vulnerability for abuse and the barriers that prevent women from leaving abusive marriages.

All the examples shared in this section suggest that opening the lines of communication to discuss sensitive topics such as domestic violence with a marginalized group of men who have

not had their voices heard or challenged in a public forum in the past, can uncover their underlying beliefs and gaps in knowledge and understanding. This uncovering process can simultaneously give us the opportunity to fills these gaps with accurate information, which leads to changes in perceptions and attitudes towards domestic violence.

It is We

Throughout this chapter, there were multiple examples of participants sharing stories where they offered assistance to victims of domestic violence, expressed support for female empowerment, or challenged men to reconsider actions that were abusive or oppressive to wives. They identified men from various segments of their community as playing a "leading role" in speaking out against domestic violence and factors that contribute to abuse, such as gender inequality, incompatible marriages, and limiting female autonomy. As Adil noted, "standing up for what you believe in is a form of protest in of itself, right." In the same token, the participants also acknowledged the importance of not engaging in abusive behaviour, with Gurvir noting it is men's "duty" to not engage in domestic violence to prevent it from "going to another generation". However, they also identified the challenge of this endeavour with one participant (Chakesh) asking his fellow group members "So who will do it? Who will bell the cat?". This question was quickly responded by Gurvir who stated unequivocally, "It is we. We are sitting here." Other group members expressed support for his statement, such as Mani, who retorted: "Yes, we have to set it correct". The focus group participants then began to acknowledge their own power to begin the change process in addressing domestic violence in their community.

Perhaps the most passionate plea about men needing to take responsibility for speaking up against domestic violence came from Fazel, who stated the following to his fellow group members:

> … If you guys are my friends and you know that I have abused my wife and my children, and you know that I talk down to them. I speak to them with disrespect, like 'go get me this, go do that…' you know, 'you're a bitch'. It's up to YOU GUYS (pointing to each participant) as my peers to tell me that what I'm doing is wrong. Because if that doesn't come from the culture, then it becomes a cultural norm! ... So, I think it is incumbent upon my friends and the community to not be *cowards*.

His remark seemed to stir the participants and prompted them to express support for men to hold each other accountable for their behaviour and for taking personal responsibility for addressing domestic violence in their communities. For example, Balvinder responded to the challenge by saying: "Yah. That's [what] I had done with my close friend. And I will do again with others."

This is Amazing

Across all focus groups in this study, participants were sharing information, disclosing personal experiences concerning domestic violence, building upon each other's responses, as well as expressing disagreement with other group members' viewpoints. One of the main aspects of the design of this study involved an educational intervention whereby participants leave the focus group equipped with accurate knowledge about domestic violence, Canadian laws and responses, and useful information to help people in their community who are experiencing abuse. Whether from the dialogues that occurred between the participants or the expression of appreciation for the researcher's brief presentation at the end of each focus group about domestic violence laws and resources available for community members, there was evidence that participants had left more knowledgeable than they had arrived.

Perhaps one of the most fervent exchanges occurred in the fourth focus group between Adil and Hakim, who had opposing ideas about how domestic violence issues should be raised in

South Asian communities. Hakim shared his concerns about the discussions being too heavily one-sided at the expense of acknowledging positive attributes of his community. In contrast, Adil expressed the need to break open the discussion to "wake up" the community and not allow fear of mainstream perceptions to prevent people who are in need of support from coming forward to get help. Throughout the focus group, their disagreements remained polite and respectful, while each person articulated their perspectives. Towards the end of the focus group, there seemed to be a softening on both sides, with Adil identifying "positives" of the South Asian culture with respect to being "family oriented" and based on "collective" group or community rather than individual goals, while conceding that the community's defensiveness to speak openly about "taboo topics" such as domestic violence is due to the reality of racial discrimination by mainstream society. Likewise, Hakim shared the following observation from his experience in the group:

> …when we all started having this conversation, we all had different ideas, you know. But we all sat together and we come to common solutions. Because I might be thinking something else two hours ago – now I got your ideas, everybody's ideas and we come [together]… and that's exactly what we are talking over here, you know in the family situations or whatever… So, when I was first talking about blaming the South Asian community, that's not good because we're going to withdraw the right people from that – but what you're saying [about restorative justice], that's amazing now because our own community is coming in and telling this is not acceptable, and that is also sending a great message out in the mainstream community you know. This also sets an example for the other communities as well, because [domestic violence] cuts across every culture.

Lastly, the researcher's experience across the focus groups and witnessing the dialogue between the men from various backgrounds, experiences, and walks of life challenged some

beliefs around men's capacity to understand and address domestic violence in the South Asian community. After each focus group, the researcher left with more insight and appreciation for the capacity of South Asian men to understand, as well as respond to domestic violence. Additionally, given the researcher's gender and age, there was a concern about being dismissed or treated with disregard by the male participants. However, the men were not only open and welcoming, such as Adil, who stated at the start of his focus group "You're the boss!", but they were also cooperative about having the researcher play somewhat of an authoritative role in guiding discussions or sharing resources. There were several times participants acknowledged the researcher's expertise on the subject matter or her influence in propelling meaningful change in the South Asian community to address domestic violence. These experiences challenged some of my biases and also affirmed the importance of being more collaborative with all members of society in order to effectively tackle domestic violence.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples" ~ Mother Teresa

This chapter begins by reviewing and reflecting upon the current study's findings in relation to the existing literature. Next, the implications of these findings for intimate partner violence prevention and intervention in the South Asian community are discussed, including directions for both policy and practice. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the study and a section on directions for future research.

Intimate partner violence is one of the most prevalent forms of crime women experience around the world, cutting across ethnicity, class, and culture. Several large-scale, cross-country studies by the World Health Organization and the United Nations have shown that women are

victimized by abuse and violence within their own homes, and that men are disproportionately responsible for perpetrating these abuses (Fulu et al., 2017; Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005; Heise & Kotsadam, 2015; World Health Organization, 2015). The latest report by Statistics Canada indicated that 28% of all police-reported crime involves violence against women committed by a spouse or ex-spouse (Burczycka & Conroy, 2017). In addition, four out of every five cases of domestic violence reported to police in Canadian cities involved wives or intimate partners as victims (Burczycka & Conroy, 2017). Although the 2016 Canadian census identified over 250 ethnic origins of Canadians, with South Asians being the largest visible minority group at 1.9 million people (Statistics Canada, 2017), and close to twenty-two percent of the population being immigrants or permanent residents (The Daily, 2017), there is limited information in the literature about how domestic violence plays out in the South Asian community to inform culturally appropriate intervention. This study aimed to address these gaps in existing knowledge to inform both policy and practice from the missing male perspective, given males' roles as the most common perpetrators in intimate partner violence and those with the greatest power to address it. Using the transformative paradigm, this study endeavoured to better understand issues related to domestic violence in the South Asian community by identifying factors believed to be responsible for wife abuse and most importantly, identifying solutions for both prevention and intervention. The following section will highlight the main findings of this study about the influence of cultural and contextual factors in domestic violence within the South Asian community. The study's themes and subthemes are placed in quotations to support the summaries and implications.

South Asian Men's Perspectives on Domestic Violence in their Communities

The results of this study suggested that South Asian male participants recognized that violence against women in marital and intimate partner relationships is a serious problem in their

communities, but that the shame and stigma surrounding it often prevents the issue from being openly acknowledged and creates a barrier for supporting victims. Studies focusing on South Asian women victims of domestic violence have also identified strong stigma and shame as key barriers to acknowledgment of the problem and to women receiving community help and support (Ahmad et al., 2009; Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996; Gilbert, Gilbert, & Sanghera, 2004; Gill, 2004; Jordan & Bhandari, 2016; Madden et al., 2016; Tonsing & Barn, 2017).

Some unique aspects of the male perspective about this problem that emerged from this study as related to the challenge of openly acknowledging the issue included: (a) fear of community racial profiling by mainstream society, (b) lack of awareness on the part of immigrant men about how domestic violence is defined and addressed in Canada, (c) differences in domestic violence laws and policies between their home countries and Canada that cause confusion, and (d) varying acculturation levels that influence understandings of how culture and law affect domestic violence in the Canadian context. Existing research on domestic violence among immigrant communities in North America suggests that differences in law and policies across countries often lead to confusion about what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable conduct within marital and family relationships after immigration (Abraham, 2000; Abraham & Tastsoglou, 2016; Erez et al., 2009; George & Rashidi, 2014). Surprisingly, the male research participants in this study were willing to challenge viewpoints and attitudes in their focus groups that minimized or denied the existence of domestic violence in their community by providing first-hand examples to illustrate the existence and prevalence of this social problem.

The South Asian men who participated in this study acknowledged that there are some unique aspects of domestic violence against wives in their respective communities. Some of these factors have been identified in previous literature, such as abuse by multiple perpetrators (e.g., in-laws) and their vulnerable position as immigrants in a foreign country (George &

Rashidi, 2014; Jordan & Bhandari, 2016; Mason et al., 2008; Raj & Silverman, 2002). In addition to in-laws and husbands' family members as potential perpetrators of violence against women, this study also identified the wife's own parents as potential perpetrators, either in the form of honour-based violence or in forcing them to return to abusive husbands.

There are numerous studies that have identified immigration status as a risk factor for domestic violence, regardless of the country origin they have immigrated from (Ahmad et al., 2009; Alaggia & Mater, 2012; Erez et al., 2009; Hyman et al., 2011; Merali, 2009; Raj & Silverman, 2002; Raj et al., 2005). Previous studies have found that South Asian immigrant women are at a somewhat elevated risk for domestic violence due to being sponsored by their husbands as the primary reason for entering the country, contributing to an exaggerated power differential in the marital relationship, combined with cultural beliefs supporting collectivist ideologies to remain married regardless of the personal sacrifice (Jordan & Bhandari, 2016; Kapur et al., 2017; Merali, 2009; Raj et al., 2005; Sabri, Simonet, & Campbell, 2018). This study identified various abusive "Restrictions" that may be imposed on immigrant wives to hinder their successful integration into Canadian society, such as isolating them from the community, preventing them from learning skills that would increase their autonomy, such as learning English, attending school, or acquiring employment skills. One unique contribution in this study is the identification of chain migration as a form of "Emotional Torture" for sponsored wives who are being used by their own family or husband's family to bring other family members from their home countries into Canada. Previous studies on South Asian immigrant women described various ways in which their immigration status was used to abuse them through threats of deportation, withholding immigration documents, or delaying residency applications (Abraham, 1999; Jordan & Bhandari, 2016; Raj et al., 2005). Although these examples of immigration abuse were not identified in this study, the participants took note of how the lack of awareness about

personal rights in the new country, limited social support, and misunderstanding of citizenship status places immigrant women in a more vulnerable position for abuse.

The findings from this study identified a range of behaviours that South Asian males considered to be abusive, including some that are typically categorized as domestic violence, and some that appear to be more culturally specific. The types of abuse the men described ranged from “Beating and Breaking to Killing”, “Emotional Torture”, being “Held Hostage” because of financial abuse, using illegal tactics by “Going Above the Law” to manipulate women, and “Serving Men’s Needs” through sexual abuse. A unique contribution of this study is the men’s description of culturally specific forms of emotional abuse, such as criticizing wives’ capabilities in the culturally prescribed wife role (such as cooking ability), insulting women’s’ family background, placing increasing dowry demands following marriage onto the wife’s family, and using religion as a tool to evoke fear in order to appease the husband or his family’s requests. Another interesting type of emotional abuse identified in this study was the participants' descriptions of abusive men engaging in inappropriate or "Taboo" behaviours that are not culturally sanctioned, such as having (or threatening to have) extramarital affairs, and misusing substances. Previous studies investigating domestic violence in South Asian communities from women’s perspectives identified husbands having affairs (Abraham, 1998) and substance misuse (Hyman et al., 2011) as problems within their abusive marriages. This study is the first study to identify these behaviours as emotionally abusive from South Asian men’s perspectives.

Financial abuse was identified in this study as a particularly harmful form of abuse for South Asian women, which included being excluded from financial decision-making, prevented access to money or assets, or not being informed about the financial affairs in their households. The participants astutely noted how financial abuse prevents wives from obtaining freedom from their abusive husbands and the challenge in prosecuting such crimes, especially if financial

decisions are made without the wife's awareness and negatively impact women's credit or prevent their access to their rightful property in divorce proceedings. Uncovering the wide range of financial abuses and the far-reaching impact of these actions in preventing South Asian victims from being able to free themselves from abuse is a unique contribution of this study. Financial abuse is also a prevalent form of abuse against non-immigrant women as identified in the mainstream literature (Branigan, 2007; Pence & Paymar, 1993; Postmus, Hoge, Breckenridge, Sharp-Jeffs, & Chung, 2018; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002), but has never been described as a hostage-taking endeavour in the way it was described by the men in this study.

The results of this study support previous research findings regarding the reluctance of the South Asian community to disclose sexual abuse, as this topic was relatively missing from the focus group discussions. This may partly be due to high level of shame and stigma attached to speaking openly about sex and intimacy in the South Asian culture, especially in the presence of the other sex (Abraham, 2000; Hussain & Khan, 2008; Jordan & Bhandari, 2016). There was an exception with one group of men in this study, because they openly shared examples of the various forms of sexual violence women could experience by husbands or their husbands' families, such as being forced to sexually fulfill the husband's father's needs etc. This group also noted some women may not be aware they were sexually assaulted and may lack understanding about consent or their right to refuse sexual activity within marriages. Furthermore, the men in this group contributed a unique conceptualization of sexual abuse as women being expected to "Service" men's needs without question, based on their cultural or familial socialization processes. Previous studies have described the South Asian norms around sexuality and the significant power differential between the genders in sexual activity that may contribute to women believing they do not have a choice about having sex with their husbands (Abraham,

1999; Hussain & Khan, 2008; Jordan & Bhandari, 2016; Reavey, Ahmed, & Majumdar, 2006). Other forms of sexual abuse identified in the literature on the South Asian community, which were not mentioned much in this study include limiting women's access to contraceptives, sex-selective abortions, and female foeticide (Abraham, 1999, 2000; Hussain & Khan, 2008; Kallivayalil, 2010). Although participants did briefly mention sex-selective abortion and female foeticide, these topics were discussed in the context of cultural practices that support male domination and male gender preference, rather than recognized as forms of abuse.

Lastly, the results of this study offered insight into abusive practices by family members towards wives that extend outside of the home through the misuse of immigration policies and legal systems. The theme "Going Above the Law" described actions whereby family members have manipulated the legal system, engaged in illegal practices, or exerted their power over wives so that it favoured them in some way. For example, the participants in this study identified how abusive husbands and families take advantage of the wife's limited knowledge of the Canadian legal system to persuade her to drop charges against the husband. They also provided examples of families who misused their power and authority to manufacture false allegations against wives who pursued legal action against their husbands, leading the women to find themselves in legal trouble. Various types of manipulation of the legal or justice system have been identified in studies conducted in South Asian countries, such bride deaths due to abuse being feigned as "kitchen fires" or alleged "suicides" by family members who realize that such incidents typically do not receive proper investigation by authorities (Belur et al., 2014; Shaha & Mohanthy, 2006). The findings of this study related to "Going Above the Law" also lend support to existing research about immigration-related abuses, such as husbands threatening wives with deportation or indicating that they can take their children away from them, neither of which they

actually have the right or legal capability to do (Abraham, 1998; Abraham, 2000; Merali, 2009; Raj et al., 2005).

The results of this study revealed two unique aspects of abuse in the immigration context that have not received much attention in existing literature: chain migration and transnational abandonment of brides. For example, a few study participants shared examples where the newly arrived wife may be compelled by her in-laws to bring other families into the country by divorcing the husband and marrying a male relative who is residing back home, and thus instigating chain migration to bring more family members into Canada. In contrast, other participants noted situations where brides have married Canadian residents but the promise of joining their new husband and migrating to the foreign country never becomes realized. This phenomenon is labelled "transnational abandonment" in the literature and is becoming recognized as a problem, but is rarely conceptualized as a form of domestic violence (Anitha, Roy, & Yalmarty, 2018; Walton-Roberts, 2004).

Understanding Domestic Violence in South Asian Communities and Identifying Solutions

Factors that focus group participants linked with domestic violence in their communities mirrored some of the key components of Heise's (1998, 2011) integrated ecological framework on violence against women. This model explains the complex and multi-faceted phenomenon of domestic violence by illustrating interconnections between contributing factors across individual, relational (microsystem), community (exosystem), and societal (macrosystem) levels. The most recent version (Heise, 2011) includes evidence-based risk and protective factors from cross-national surveys that relate to both intimate partner violence victimization and perpetration. An important contribution of the ecological model with respect to domestic violence is that it can also be used as a framework to create preventative initiatives and intervention strategies. For

instance, Michau and colleagues (2015) outline how collaborative efforts across and within various sectors (e.g., health, legal, faith, education, civil society) can target each of the ecological systems to achieve meaningful change in violent behaviour and victim support (Michau, Horn, Bank, Dutt & Zimmerman, 2015). Similarly, Fulu and Meidema (2015) incorporate globalization and migration into the entire ecological model as a way to signify how the changing realities around the world impact the issue of domestic violence. The solutions for domestic violence that the South Asian men in this study recommended actually do cut across various systems of the ecological model, and take into account international migration experiences and transnational ties within the South Asian diaspora in addressing abuse. The biggest contributions of this study lie in the solutions described by the men for both domestic violence prevention and intervention and how they can be implemented, with men playing a key role in the implementation process. Over the past several years, the inclusion of men has been identified as a critical component of efforts to eradicate gender-based violence (Casey, Carlson, Two-Bulls, & Yager, 2018; Flood, 2011; Jewkes et al., 2015; Katz, 2015; Tolman & Walsh, 2018). The following sections will utilize the ecological framework to structure the findings from this study regarding the factors associated with domestic violence in the South Asian community and the solutions to help address this issue from a community-based perspective.

Macrosystem/Societal

The broadest system of the ecological model is the macrosystem or societal values, which influence the other ecological systems through direct and indirect means. The macrosystem level of analysis examines societal norms, ideologies, cultural values, and belief systems that affect the population that adheres to them (Heise, 1998). The ideologies are also reflected in laws, policies, government, and higher-level courts, that together create a climate whereby violence is either encouraged or discouraged (Sabbah, Chang, & Campbell-Heider, 2017). Characteristics of the

macrosystem can differentiate countries from one another (Carlson, 1984), and can also partly explain the variable prevalence rates of violence against women around the globe. The existing literature has identified several variables in the societal system that are associated with increased risk of violence towards women and girls. Factors in this system such as beliefs or values that support rigid gender roles and male entitlement have been frequently identified as increasing domestic violence victimization and perpetration (Fulu, Jewkes, Roselli, & Garcia-Moreno, 2013; Heise & Kotsadam, 2015). Cross-sectional surveys from countries that tend to support these ideologies, such as those in South Asia, have found some of the highest prevalence rates of domestic violence (Fulu et al., 2013; Heise, 2011; Ler et al., 2017; Tran, Nguyen, & Fisher, 2016).

The men in this study highlighted cultural beliefs and practices around male entitlement, gender inequality, and some level of social acceptance of oppression of women as key contributing factors for domestic violence, supporting existing research findings from studies conducted in South Asia and studies of South Asian immigrants living in North America (Akhter & Wilson, 2016; Atteraya, Gnawali, & Song, 2014; Banerjee, 2014; Das, Bhattacharyya, Alam, & Pervin, 2016; Madhani et al., 2017; Murshid, 2017; Sabri et al., 2018). Previous studies with South Asian men and women indicate cultural beliefs can significantly impact whether behaviours are viewed as abusive or not, and also increase the likelihood of domestic violence incidents (Ler et al., 2017; Madhani et al., 2017; Verma et al., 2017). The theme "Cultural Practices" described multiple South Asian cultural norms endorsing male dominance and oppression of women and beliefs around women being expected to accept their "fate" or "kismet". The participants shared multiple methods in which these norms are reinforced in their respective communities such as witnessing female oppression, cultural proverbs or idioms that illustrate women's tenuous position in their family of origin, unwarranted scrutiny of daughters-

in-law, traditional practices regarding male child preferences (such as celebrations specifically for boy but not girls), and upholding rigid traditional gender roles. Additionally, the “I am King mindset” subtheme illustrated how cultural beliefs about male domination interacted with domestic violence perpetration in the South Asian community, especially if these beliefs are challenged or threatened as wives obtain more economic autonomy following relocation to Canada. These results support findings from another study that found that South Asian women’s employment out of the home or involvement in micro-economic funding is associated with elevated risk of domestic violence (Bates et al., 2004; Koenig et al., 2003; Rocca et al., 2009; Schuler, Lenzi, Badal, & Bates, 2017).

Another component of the macrosystem related to domestic violence is the policies that inform law enforcement and justice system responses to domestic violence incidents (Akhter & Wilson, 2016; Heise, 1998; Verma et al., 2017). The recurrent discussions across all four focus groups in this study highlighted the significant differences between how domestic violence is defined and addressed in South Asia as compared to Canada. Participating men expressed that Canadian law has a much broader definition of violence, investigates abuse allegations much more thoroughly, and takes the matter more seriously than the justice systems in their home countries. The men suggested that these differences contribute to immigrant men from their communities continuing to behave in ways that Canadian society would identify as unacceptable towards their wives after immigration, due to their ignorance of the differences in laws and policies between the home and host societies. This is the first study where South Asian men directly described the association between the differing approaches, laws, and policies related to domestic violence and abusive behaviours in marital relationships. Many participants in this study noted that both men and women might be using their home countries in South Asia as

reference points when interpreting whether behaviours are abusive or not, and whether or not they need help or should provide others with help or support.

Overall, the findings of this study offered support for “Corrective measures involving the police/legal system” in Canada. However, concerns were raised by participants about the potentially detrimental impact of legal/justice system involvement for South Asians due to their lack of consideration of how the existing legal and community intervention may oppose cultural ideologies related to family unity and collectivism. For instance, many participants expressed concern about the zero tolerance criminal justice policies resulting in mandatory separation of husband and wife during domestic violence investigations, and the possibility of increasing women’s risk for more lethal forms of violence. Similar to other reports, this study’s findings raise concerns that domestic violence victims from ethnic minority groups may be caught between a system that can help stop the abuse by removing the perpetrator, but where the mandatory separation is viewed as a direct conflict to their value system of maintaining family unity (Abraham & Tastsoglou, 2016; Fong, 2010; Tam et al., 2016). Furthermore, some men in this study noted that a wife's separation from her husband may cause South Asian victims to experience significant harm to their reputation and possibly prevent them accessing support from the community because of the high importance of having an intact family system. Many researchers and community advocates have raised similar concerns about the differential impact of criminal justice responses to immigrant, marginalized, and indigenous women (Abraham & Tastsoglou, 2016; Sokoloff, 2008; Tam et al., 2016).

Other than cultural beliefs and values related to gender, there has been limited investigation into other macrolevel/societal factors contributing to domestic violence incidents. Fulu and Miedema (2016) detail how globalization factors stemming from migration, media, economic or immigration policies, political discourse, and religious movement can impact

gender norms at a local level and are an important consideration that influences domestic violence risk. Furthermore, the growing divisive rhetoric towards racial, religious, and ethnic groups is another macrolevel component that can be expected to influence the acculturation process for immigrant families (Fulu & Miedema, 2016). Findings from this study support the importance of considering globalization factors in conceptualizing domestic violence within the South Asian community. For instance, the participants noted the challenge for newcomers in navigating and accommodating values/beliefs of two different cultures and societies in the acculturation process, especially if they are in opposition to one another, such as in terms of gender role expectations. The participants also noted the unique feature of their lives in terms of maintaining transnational ties to their home countries through family connections and property as an added source of stress, together with the impact of their home country policies and practices on their family functioning in Canada. A modification of the ecological model to depict the influence of immigration experiences on South Asian families encompassing all four systems is visually represented below in Figure 3.

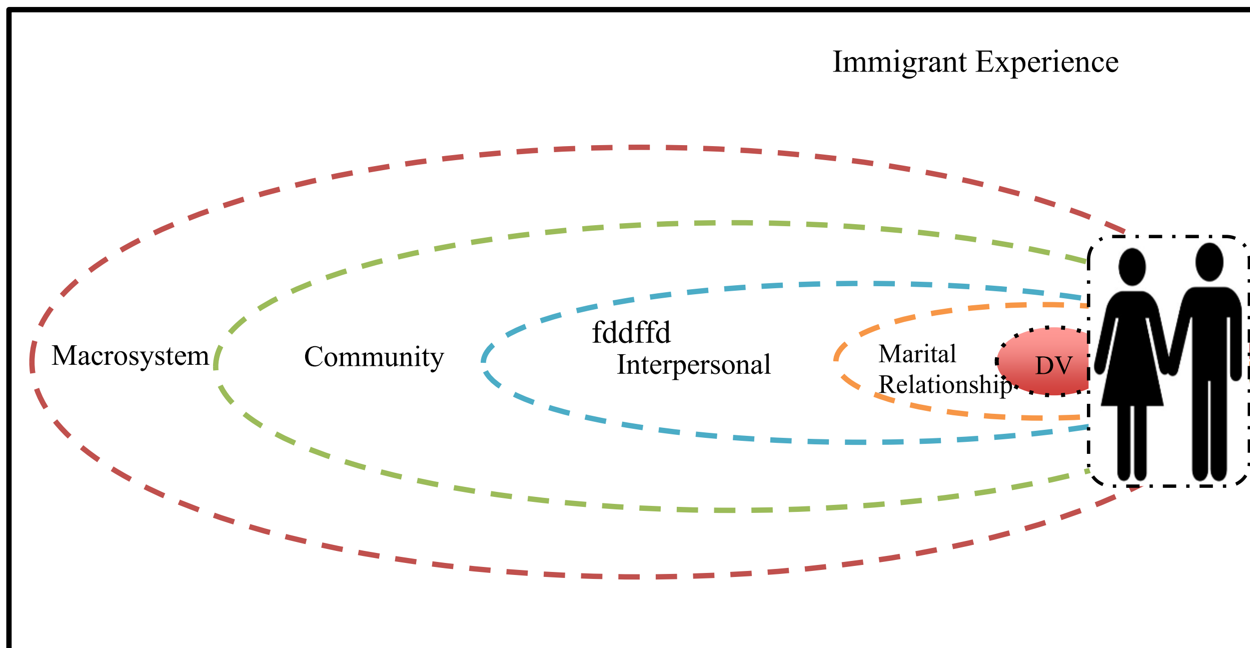

Figure 3. Modifications to the Ecological Model based on this study's findings

Other modifications to the ecological model stemming from this study include using dashed lines for concentric circles to illustrate the multidirectional flow between the ecological systems rather than having them being embedded within one another. Additionally, depictions of the couple are enlarged to describe their influence on and their potential for being influenced by the ecological systems.

Macrosystem/society level solutions. The men in this study offered several solutions to intimate partner violence at the macrosystem/society level, which were primarily aimed at "Upgrading Knowledge" of South Asian newcomers about their rights and laws related to domestic violence and moving them towards valuing gender equality. For example, the male participants suggested providing information in brochures or pamphlets upon successful application for entry into Canada and incorporating presentations into already existing programming at settlement agencies or within educational curriculums. They also shared several examples of some positive changes within their communities both locally and abroad with respect to modifying harmful cultural practices, such as making it illegal to request dowries and celebrating both genders in events/festivals that previously were primarily focused on boys (e.g., Lahori, Pink Ladoo Project). These examples illustrate how changes to cultural norms can be achieved through collective action by community members to champion modifications of their customs and traditions that reinforce beliefs and attitudes associated with domestic violence and gender inequality.

Although there was a reluctance to rely on the criminal legal system as a first line approach to domestic violence incidents, the findings demonstrated strong support for the Canadian justice system in changing abusive attitudes and behaviours through various mandated intervention programming for perpetrators ("If push comes to shove: Corrective actions"). However, there were suggestions to include alternative criminal legal interventions such as

"Restorative/community initiatives" alongside formal legal responses, which could involve trained South Asian community leaders. Distinguishing features of restorative justice include its capacity to: (a) integrate cultural knowledge to assess and correct misdemeanours, (b) broaden the concept of victim by incorporating the perspectives of family and community members who were harmed by the perpetrators behaviour, and (c) focus on resolution rather than law-breaking to allow for meaningful change in the perpetrator's behaviour when confronted with their abusive behaviour by their own community (cf. van Wormer, 2009). Many advocates of this approach recognize the potential for victims to have their voices heard, and for families as well communities to participate in holding perpetrators accountable for abuse, while creating space for healing (Coker, 2006; van Wormer, 2009). While there are legitimate concerns about restorative justice by victim advocate groups (e.g. Stubbs, 2007), the potential of this approach to be responsive to the needs of the collectivist South Asian community cannot be ignored (Condon, 2010; Elias, 2016; Goodmark, 2018).

Exosystem/ Community

The factors in this system of Heise's (1998, 2011) ecological framework on gender-based violence include both formal and informal institutions in society that affect the immediate surroundings of the individual, such as socioeconomic conditions, community level interactions, and front-line service provision (Carlson, 1984; Heise, 1998). This study's findings under "Life Stress" and its sub-theme ("External Stressors") which in turn create "Internal Stress" for men corroborate existing literature. Several studies investigating South Asian women's experiences of domestic violence in North America have identified all three of the above aspects as contributing to some degree in their victimization or help-seeking behaviours (e.g. Abraham, 1998; Finfgeld-Connett & Johnson, 2013; George & Ramkissoon, 1998; Guruge, Khanlou, & Gastaldo, 2010; Hyman et al., 2011; Jordan & Bhandari, 2016). For instance, financial difficulties from external

stressor such as unemployment or underemployment, as well as changes to the family's socioeconomic status upon immigrating have been found to contribute to marital tensions and stress, thereby increasing South Asian women's risk for domestic violence (Abraham, 1998; George & Ramkissoon, 1998; Hyman et al., 2011).

Across all focus groups, participants raised concern about the lack of open acknowledgement about domestic violence issues by some members of the South Asian community. The level of stigma in the South Asian community for reporting domestic violence incidents to legal authorities, along with lack of support from their own cultural group to speak about their abuse experiences or seek services, have been frequently cited in the literature (Ahmad et al., 2009; Ahmad et al., 2013; Bhandari, 2018; Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996; Finfgeld-Connett & Johnson, 2013; Guruge et al., 2010). Under the theme "Ignorance" many participants perceived some degree of reluctance from religious and cultural leaders to openly discuss domestic violence issues and provide information about the services available for support, thereby leaving their members unable to take corrective action regarding wife abuse. Likewise, the "Unresponsive System" theme supports existing evidence about other barriers for South Asian people in accessing mainstream services, such as the perception that mainstream service providers will not understand their culture, difficulties navigating the systems for help-seeking in the new society, and limited availability of culturally and linguistically appropriate support (George & Rashidi, 2014; Guruge & Humphreys, 2009; Kapur et al, 2017; Pajak et al., 2014; Raj & Silverman, 2007; Sabri et al., 2018).

Exosystem/Community level solutions. "Changing Mentalities" and the need to "Shake up the Community" were identified by the South Asian males in this study as key ways to raise awareness about domestic violence issues affecting their communities. The participants specifically highlighted the need for religious institutions and leaders in their community to use

their respective platforms to be more vocal about domestic violence. Other studies have also suggested that it is important to involve religious and community leaders in domestic violence prevention (Ayyub, 2000; Choi, Elkin, & Disney, 2016; Hamid, 2015; Sabri et al., 2018). Additionally, this study identified the need to target certain subgroups in the South Asian community to "Upgrade Knowledge" as a means to shift attitudes that support violent expression of male dominance such as parents, newlyweds, youth, and elders. Several participants shared their involvement in initiatives that helped raise awareness about domestic violence within their community groups in Edmonton and Calgary, noting both the challenges and rewards of their participation. Most notably, they shared the difficulty in getting some religious or community leaders on board to share information, as well as targeting individuals at risk for engaging in abuse or being abused to attend sessions. Nonetheless, there was optimism that improvements could be made by continuing to engage in these discussions with their peer group and communities ("Hey Listen"), as well as access support from other experts (mainstream service providers and systems) to assist in improving their efforts.

This study's findings acknowledged the need for South Asian community members to learn how to "Balance Support and Challenge" with domestic violence victims and their perpetrators. The participants strongly advocated for South Asian victims of domestic violence to receive support and services for counselling, education, and financial assistance. The study's findings also identified the need to support and offer services to perpetrators of domestic violence to correct their behaviours, rather than to ostracize or incarcerate them. However, the findings from this study recommended active collaboration between service providers and the South Asian community through outreach efforts to not only share information about services but also to build trust with their members through direct contact. Some of the suggestions focused on disseminating information to the South Asian community about the negative effects

of domestic violence on victims and families, learning about their legal rights, how to access services, and acquiring more helpful ways to address relationship conflict. Several other researchers have suggested collaborative approaches to addressing domestic violence among immigrant and marginalized ethnic communities (Baobaid, Kovacs, Macdiarmid, & Tremblay, 2015; Cuevas & Cudmore, 2017; Dasgupta, 2017; Sabri et al., 2018; Stockman et al., 2015).

The findings of this study also identified service providers as needing to "Upgrade Knowledge" about the South Asian community and their cultural practices. Participants suggested building coalitions between mainstream organizations and the South Asian community to share important considerations in their community with service providers so that their awareness about culturally relevant issues for this group can enhance their effectiveness when working with South Asian clients. Information identified as important to share with non-South Asian service providers included: challenging cultural misinterpretations that justify violent behaviours, examining the presence of multiple domestic violence perpetrators, strengthening family interventions, and assessing for culturally-based forms of abuse that could be missed by mainstream assessment measures. Kapur and colleagues (2017) interviewed advocates from South Asian non-profit organizations in the United States and found that alongside direct support to domestic violence victims and doing outreach efforts with the community, they also trained mainstream service providers about the South Asian culture. Building these partnerships was viewed to be crucial for expanding access to services and improving effectiveness of interventions for South Asian victims. This is especially important since victims from these communities may not feel comfortable seeing a counsellor/advocate from their own community due to fears about limited confidentiality and shaming their cultural group (Kapur et al., 2017).

One of the most unique contributions of this study relates to recommendations from participants about the different ways men can play important roles in their community to combat

issues contributing to domestic violence. There has been a major push for the inclusion of men in research, practice, and policy to address and prevent domestic violence, since they are the primary perpetrators and power holders within society (Dasgupta, 2017; Jewkes et al., 2015; Katz, 2015; Storer, Casey, Carlson, Edleson, & Tolman., 2016; Tolman & Walsh, 2018; Wells et al., 2015). For instance, the findings related to "Empower Women" included ideas about publicly speaking out against cultural practices that reinforce gender inequality and openly supporting women's autonomy through education, employment, and active participation in society. Additionally, "Potentiating informal community networks for man-to-man accountability" was identified as a possible solution by imploring South Asians as a whole being more supportive towards victims of domestic violence, but more specifically having men challenge other men in their networks who express beliefs about male domination. This includes men challenging themselves to intervene or help in situations where they become aware of other men engaging in abusive behaviour towards women and girls. The male participants in this study also recommended that victims be informed about available community services.

Microsystem/ Interpersonal

The microsystem/interpersonal factors related to domestic violence include interpersonal dynamics in the family domain that directly or indirectly influence domestic violence incidents (Akhter & Wilson, 2016; Heise, 1998). The findings from this study suggest that the negative influence of parent in-laws and practicing rigid traditional family roles that impose "Restrictions" on women's authority in the home may be associated with violence towards South Asian wives. Additionally, this study corroborates previous evidence about the South Asian community's collectivist ideologies whereby the relations between family members and their cultural group is accorded higher importance than individual needs or goals. Various researchers and activists have detailed the significant pressure South Asian victims feel to avoid shaming the

family or cultural group, which prevents them from disclosing domestic violence incidents, and prevents perpetrators from being held accountable (Ahmad et al., 2009; Tonsing & Barn, 2017; Venkataramani-Kothari, 2007). Existing research suggests that South Asian women who were isolated in their experiences, lack support from informal systems, or fear rejection for disclosing the abuse they are enduring have an elevated risk of experiencing ongoing or elevated levels of intimate partner violence (Mahapatra, 2012). Previous studies also noted how these factors influenced whether South Asian victims sought help following domestic violence incidents such as notifying police, accessing formal supports, and obtaining health care (Ahmad, Rai, Petrovic, Erickson, & Stewart, 2013; Jordan & Bhandari, 2016).

Marital Relationship. The quality of marriages was one of the most frequently mentioned factors that contributes to wife abuse in the South Asian community by the male research participants. The men in this study specifically noted how poor marital matchmaking by families arranging their children's marriages creates "Relationship Tension", thereby increasing the risk for abuse and violence towards wives. A wide variety of arranged marriage practices still exist in the South Asian community, which fall on a continuum from minimal participation to a high level of decision-making power by the potential spouses (Aguiar, 2018; Charsley & Shaw, 2006; Jaiswal, 2014; Madathil & Benshoff, 2008; Shankar, 2008; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000). Furthermore, marriages can be arranged between potential spouses who both live in South Asia, are living in Canada, or a combination of both such that members from the local Canadian community have transnational courtship arrangements with people back home (Mooney, 2006; Walton-Roberts, 2004). In Canada, South Asians have the highest number of family sponsorship immigration applications, with spousal sponsorships in international arranged marriages being the most common (Hudon, 2015). Study participants highlighted inappropriate arranged marriage practices that place women at risk for violence, such as: (a) not carefully selecting spouses based

on compatibility, (b) focusing on secondary gain of the marriage through financial compensation or chain migration, and (c) not thoroughly examining the families of the potential spouses to assess for common values. The South Asian men indicated that these misguided matchmaking processes heighten the potential for marital conflict and strain and incompatibility. The participants recommended parents and extended family members who are involved in arranging marriages should focus on compatibility between spouses and evaluating the potential spouses' families for appropriate cultural values to promote well-adjusted and happy marital unions.

Existing research has identified lack of compatibility between South Asian spouses to be associated with women's increased vulnerability to abusive experiences in comparison to women who identify themselves as compatible with their husbands (Chaudhuri et al., 2014; Gill, 2004; Merali, 2009; Natarajan, 2002). However, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first study where South Asian community members identified improper marital matchmaking practices as contributing to wife abuse in their community. Most of the literature has mainly identified broad and/or peripheral factors such as adherence to patriarchal beliefs, negative family influence, and individual psychopathology as contributing to risk of abuse in South Asian marriages in Canada, with a lack of close examination of aspects within the marital relationship (including courtship processes) that may be influencing domestic violence incidents. While participants acknowledged other interpersonal concerns already identified in the current literature, such as poor conflict resolution skills, acculturation stressors, and negative external influences (Chaudhuri et al., 2014; George & Ramkissoon, 1998; Mahapatra, 2012; Sabri et al., 2018; Sayem, 2012 Simbandumwe et al., 2008), they also offered a nuanced perspective about how incompatibility between spouses and improper marital practices may weaken couples' capacities to respond to these challenges in an effective manner.

Microsystem/interpersonal level solutions. The men in this study suggested that strengthening interpersonal relationships is critical for addressing domestic violence in the South Asian community. For example, improving how extended family members respond to domestic violence incidents was identified in this study as a key mechanism for protecting victims and holding perpetrators accountable. Negative meddling by husband's family or the lack of support from the abused wife's own parents were specifically identified in this study as needing modification by offering support to the abused wife and challenging the perpetrator(s)' abusive behaviours. The participants also recognized the role of men in utilizing their influence within families and their peer groups to create meaningful changes on this issue. In several subthemes under "Going back to the cultural basics", participants noted the importance of men prioritizing their marriage and parenting role, and modelling positive support for women's empowerment and gender equality within their immediate and extended families. They also emphasized the need for families and parents to ensure potential spouses for their children are equally matched with them in terms of their qualities and values, as well as having them examine whether the suitors' families exhibit appropriate cultural values in their homes. Based on the existing research with South Asian domestic violence survivors, these transformations in the family system would likely reduce abusive behaviours and promote formal help seeking on the part of victims (Guruge & Humphreys, 2009; Jordan & Bhandari, 2016).

When considering their own roles in addressing domestic violence, the South Asian men in this study suggested that males have an obligation to participate in "Man to Man Accountability" by confronting their family members or peers for abusive behaviours, while simultaneously advocating for and supporting abused women. The male participants in this study indicated that building respect for girls and women and engendering the capacity to advocate for them begins in the home in early life through modelling such behaviours in the parenting process

and through marital and family relationships. Skills to strengthen men and boys' capacities to engage in this type of advocacy have been incorporated in several prevention programs around the world aimed at strengthening men's abilities to challenge abusive behaviours or perspectives in their communities (Casey et al., 2018; Jewkes et al., 2015; Storer et al., 2016).

Ontogenetic/Individual Factors

This system in the ecological model refers to an individual's developmental experiences or personality and how these factors influence his or her response to stressors in the other systems (Heise, 1998). It can include personal attitudes, beliefs, and values learned from one's family of origin; personal resources, skills, and abilities; as well as personal weaknesses, problems, and pathologies (Carlson, 1984). Previous research investigating domestic violence in South Asian populations indicates that victims and perpetrators appear to have similar individual risk factors, such as positive attitudes about violence towards wives, witnessing domestic violence during childhood, marriage at a young age, and lack of education (Akhter & Wilson, 2016; Kalokhe et al., 2017; Ler et al., 2017). The findings from this study corroborate existing evidence regarding the association of several personal factors such as language barriers, limited personal autonomy, feeling isolated, and husbands' addiction issues as being connected to South Asian women's experiences of abuse (George & Rashidi, 2014; Mahapatra, 2012; Pajak et al., 2014; Sabri et al., 2018). This study also suggests that South Asian community members who are "Ignorant" either because they hold attitudes tolerant of wife abuse or male domination, resist interacting with mainstream society, or are unaware of their personal rights and laws governing domestic violence, may be vulnerable to experiences of abuse.

The South Asian men in this study shared their perspectives about dealing with "Internal Stressors" that may arise from changes to their roles in the family, obligations in various family relationships, and the acculturation process, adding to existing knowledge about developmental

and personal experiences that relate to domestic violence. The results of this study offered interesting insights about the shifts in power some South Asian men may experience with the mainstream community due to racism and discrimination or in their own marriage because of gender role reversals. Gender role reversals have been found to occur among many couples after immigration due to differences in males and females acculturation levels or employment status (Bui & Morash, 2008; Dion & Dion, 2001; Flores, Tshann, Marin, & Pantoja, 2004; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002; Midlarsky et al., 2006). Additionally, the current study provided some nuanced views about male power in the South Asian community with respect to husbands feeling conflicted with wanting to fulfill a dutiful son role while being a good husband, and dealing with situations where men may have limited capacity to address abusive behaviours from their families towards their wives due to a lack of authority in the immediate family. Several participants relayed the emotional toll that results from modifications of the male role in the marriage and when encountering challenges with employment or discrimination, together creating a downward shift in their social status. Echoing the existing literature on risk factors associated with domestic violence, the participants in this study noted how these challenges could lead some men to experience anger problems, depression, and/or addiction issues, and consequently increase their risk of being abusive towards their wives (Birkley & Eckhardt, 2015; Heise, 2011; Hyman et al., 2011; Sabri et al., 2018; Simbandumwe et al., 2008; WHO, 2012).

Ontogenetic/individual level solutions. In this study, suggestions for addressing domestic violence at the individual level focused on male South Asian community members needing to shift behaviours and attitudes that were viewed to be associated with wife abuse. These results extend support to the current discourse regarding men playing an active role in creating change within their families and communities to transform social norms that maintain gender inequality (Douglas, Bathrick, & Perry, 2008; Jewkes et al., 2015; Katz, 2015; Pease, 2008; Sharma, 2000;

Tolman & Walsh, 2018). Overwhelmingly, the participants recognized that in order to achieve this cultural shift, men need to engage in close introspection about any negative beliefs and attitudes they may hold towards women and begin the process of modifying these viewpoints. This push towards examining and modifying negative attitudes towards women is consistent with many national and international preventative programs designed to engage men and boys in becoming allies in addressing gender based violence by reconstructing notions of masculinity in their homes and communities (Casey et al., 2016; Jewkes et al., 2015; Storer et al., 2016; Wells et al., 2015). There is emerging evidence that men who successfully complete preventative programs with such a focus show less tolerance in their attitudes towards violence against women and are less likely to perpetrate violence in their own intimate relationships (Abramsky et al., 2016; Pulerwitz et al., 2015; Verma et al., 2008).

The South Asian men in this study proposed that cultural shifts must “Start at Home” through men becoming more actively involved in their marital and parenting relationships, and modelling and passing down values associated with gender equality to their children. For instance, the participants underscored the importance of men teaching children the importance of non-violence and valuing both genders and openly supporting their wives’ independence or decision-making role in the family. Another powerful recommendation in this study was for fathers to support their daughters’ independence and most importantly, to step in and protect their daughters following abuse disclosures, rather than forcing them to return to violent marriages. This recommendation of the study participants makes a unique contribution to the literature, because it identifies how relationships between fathers and daughters can be altered to combat gender-based violence from the perspectives of South Asian male fathers (as most of the men in the study were married with children and/or grandchildren). Existing literature has highlighted the general need for family members to provide support women to women who are

being abused (Bhandari, 2018; Finfgeld-Connet & Johnson, 2013; Mahapatra, 2012; Sabri et al., 2018), but has not provided any specific directions for change in father-daughter relationships. The personal disclosures shared by the men in this study regarding the changes they have made in their own families and communities to respond to gender inequality and improve marital relationships allude to the immediate and long-term impact that individual-level changes can have on the marital and family system. A number of past studies have suggested that re-negotiating gender roles within the family in order to move towards egalitarian, non-violent marital relationships is an effective means for reducing the risk of family conflict and abuse (Jewkes et al., 2015; Sharma, 2000; Simbandumwe et al., 2008; Yoshihama et al., 2012).

Implications for Policy and Practice in Domestic Violence Prevention and Intervention in South Asian Communities

In addition to contributing to the existing knowledge base, research studies can help to guide effective policies and practices to improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities. The results of this qualitative research study, based on the information obtained from South Asian men residing in Edmonton and Calgary, has given a nuanced perspective of domestic violence in the South Asian community, and increased our understanding of the factors that contribute to wife abuse. Additionally, this study identified several solutions at various levels of the ecological system that could help to address domestic violence in terms of preventative efforts, as well as intervention initiatives. The implications of this study are divided into three parts: policy, practice, and community. The addition of community reflects the perspectives from participants about the importance of mobilizing the South Asian community to create meaningful changes in addressing and responding to wife abuse. It also supports the transformative paradigm, which is partly premised on the philosophy that research findings should empower communities to make changes based on their own cultural framework and

insider perspectives. Due to the collectivist nature of the South Asian culture, which places primacy on the group and community, directions for community-based initiatives are discussed first.

Directions for Community

There are three recommendations stemming from this study related to the South Asian community taking initiative to address the issue of domestic violence. Each of these is presented below.

1. Community and religious leaders should encourage open discussions about domestic violence and provide opportunities for community members to learn about and celebrate aspects of religious/cultural and family values that support gender equality and non-abusive behaviours. Previous research findings suggest that cultural and faith-based groups can play crucial roles in helping South Asian immigrants make successful transitions to life in Canada (Abboud, Wells, & Esina, 2014). Cultural and religious organizations may be appropriate venues to disseminate information that may not be otherwise accessed by South Asian community members. Domestic violence topics can be incorporated into community events or community leaders can collaborate with mainstream organizations to gather information and resources to disseminate information to their members in English or translated documents related to rights and laws/policies in Canada and available support services.

   The South Asian community could incorporate programming in their faith centres/cultural organizations that corresponds to relevant local events such as Daughter's Day (September), Family Violence Prevention Month (November), Family Day (February) or international events such as International Women's Day (March 8), International Day of Families (May 15), International Day of Non-Violence (October 2),

or International Day of the Girl Child (October 11), as a means to raise awareness about the need to work together to eliminate gender-based violence (http://www.un.org/en/sections/observances/international-days/). South Asian community leaders can also incorporate religious teachings that reinforce gender equality from their scriptures and respectful/non-violent relationships in their religious places of worship, to counter cultural proverbs that promote inequality and gender-based violence. They can also encourage cultural shifts through role modelling some of the reforms identified by the male participants in this study towards celebrating the birth of both genders (Lohri) rather than only celebrating the birth of male children, and refusing to demand dowries for daughters in the arranged marriage process. The Pink Ladoo Project is an example of a project utilizing a well-known South Asian food (Ladoo) and culturally auspicious occasion (birth of a child) to raise awareness about gender inequality, and the importance of viewing both genders as a blessing in the family (https://www.pinkladoo.org/).

2. South Asian families are urged to rethink about the original cultural purpose and method of arranged marriage, when engaging in the marital match-making process for their sons or daughters. Research participants in this study noted how match-making that is seen as a business venture to acquire wealth or possessions, or is done with the objective of chain migration of other family members abroad. They suggested that this form of match-making practice damages authentic South Asian cultural values and makes women vulnerable for experiencing abuse. Parents or relatives arranging the marriages of their children are encouraged to focus on and carefully consider and evaluate the cultural and personal compatibility of the potential marriage partners and their families, focusing on core personality characteristics, education levels, and values when making these critical life-altering decisions. Furthermore, parents are encouraged to create opportunities for

contact with the family of the potential match, so they can directly assess the behaviours and values of the family their daughter may be joining, given that arranged marriages are conceptualized as joining two families, rather than only two individuals.

3. Informal networks within the South Asian community should be created and strengthened. The findings of this study suggest a general lack of support among community members in acknowledging that domestic violence is a problem and in supporting women in abusive situations, posing a barrier to seeking help, as well as serving as a perpetuating factor in gender-based violence. The transformative changes that occurred in this study in terms of males holding each other accountable for acknowledging domestic violence and becoming allies to the women in their families and community must continue. Therefore, the natural leaders that emerged in the focus groups among the study participants were encouraged to take the first steps in creating and expanding upon social groups within the community, including any willing members of their own focus groups and any other community members who want to attend. These groups would meet at their own preferred place and time and desired frequency as a space for men and boys in the community to increase their capacities as allies against domestic violence in their communities, and to support each other in standing up against violence. This initiative stemming from the research is consistent with the recommendations by several activists who support men's involvement in anti-violence efforts (Flood, 2011; Fulu et al., 2013; Katz, 2015; Storer et al., 2016). The informal support networks would serve as a vehicle for creating a ripple effect, whereby more men who are in power positions in the community are willing to support women as active, rather than inactive, bystanders. Empowering community members to act in this capacity when encountering abuse has been identified as one of the most effective ways to combat gender-based

violence (Coker & Clear, 2015). Bystanders are described as "those who see or hear an act of violence, discrimination, or other unacceptable or offensive behaviour" and intervene in these incidents (Coker & Clear, 2015, p. 221). Although public campaigns and initiatives are important methods for disseminating information about abuse on a large scale, they are not the most effective ways of creating meaningful change to individual behaviour, when compared to bystander interventions (Casey et al., 2016; Jewkes et al., 2015). Therefore, a combination of education and consciousness-raising activities and the development of bystander networks among the South Asian community would likely yield the best outcomes in improving marital and family relations among community members.

Directions for Policy

The recommendations for policy arising from this research study focus on strengthening prevention and intervention efforts across the ecological system to combat violence against women and girls in South Asian communities, while keeping in mind the unique needs of immigrant families. The following recommendations coincide with both federal and provincial frameworks that aim to address family violence. For example, the Government of Canada (2017) put forth a document entitled: *It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence* based on three pillars: prevention, support for survivors and their families, and promotion of responsive legal and justice systems. The strategy aims to fill gaps in support for diverse populations and to engage men and boys in awareness campaigns. It also includes funding to several government sectors such as Status of Women Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, RCMP, and Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada to support related initiatives. Similarly, in 2013, the Government of Alberta released its own provincial framework to end family violence and identified five key strategic priorities to accomplish over a 10-year

period, which included: (a) engaging men and boys, (b) enhancing services, supports, and justice responses to victims and offenders, and (c) collaborating with diverse communities. However, at this time it is unclear to what extent these priorities have been met and who is responsible for the initiatives outlined in these frameworks. The policy recommendations stemming from this study that are outlined below are congruent with the federal and provincial governments' plans to address violence against women and to support the unique needs of ethnocultural communities:

1. Provide newcomers with better access to information related to fundamental human rights that are protected in Canada, and Canadian laws/policies related to both human rights protection and domestic violence and related community resources at multiple dissemination points. The results of this study revealed that many South Asian newcomers are often unaware of the relationship expectations in Canada, laws associated with domestic violence, their rights when experiencing abuse, or the available services that can help to address their circumstances. Furthermore, the findings indicate the acculturation and adjustment process puts undue strain on intimate relationships and newcomer couples may benefit from having these issues normalized, but also should be provided with strategies to address challenges that may arise in their relationships. Many participants recommended that immigrants and foreign brides should receive this information in their first languages prior to departure from their countries of origin in the respective Canadian Foreign Embassies, or shortly after their arrival, through ESL classes held at local settlement/immigrant-receiving agencies, translated pamphlets, or even in the context of citizenship preparation classes. Although there are several existing guides for newcomers written by federal, provincial and municipal governments, the guides provide very limited information about healthy family or marital relations and related laws and policies or home and host country comparisons. Therefore, there is an urgent

need to incorporate information on these topics either into existing guides, or through the creation of new pamphlets or presentations in ESL classes or foreign embassies.

2. Create a process for identifying at-risk immigrant families or sponsored spouses by connecting them to settlement counsellors for ongoing support. The results of this study revealed the various changes South Asian families experience after immigration, such as differing expectations regarding roles in the family, difficulty securing employment, limited social support, and problems navigating various social services, which may leave some community members vulnerable to domestic violence. To address this issue, it may be helpful for government agencies to implement a program for newcomers as part of their integration process to attend compulsory orientation sessions hosted by multi-agency staff to assist with various facets of the settlement process such as employment, transportation, finances, health, education, leisure, police/legal, and community. These programs could also incorporate support to South Asian Canadian families so they are also made aware of the challenges and given resources to help their family member have a successful transition. This would allow immigrants an opportunity to meet with various service providers and obtain resources for different components of their livelihood, and possibly prevent or at least reduce the potential for negative relationship and family outcomes.

   Baobaid and colleagues (2015) describe an example of this approach at the Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration based out of London, Ontario. This organization developed a Culturally Integrative Family Safety Response model that is informed by practice and research, but is also based on open dialogues between the Muslim community and local mainstream organizations to address the unique needs of Muslim families. Within this model, there is a Safe Integration Program, whereby

families attend orientation sessions at a local settlement agency to discuss post-migration stressors with a group of newly arrived families (Baobaid et al., 2015). From there, families can voluntarily participate in an enhanced assessment with a counsellor to address pre-migration and post-migration challenges, and are given the results of this assessment along with an outline of community resources that can address any risk factors. This model includes four main aspects (family screening, early identification, partnerships, and early intervention) to help with successful integration and address problems early in the transition process. The model relies on collaboration with multiple stakeholders in the Muslim community and settlement agency sector, while incorporating cultural knowledge into intervention efforts, such as working from a collectivist approach and addressing contextual factors that impact the well-being of community members. Since Muslims are a subgroup of the South Asian community in Canada, this model seems to hold some promise, although it has not yet been applied to South Asians of other religious affiliations.

3. Evaluate current domestic violence laws and policies with a specific focus on their potential differential utility and impact on ethnocultural communities. In recent decades, there has been a push for various types of policies to be evaluated from a gender-based lens. The results of this study suggest the need to go a step further to also evaluate existing laws and policies from a cultural lens. There is no doubt that domestic violence policies and legal sanctions against perpetrators have protected countless women and children from abusive behaviours. As noted by Das Gupta (2017), domestic violence law "signals to perpetrators, victims, and communities that abuse of girls and women is unacceptable and carries legal consequences" (p. 242). However, there is growing concern in the literature about the overreliance on legal measures in domestic violence

cases and the differential impact of these criminal justice procedures on immigrant families. This is especially the case in light of the fact that ethnic minorities are already overrepresented in the criminal justice system (DasGupta, 2017). The findings of this research revealed mixed perceptions about the Canadian justice system and its ability to address factors associated with domestic violence in the South Asian community, while respecting the importance of family unity. While participants recognized the significance of domestic violence laws for deterring violent behaviour, they also expressed concern about practices that separate family members. Goodmark (2018) noted that mandatory arrest and separation interventions reinforce abused women's lack of power following domestic violence and may promote greater reluctance on their part to seek help from the police in the future, putting them at greater risk of unmitigated future harm. Concerns were raised in this study about whether the current criminal justice system can adequately protect South Asian women while respecting a family's desire to remain intact. Therefore, funding should be directed towards researching the outcomes of criminal justice responses like mandatory arrest and forced separation for ethnically diverse groups and immigrant populations compared to non-immigrant populations. This would provide valuable information about whether the needs of our diverse populations are being met and if the desired outcomes of reducing risk are occurring. If the evaluation reveals differential results, new interventions and justice system responses should be considered that take into account community- based or culturally-based solutions through extensive community consultation.

This dissertation served as a beginning of such a community consultation process. The participants feedback suggested that offering alternative legal measures for first-time low-risk offenders that incorporate psychoeducation and enhancing personal skills, while

supporting family members during the process would be very helpful for South Asians. Participants in this study also recommended the use of restorative justice interventions. Many community advocates have suggested that such interventions are more culturally responsive than traditional criminal justice interventions, due to the incorporation of both a community perspective and the victim's perspective and participation in determining how to redress the perpetrator(s) behaviour and the resulting damage to health, relationships, and property (Coker, 2006; Elias, 2016).

4. Increase cultural competence throughout the justice and legal system by educating police, lawyers, judges, and correctional/probation staff about contextual factors that influence domestic violence in immigrant and ethnically diverse families (Lockhart & Danis, 2010). According to Statistics Canada (2017), Canadian society is projected to become even more diverse and our population growth will largely continue to rely on immigration. This makes it imperative for existing systems to be more responsive to the unique needs of ethnically diverse families. The findings of this study indicate that service providers across the legal and intervention spectrum would benefit from understanding the South Asian community and the unique needs of this population in order to improve the effectiveness of their responses to domestic violence incidents. The use of cultural brokers or the hiring of culturally and linguistically diverse staff within these systems could help towards these ends, as would the delivery of in-services within these systems focusing on understanding culturally diverse families.
5. Provide funding to organizations for outreach activities and prevention initiatives with South Asian communities. Educating the community has been identified by several advocates and researchers as a necessary step for combatting domestic violence in ethnocultural communities. However, most community groups lack the funding for

engaging in such educational initiatives (DasGupta, 2017; Ellsberg et al., 2014; Storer et al., 2016). Funding should be allocated to support outreach activities between mainstream organizations and cultural or religious institutions that address domestic violence issues with the South Asian community. Specifically, the government should offer funding to cultural organizations that incorporate gender-based violence initiatives or programming that tackles any or all of the three priorities identified by the federal government such as prevention, enhancing access to supports or resources, and engaging boys and men.

Directions for Practice

The results of this study have the potential to inform settlement workers, social workers and psychologists who work directly with South Asian families, couples and individuals. It is important to note that many of the suggested recommendations for practice directly relate to some of the policy changes described in the previous section and emphasize the need for collaboration with the South Asian community. The primary practice recommendations stemming from this study are below:

1. Gain cultural knowledge and have an active presence within the community. In some respect, these two recommendations are complimentary, since working alongside South Asian community members would provide practitioners with an opportunity to obtain culturally-based knowledge directly from them, while building credibility. Service providers who work with South Asian clients should seek knowledge about the community's cultural practices, collectivist beliefs, and how various contextual factors, such as pre-migration circumstances and post-migration experiences, interact in domestic violence cases (Finfgeld-Connett & Johnson, 2013; George & Rashidi, 2014). This dissertation has attempted to enhance the available research base that provides information in these areas of cultural knowledge from the missing male perspective. It is

important for practitioners to understand the customs and traditions that may overlap across South Asian communities, while also recognizing the heterogeneity across these communities.

Counsellors conducting domestic violence assessments among members of South Asian communities or encountering clients experiencing domestic violence should include in their assessments, inquiries related to: (a) multiple possible perpetrators, (b) culturally-specific forms of abuse, (c) evidence of isolation or restrictions on behaviour, (d) conflict associated with gender role reversals, (e) client awareness about domestic violence laws or legal rights, (f) contributing factors or tensions at any or all levels of the ecological model of gender-based violence by Heise (1998; 2011), and (g) any personal, linguistic, or structural barriers to accessing intervention or support, considering how these barriers can be addressed.

Service providers should use their position to advocate for changes that address systemic barriers related to language or accessing services. Participants in this study expressed concern about the difficulty in navigating services. Similar concerns were identified by South Asian practitioners and community members in the Greater Toronto area, and they suggested to modify service delivery so that several issues could be addressed in one place, such as housing counselling services at a local settlement agency or cultural organization or having a drop-in day at such sites, rather having members go to multiple agencies (George & Rashidi, 2014).

2. Counsellors working with South Asians experiencing marital or family tensions or who are already dealing with domestic violence should tailor their interventions to contributing factors affecting that particular client, couple, or family at varying levels of the ecological model, based on how these factors manifest themselves in the client's own

cultural context (Cuevas & Cudmore, 2017; Warrier, 2009). For example, tensions related to employment can be dealt with by connecting the members of the couple to job finding or re-credentialing support through a local immigration agency. Similarly, gender role reversals in the family can be dealt with through couples or family counselling to help families make adjustments to their pre-migration relationship expectations after going through the acculturation process in Canada, and to negotiate new roles and responsibilities. When domestic violence disclosures occur, counsellors need to understand that leaving the marital relationship may not be a viable option. Given that the South Asian community is oriented towards a collectivist philosophy that upholds the needs of the group over the individual, it may be important to incorporate interventions for the whole family while recognizing the different relationship dynamics that could be interfering with addressing abusive behaviours

3. Consider using the S.T.A.R.T.© model for approaching the intervention process with this group, which is a spiritually sensitive multi-dimensional education and intervention approach for working with diverse cultural communities (Stennis, Bent-Goodley, Purnell, & Williams, 2015). This program was initially designed for African American communities in the United States, but has been tested and implemented with various ethnic and faith groups (Stennis et al., 2015). The model's acronym S.T.A.R.T.© stands for **S**hatter the Silence, **T**alk about It, **A**lert the Public, **R**efer, and **T**rain self and others, and was developed to be sensitive to cultural/religious traditions, address various systems across the ecological model, and focus on how individuals, families, and organizations can work within communities to address issues of domestic violence (Stennis et al., 2015). This model includes community collaboration and engagement, psychoeducation about personal rights, laws and policies, and collaboratively deriving appropriate cultural

responses and courses of action for responding to domestic violence incidents experienced by clients.

Evaluating the Study

Since qualitative and quantitative research studies operate based on different philosophical assumptions about reality, unique criteria have been put forward for evaluating qualitative projects (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The influential work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggests that qualitative research should be judged by its degree of trustworthiness rather than rigor, which is determined through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Like other qualitative research approaches, Mertens (2009) has adopted Lincoln and Guba's (1985) set of criteria to evaluate transformative paradigm research, but also suggests examining authenticity to ensure the research is presented in a fair and balanced manner and can be used by community members to further social justice efforts. Both Lincoln and Guba's (1985) and Mertens (2009) criteria are described below, together with how these criteria were addressed in this research project.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the direct congruence between participants' understandings of the phenomenon under study and the researcher's representation of these understandings through member-checking, or eliciting participant feedback (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The use of participant feedback or member checking serves to enhance the believability of the study results due to the consistency of the reported results with the lived experiences of participants, as well as the existing literature base on the topic being studied (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In regards to the latter point, Hays and Singh (2012) note that credibility is assessed by determining whether the conclusions drawn from a qualitative study make sense. Credibility can be enhanced through prolonged engagement in the research topic and setting (Creswell, 2013). Establishing credibility

with community groups through active engagement and building trust with members is another important facet of credibility in the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2009). In the process of conducting this study, the researcher immersed herself within the South Asian community in Edmonton and Calgary by meeting with key stakeholders and attending various cultural events to build trust with the groups from which she was recruiting participants. She is also an insider to the South Asian community, assisting with this process. These relationships facilitated her ability to seek feedback from the male focus group participants about any misunderstandings or any information to correct or modify after summarizing her understandings of their focus group disclosures at conclusion of each focus group. Feedback provided by participants suggested that the researchers' presentation of their collective understandings of domestic violence, contributing factors for it, and possible solutions were authentic reflections of their perspectives. No changes were requested. This process of seeking feedback from all group members at the conclusion of each focus group, through a pre-exit focus group debriefing, has been established as an acceptable form of member-checking when utilizing focus groups as a data collection tool (Efron & Ravid, 2013; Krueger & Casey, 2009; Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014).

The results of the focus groups in this study are consistent with other studies on the South Asian population, attesting to their believability, while also extending existing findings and highlighting the diversity among group members, in terms of those who realized domestic violence is a problem and those who were in denial until other group members confronted them. The fact that transformative dialogues that occurred in the process of conducting this study were made explicit in the results section, also enhances the credibility of the study by making the findings and participants' interchanges directly accessible for readers to judge their congruence with the overall study results.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed transferability as a research criterion for qualitative research, focusing on the relevance and applicability of the study results to the larger group that the participants were drawn from. Qualitative research does not strive towards generalizability, but rather to provide a detailed description of the research findings, participants, settings, and time period, so that readers can determine whether the research findings are appropriate to the contexts in which they work (Hays & Singh, 2012). Merriam and Tisdale (2016) suggest maximum variation of the research sample is one mechanism for enhancing transferability.
The participants in this study were from the top source countries of South Asian immigrants to Canada and Alberta: India and Pakistan. They were a diverse sample in age range (24-74), length of residence in Canada (from being born in Canada to being in Canada for only a few years, to residing in Canada for multiple decades), religious/subculture affiliations (Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian), employment settings (from manual labourers to professionals with graduate degrees), community roles (religious/community leaders, frontline service providers, and general community members) and family status (from being married without children, to being fathers, to being grandfathers as well). Therefore, the study included a wide range of male perspectives and experiences, maximizing the applicability of the research findings related to the men's voices to working with South Asians with similar circumstances. Furthermore, the recommendations the men collectively made for addressing domestic violence cut across multiple systems, like the family system, the cultural community, the legal/justice system, the social service system, and the settlement/immigration system. Their suggested directions for prevention and intervention are applicable to many different areas of service delivery.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the potential for replicability of a study by other researchers or over time, which is enhanced through maintenance of a clear audit trail of processes and decision-making points in conducting the study and interpreting and analyzing the data (Hays & Singh, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mertens, 2009). In this study, a detailed account of all study procedures, decision-making points, and how data was transcribed, analyzed and interpreted was kept in the researcher's journal to create a clear audit trail. The journal also documents the process of data coding and development of themes and subthemes.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the close correspondence between the interpretation of research data and the actual data collected, which can be achieved through both journaling and external auditing of study processes and findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher kept a reflective journal documenting her reactions to the research data, what she was learning, and unexpected findings and research outcomes. She discussed her thoughts and possible interpretations of the data with her dissertation supervisor, who is a member of a different South Asian cultural and religious subgroup (Muslim) than the one that the researcher belongs to (Punjabi), and who has many years of experience researching the South Asian community. Thus, the supervisor served as the external auditor of the data analysis and interpretation process to ensure that the study analysis focused on participants' perspectives on domestic violence in their communities rather than the researcher's perspectives, biases, or pre-conceived notions about their perspectives.

Authenticity & Transformative Impact

In many ways, authenticity is similar to confirmability, in that it reflects researchers' attempts to present participant perspectives in an authentic manner (Hays & Singh, 2012). Some

note the subtle difference between confirmability and authenticity is that the former refers to methodological criteria and the latter refers to theoretical criteria (Hays & Singh, 2012). Authenticity is especially important in the transformative paradigm because it means the researcher presented a fair and balanced view of the research findings, and that community members can use the information for the purposes of furthering social justice and human rights (Mertens, 2009). This means taking steps to avoid bias in the data collection and reporting of results by engaging in self-reflective process and acknowledging biases where they occur, which was done in the study and described above. Fairness in this study was demonstrated by reporting the range of different views and comments across the focus group participants in relation to all emerging themes, including direct evidence of conflicts or disagreements between the focus group members in transformative dialogues.

Mertens (2009) provides several indices associated with authenticity that directly relate to evaluating whether a study has had a transformative impact when utilizing the transformative paradigm: (a) determining if the people involved in the study changed as a result of their participation (experiential); (b) identifying if the consequences of the inquiry advance social justice and human rights (consequential); (c) evaluating if the relationships among researchers and participants changed (interpersonal); (d) understanding if the nature of reality has been modified to contribute to social justice goals (ontological); (e) determining what actions can result from, or are possible, as a result of the study (catalytic); (f) whether the researcher and participants understand themselves differently (critical reflexivity); and (g) and if the research study contributed to the community (reciprocity).

The “Transformative Conversations” that occurred during the course of this study highlighted the changes among participants that transpired during the research process. As part of the research process, the researcher engaged in an educational debriefing at the end of each

focus group where she provided South Asian men with accurate information about how domestic violence is defined, responded to and addressed in Canada and in Alberta, and also provided a list of local resources to assist affected community members. The objective of this educational debriefing was to advance human rights and social justice within the community through a potential ripple effect from group members to their social networks outside of the group, as they were encouraged to share the information with other community members, and many requested photocopies of the information to share among their networks. This educational debriefing also changed the relationship the researcher had with the participants from the initial stage of the study, where she served as a researcher and focus group facilitator, since it required her to shift to the role of an educator and resource person for the participants. The study generated several recommendations and strategies for the South Asian community to utilize to address domestic violence, when supported by policy and practice shifts, which would serve to empower the community, demonstrating the reciprocity of the study. The researcher was encouraged by focus group participants to share a summary of the study findings and implications for the community with community leaders, which she has followed up on. The researcher was forever changed by and impressed by the participants' self-insight and willingness to confront each other and play a role in addressing the difficult social problem of domestic violence. She initially was not sure how and whether men would see themselves as contributing to domestic violence prevention and intervention, but it became clear in their dialogues that they envisioned many possibilities for engaging in this challenging work, starting by taking a good look in the mirror and re-evaluating how they approach their own family lives.

Limitations

Although this study produced original contributions to knowledge about how domestic violence is defined and contributing factors and solutions from the missing perspective of South

Asian men, the study had some limitations. The first limitation is that the focus groups were conducted in English and not in the participants' first languages. Participants were offered the option of attending a focus group that could be facilitated in their first languages, but all of them declined this option and indicated they felt comfortable with their communicative abilities in English. However, some of the conversations in the focus groups switched between English, Punjabi and Hindi, which are languages spoken by a large number of people across South Asian countries. This phenomenon, called code-switching, has been found to be very common among those with English as a second language, and is not a reflection of poor language skills in English, but rather a reflection of cultural comfort with the first language in certain settings where individuals are interacting with other members of their own cultural groups (Auer, 2013; Heredia & Altarriba, 2001; Mabule, 2015; Nguyen, 2015). The researcher's first languages are Hindi and Punjabi, so she could understand and translate the majority of what was spoken by participants in these languages. However, participants who switched between languages either asked if others understood or automatically translated their comments into English after saying them in their first languages. In cases where this did not occur, the researcher would request them to restate their responses in English to avoid any misinterpretations of what was being shared by other group members who didn't share their language, and to reduce the possibility of excluding participants who were not fluent in those languages. Nonetheless, participants for whom English was a second language may have encountered some difficulty expressing themselves, despite them reporting comfort with their communicative abilities in English, and this could have led to some loss of meaning or nuances in their intended communications.

Another limitation of this study is the researcher's gender and age, which may have prevented some of the men from speaking freely about their opinions regarding women or more sensitive aspects related to domestic violence, such as sexual abuse. Issues regarding gender and

age are especially significant in the South Asian community, which tends to ascribe to a more traditional perspective regarding interactions between members of the opposite sex and being directive with elders. The researcher attempted to minimize these barriers by being aware of how her presence might influence interactions with participants and what discussion topics could be openly shared. Additionally, using a semi-structured interview protocol for the focus groups provided more flexibility for moderating group discussions, so that the focus centered on focus group participants' conversations with one another, rather than their conversations with the researcher. From the beginning of each focus group and throughout the discussions, the researcher attempted to create an open environment that respected multiple viewpoints which was demonstrated by giving opportunities to participants with differing perspectives to elaborate on their opinions, and also by acknowledging there are no particular views being solicited. The researcher also capitalized on using skills from her experiences of facilitating therapy groups that only consisted of male perpetrators of domestic violence and previous experiences facilitating focus groups with South Asian community members. Nevertheless, it is possible that the South Asian males in this study may have disclosed different or additional aspects of their perspectives if the focus groups were run by a male facilitator.

The final limitation of this study is that although the sample recruited included South Asian mostly married men of a wide age range with different religious affiliations, varying lengths of residence in Canada, and varying community and occupational roles, only two of the South Asian countries of origin (India and Pakistan) were represented among their backgrounds, despite multiple recruitment methods with various South Asian cultural organizations across two large Albertan cities. However, the participants' country of origins also represents the top source countries for immigrants from South Asia (Statistics Canada, 2017d). The fact that so much information about aspects of cultural teachings, proverbs, and traditional family practices that

contribute to domestic violence emerged from the study suggests that the high educational level of some of the participants may have positioned them to be able to effectively articulate these issues. Also, the fact that there was still a great deal of variance among participants viewpoints on domestic violence as evident in the transformative dialogues suggests that even more variance may have been observed if less educated men, more single men, and men from other South Asian countries had been included in the sample.

Conclusion & Directions for Future Research

The current study was inspired by the lack of existing knowledge about South Asian community-based understandings of domestic violence and a desire to incorporate men's viewpoints on this issue because of the influential role they play within the community. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there are no other published studies in North America that have attempted to understand domestic violence in the South Asian community by exploring the perspectives of male community members. This study extends the current discourse by incorporating South Asian male community members' perspectives on domestic violence and generating culturally informed solutions including the acknowledgement regarding the unique role of men in these efforts. In general, most of the studies conducted on South Asians regarding domestic violence are largely based on the female perspective either as victims of abuse or front-line workers. Although these studies have greatly broadened our understanding about the differential abuse experiences of ethnic minority populations, more research with both genders is needed to understand the factors associated with domestic violence. Furthermore, the research discourse needs to expand beyond descriptions of abuse and towards a systematic identification of factors associated with domestic violence in the South Asian community to help create responsive interventions.

There is a growing recognition that including men and boys as key informants for understanding domestic violence within their communities is a critical step for eradicating gender-based violence. However, men also need to be included in research efforts to help inform what strategies would be most effective in their communities or peer group. This is especially true of men from minority groups who do not occupy the same privilege as White men and who often experience prejudice in the mainstream legal system, as demonstrated by an over-representation of ethnic minorities in the criminal justice system. The study participants frequently discussed the key role religious leaders and youth play as change makers in the South Asian community, and noted the significant challenges immigrant men in their community face as they adjust to their new life in Canada. Consequently, it would be vital for future research to include viewpoints from men in these subgroups to not only expand our understanding of domestic violence in the South Asian community, but also to identify possible contributions they can make to challenge existing norms or behaviours that condone abuse towards women. Future studies should aim to include more men from the South Asian countries that were missing in the research sample and from a greater diversity of economic backgrounds. As described earlier, part of the objective of this study was to create an opportunity for encouraging dialogue between participants about their role in addressing domestic violence within their respective communities and to provide knowledge that could be transferred to their networks. Based on the conversations generated among the study participants and the positive feedback received about the educational material at the end of each focus group, there were meaningful changes that occurred through their participation. However, future research should also incorporate a longitudinal follow-up with participants to determine what type of impact occurred, and whether this impact resulted in any action within the month, 6 months or year following the study in terms of changing one’s own behaviour or intervening as a bystander in response to others’ abusive behaviours.

Domestic violence and gender-based violence are issues that require engagement from all members of a community, and effective interventions should be based on methods that are culturally and contextually appropriate for a given group. Many of the participants shared concerns consistent with the existing literature about the overreliance on criminal justice interventions and the detrimental impacts of these typical practices on ethnically diverse communities. This study's findings also highlighted the challenges South Asian community members face in accessing domestic violence information and resources. Future research should include program evaluation studies piloting some of the culturally congruent intervention suggestions and models for South Asian families affected by domestic violence emerging from this research, such as restorative justice interventions, as well as various community initiatives and campaigns aimed at prevention. The results of this study suggest that preventing and addressing domestic violence in the South Asian community will require a multi-tiered effort including community activism and advocacy, policy change, and cultural adaptation of intervention practices. This research study has hopefully planted the seeds for these transformations to occur among community members, practitioners, and policy makers through the study's many original contributions to knowledge and its direct and tangible impacts on the study participants as men within the South Asian community.

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Appendix A: Study Description/Advertisement

University Study on South Asian Men's Views and Opinions about Abuse or Domestic Violence

Everyone has a different idea about what a good relationship between husband and wife should be like, and what makes a bad relationship or marriage. In some marriages, there is abuse or violence, but men and women may understand or define abuse differently.

A study at the University of Alberta is looking for South Asian men who would be interested in sharing their opinions and thoughts about abuse or domestic violence among married couples in their community. This study is being done by Jasmine Bajwa, a PhD student in Counselling Psychology at the University of Alberta, working under the supervision of Dr. Noorfarah Merali. The findings of the study could help community workers and family counsellors to better understand men's views about abuse, so they can help prevent abuse, and help families going through abuse to build better and safer relationships.

The purpose of the research is to:

1. Understand what makes a good marriage and what makes a bad marriage and the types of relationship problems that can come up
2. Learn what kinds of things contribute to abuse or violence towards wives.
3. Come up with solutions to prevent or deal with domestic violence in the South Asian community.

You can take part in this study if you:

- Are male
- Are over the age of 18
- Have a South Asian heritage (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi, Nepali, or Fijian)
- You have lived in Canada or Alberta for at least 2 years

What you will be asked to do:

Taking part in this study will only take a few hours of your time and will take place at a location and time that works best for you. It is completely up to you if you want to be in this study or not. If you choose to take part in the study, you will be invited to a group meeting with 4-6 other men from your community to talk about what makes a good marriage, what makes a bad marriage, what type marital problems are common in your culture, what is abusive behaviour or domestic violence, what causes abuse or violence towards wives, and what are the solutions to prevent or stop this from happening in your community. Everything that you and other people say in the meeting will be kept private. If you want to talk in your own language, an interpreter can be arranged for you at no cost.

Food and refreshments will be provided at the group meeting.

If you want to take part in this study or would like more information, please contact Jasmine either by email (jbajwa@ualberta.ca) or call her at this number: 780-994-2483.

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

University Study on South Asian Men's Views and Opinions about Abuse and Domestic Violence

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

This study wants to learn what men from the South Asian community think makes a good marriage and a bad marriage, and how they define abuse or violence towards wives. Men in the study will also be asked to share their thoughts and ideas about what causes violence against wives in their community and what can be done to help people who may experience problems in their relationships. This study is being done by Jasmine Bajwa, who is a PhD student at the University of Alberta working under the supervision of Dr. Noorfarah Merali. Her study will help community workers and family counsellors to help South Asian couples create good and safe relationships and to try to prevent problems from happening.

If I mark "yes" to all of the statements below and sign this form at the bottom, it means that I understand these things about the study:

I have received and read a copy of the *Participant Letter of Information.* I understand what was written and Jasmine has answered any questions that I may have had.	Yes No
I will meet with Jasmine in a group with other men from my community who are also taking part in this study. Jasmine will ask some questions to all of the men in the group, and I can answer at any time. She may have an assistant to help her run the group meeting, so everyone gets a chance to say what they think. If I like, I can bring a male relative or friend from my community with me to the group meeting.	Yes No
There may be a chance that I know some of the other men in the group meeting from my community or social life. Even if I know them, everything I say in the group and everything they say will be kept private. Nothing anyone said or did will be talked about or shared outside of the group meeting by Jasmine, or by other people in the group.	Yes No
The meeting will take between one to three hours, and will happen at a time and place that is best for me. I will be asked about: my ideas of good and bad marriages or relationships, what is abuse or domestic violence towards wives, and what causes problems such as violence and abuse towards wives. I will also be asked about what kind of things may prevent or stop abuse towards wives in my community.	Yes No
During the group meeting, I will be asked to share thoughts and opinions, but I do not have to give information about my own marriage or family relationships, or the relationships of other people that I know.	Yes No
People who come to the group meeting will not share information to others about who came or what they said. But after the group is over, I can tell other people about what I learned from going to the group, as long as I don't tell who came or what any other group members said or did.	Yes No

The group meeting will be tape recorded so that Jasmine can hear everyone's comments, write down what everyone has said, and then later she will delete the tape. My name will not be included in any reports about the findings of this study. Instead, another name will be used instead so that nobody will know who is talking. While she is working on the study and has to keep the tape, it will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in her research office.	Yes No
Talking about marriage relationships and abuse or domestic violence may make me feel upset, mad, or have some stress, especially if I have had some marriage problems in my own life. If this happens, I can get help from Jasmine because at the end of the group meeting she will give everyone a list of places we can go for help if we need it. Also, if I tell Jasmine how I am feeling, she will help me to get information or help that I need to feel better.	Yes No
Even though the group meeting focuses on my thoughts about marriage and abuse in general and not about my own marriages or relationships, if I say that I am abusing any person under the age of 18, or someone who is a vulnerable adult, Jasmine is required by law to tell the police.	Yes No
It is up to me whether or not I take part in this study. Even if I sign this form, I can stop taking part in this study at any time without any questions or problems. If I found out about this study from an agency or someone I know, they will not be told if I took part or not.	Yes No
If I have any questions or concerns, or want to know more about this study, I can send an email to Jasmine at jbajwa@ualberta.ca or leave her a message at 780-994-2483. I can also contact her supervisor, Dr. Noorfarah Merali, at the University of Alberta: 780-492-1158.	Yes No
The plan for this study has been reviewed by the Ethics Board at the University of Alberta, which makes sure people who are taking part in a study are protected from harm and treated properly. This Board is called Faculties of Education, Extension and Augustana Research Ethics Board (EFA REB). If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a person taking part in this study, I can call the head of this Board at 780-492-3751.	Yes No

I agree to take part in this study:

____________________	____________________	____________________
Participant Signature	**Printed Name**	**Date**

I believe that the person signing this form understands what is involved in the study and voluntarily agrees to participate.

____________________	____________________	____________________
Researcher Signature	**Printed Name**	**Date**

Two copies of this consent form will be provided. One is to be kept by you for your records, and the other is to be returned to the researcher.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact:

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Appendix C: Participant Study Information Sheet

University Study on South Asian Men's Views and Opinions about Abuse or Domestic Violence

This study wants to learn what men from the South Asian community think makes a good marriage and a bad marriage, and how they define abuse or violence towards wives. Men in the study will also be asked to share their thoughts and ideas about what causes violence against wives in their community and what can be done to help people who may experience problems in their relationships. This study is being done by Jasmine Bajwa, who is a PhD student at the University of Alberta working under the supervision of Dr. Noorfarah Merali. Her study will help community workers and family counsellors to help South Asian couples create good and safe relationships and to try to prevent problems from happening.

This sheet provides information about the study and what you will be asked to do if you agree to take part.

1. You will meet with Jasmine in a group with other men from your community who are also taking part in this study. Jasmine will ask some questions to all of the men in the group, and you can answer at any time. She may have an assistant to help her run the group meeting, so everyone gets a chance to say what they think. If you like, you can bring a male relative or friend from your community with you to the group meeting.

2. The group meeting will be in English but if you don't feel comfortable talking in English, you can tell Jasmine this, and she can arrange for you to take part in a group that is run in your first language.

3. There may be a chance that you know some of the other men in the group meeting from your community or social life. Even if you know them, everything you say in the group and everything they say will be kept private. Nothing anyone said or did will be talked about or shared outside of the group meeting by Jasmine, or by other people in the group.

4. The meeting will take between one to three hours, and will happen at a time and place that is best for you. You will be asked about: Your ideas of good and bad marriages or relationships, what is abuse or domestic violence towards wives, and what causes problems such as violence and abuse towards wives. You will also be asked about what kind of things may prevent or stop abuse towards wives in your community.

5. During the group meeting, you will be asked to share thoughts and opinions, but you do not have to give information about your own marriage or family relationships, or the relationships of other people that you know.

6. People who come to the group meeting will not share information to others about who came or what they said. But, you can talk about what you learned from coming to the group with other people after the group is over, as long as you don't tell who came or what any other group members said or did.

7. The group meeting will be tape recorded so that Jasmine can hear everyone's comments, write down what everyone has said, and then later she will delete the tape. Our names will not be included in any reports about the findings of this study. Instead, another name will be used instead so that nobody will know who is talking. While she is working on the study and has to keep the tape, it will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in her research office.

8. Talking about marriage relationships and abuse or domestic violence may make you feel upset, mad, or have some stress, especially if you have had some marriage problems in your own life. If this happens, you can get help from Jasmine because at the end of the group meeting she will give everyone a list of places to go for help if you need it. Also, if you tell Jasmine how you are feeling, she will help you to get information or help that you need to feel better.

9. Even though the group meeting focuses on your thoughts about marriage and abuse in general and not about your own marriages or relationships, if you say that you are abusing any person under the age of 18, or someone who is a vulnerable adult, Jasmine is required by law to tell the police.

10. It is up to you whether or not you take part in this study. Even if you sign this form, you can stop taking part in this study at any time without any questions or problems. If you found out about this study from an agency or someone you know, they will not be told if you took part or not.

11. If you have any questions or concerns, or want to know more about this study, you can send an email to Jasmine at jbajwa@ualberta.ca or leave her a message at 780-994-2483. You can also contact her supervisor, Dr. Noorfarah Merali, at the University of Alberta: 780-492-1158.

12. The plan for this study has been reviewed by the Ethics Board at the University of Alberta, which makes sure people who are taking part in a study are protected from harm and treated properly. This Board is called Faculties of Education, Extension and Augustana Research Ethics Board (EFA REB). If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a person taking part in this study, you can call the head of this Board at 780-492-3751.

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Appendix D: Participant Demographics Form

Today's Date ________ / ________ / ________
Month Day Year

Age: ________

Ethnic/Cultural Background: ____________________________

Religion: ____________________________

Country of Origin: ____________________________

Length of Residence in Canada: ____________________________

Length of Residence in Alberta: ____________________________

Citizenship Status (please check ✓ one)

- ☐ Canadian Citizen
- ☐ Permanent Resident
- ☐ Student Visa
- ☐ Working Visa
- ☐ Refugee
- ☐ Other ____________________

Relationship Status (please check ✓ one)

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Common-Law
- ☐ Separated/Divorced
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Other ____________________

Current Living Situation (please check ✓ one)

- ☐ Alone
- ☐ With a partner/spouse and/or children
- ☐ With my parent(s)
- ☐ With a roommate
- ☐ Joint family (living with in-laws or with brothers or sisters, along with husband or wife)
- ☐ Other ____________________

Highest Level of Education (please check ✓ one)

- ☐ Partial elementary school
- ☐ Elementary School
- ☐ Partial high school
- ☐ High School
- ☐ Partial college/university
- ☐ College diploma
- ☐ Undergraduate degree
- ☐ Partial graduate school
- ☐ Graduate degree
- ☐ Other ________________________

Diplomas or Degrees You Have: ___________________________

Employment Status (please check ✓ one):

□ Not employed	□ Part-time employment
□ Full-time employment	□ Part-time student
□ Full-time student	□ Retired
□ Other ________________________	

Occupation: ___________________________

Appendix E: Educational Debriefing Materials

There are many types of family violence

There are many types of family violence. Many types of family violence are against the law. For example: physical abuse, sexual abuse.
ALL abuse is wrong.
Here are 6 types of abuse:

1 Physical abuse

Examples

- hitting
- slapping

- pushing
- kicking

2 Sexual abuse

Examples

- forcing a family member to have sex
- forcing a family member to do sexual things they do not like

In Canada, it is against the law to force anyone to have sex.

3 Psychological abuse

Examples

- making threats

- cutting clothes, breaking things

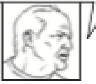
- calling a family member names

- not letting a family member see family and friends

4 Spiritual abuse

Example

- not letting a family member practice their religion



5 Financial abuse

Examples

- giving an adult family member very little money for food, clothes and other things
- taking a family member's money
- not letting an adult family member work outside the home

6 Stalking

Example

- making a family member afraid by doing one or more of these things: following them, phoning many times, sending many e-mails or text messages

Note: An abuser can be any family member. For example: husband, wife, ex-spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, father, mother, step-parent, foster parent, sister, brother, son, daughter, aunt, uncle, grandparent, in-law, caregiver.

Family violence often goes in a cycle

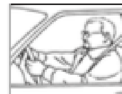
Abuse can go on for months or years. But an abuser is not violent all of the time.
The abuse often goes in a cycle. Most cycles have 4 parts.

The cycle happens again and again. It happens more often. The abuse gets worse.

Example: Ed and Ling

Part 1

- Ed becomes angry and tense. He is upset about his job. He wants to hurt someone.



- Ed chooses to abuse his wife. He calls her names. He gets mad easily.

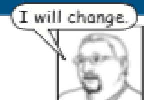
- Ling is afraid. She does nice things for Ed so he won't get mad.

Part 2

- One day, Ed hits Ling. The next day, he kicks her. Ling is terrified. She is afraid to tell anyone.

Part 3

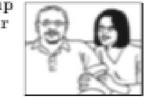
- Ed is sorry. He is more kind and loving.



- Later, Ed says, "You made me angry. So I hit you."

Part 4

- For a while, Ed seems calm. Ed and Ling pretend (act like) their relationship is okay. But their relationship is not healthy.



Then Part 1 begins again.

Ed and Ling need help to stop the cycle of abuse. Where can Ed and Ling get help? See pages C and D.

B • English Express • Talking about family violence

SOURCE: "*Talking about Family Violence*", Government of Alberta, Human Services (http://humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/PFVB3976-talking-about-family-violence-english-express.pdf)

Abusive and violent behaviour is against the law, and the legal system will get involved to keep everyone safe. The police take domestic violence very seriously and will question everyone involved to find out what happened. There are many types of criminal charges that people can get from domestic violence incidents, but the most common are:

- ***Property damage*** – damaging or destroying things that another person owns
- ***Criminal harassment ("stalking")*** – repeatedly meeting or communicating with another person when they don't want to
- ***Mischief*** – destroying or damaging things that a person owns so that the items become useless
- ***Uttering threats*** – telling the other person that they will be hurt or killed, their property will be burned, destroyed, or damaged, or their pet will be killed, poisoned, or injured
- ***Assault*** – any use of physical force on another person to hurt them, such as slapping, hitting, pushing, grabbing, kicking, punching, holding, dragging
- ***Assault with a weapon*** – using any item to physically harm another person, such as stick, knife, etc.
- ***Sexual assault*** – touching or forcing someone to have sex when they don't want to
- ***Kidnapping & forcible confinement*** – keeping a person away from others against their will or transporting someone out of Canada when they don't want to leave
- ***Murder*** – killing another person or hurting another person so that their injuries causes them to die

The police and court take the safety of women and children very seriously and may put many restrictions on the person accused of hurting them. If people do not follow these orders, they can get additional charges and/or convictions on their criminal record or be sent to jail.

What can you do to help a woman who is being abused by her husband and/or his family?

- **Open up.** Ask if she needs help or wants to talk about how she is doing or feeling.
- **Be supportive.** Listen to what she is saying and let her know that you believe what she is telling you. Tell her she doesn't deserve to be hurt and it's not her fault.
- **Lend a hand.** Let her know that you care and ask, "How can I help?" You can also tell her that there are people who can help her to be safe and feel better. If she doesn't know who to talk to, you can let her know there are services and counsellors who can help her figure out what to do.

What can you do if you know a man who has been abusive to their wife or girlfriend?

- **Speak up.** Let him know that his behaviours are abusive and have harmed his family
- **There are other options.** Abusive behaviours are learned and men can find better ways to treat their wives with respect. Tell him about programs that can help him make better choices so he doesn't hurt his wife and family.
- **Express concern.** Let him know that you are worried how his behaviours are affecting him and his family. You can also tell him about the possible bad things that could happen to him and his family (such as embarrassment, depression, family breakup, children upset or police charges) if he doesn't change his behaviours.
- **Provide support.** Listen to what he is saying and tell him that you believe he can change. Let him know that many men do not hurt or insult their wives, and that he may have a happier marriage/family if he treats his wife better.
- **Hold him accountable.** If someone is doing things to hurt their wives, they are choosing to be abusive. No one is at fault except the person who chooses to harm his family.
- **Break the cycle.** Ask him to think about his children who may be scared and hurt by witnessing their mother get hurt. Children who see violence in their family can have difficulties in school, experience emotional problems, and are more likely to be violent in their relationships.

Domestic Violence Services in your Community:

Information

- 24-hour Distress Line – 780-482-HELP (4357)
- Police complaint line – 780-423-4567
- Family violence Info Line (24/7) – 310-1818
- Online resource: www.familyviolence.alberta.ca
- Addiction Helpline – 1-866-332-2322

Programs for Women who have experienced abuse

- Changing Together – Centre for Immigrant Women – 780-421-0175
- Edmonton John Howard Society – 780-423-1635
- Multicultural Women and Seniors Services Association – 780-465-2992
- The TODAY Family Violence Help Centre – 780-455-6880
- City of Edmonton Community Services – 780-496-4777
- Islamic Family and Social Services Association – 780-462-0772
- YWCA of Edmonton – 780-423-9922 ext. 222

Programs for Men who want to change their abusive behaviour

- Edmonton Family Violence Centre – 780-439-4635
- The Family Centre (Reaching for a Good Life) – 780-424-6103
    - (http://www.the-family-centre.com)
- City of Edmonton Community Services – 780-496-4777
- Walk-In Counselling Society of Edmonton – 780-757-0900
- Addiction Services Edmonton – 780-427-2736

Programs for Families and Parents

- Catholic Social Services
    - South Central Office: 780-432-1137
    - Central Office: 780-424-3545
    - East Office: 780-471-1122
    - Southside Greystone Office: 780-432-1137
- Millwoods Family Resource Centre – 780-413-4521 (http://mwfrc.org)
- The Family Centre – 780-439-4635 (http://www.the-family-centre.com)
- KARA Family Resource Centre – 780-478-5396 (http://www.kara-frc.ca)
- Norwood Child + Family Resource Centre – 780-471-3737 (http://norwoodcentre.com)

Appendix F: Interpreter Confidentiality Form

University Study on South Asian Men's Views and Opinions about Marital Conflict and Domestic Violence

I, (print name)____________________________, have been hired by Jasmine Bajwa as an interpreter to accurately translate interviews she is conducting for the purpose of her doctoral dissertation research at the University of Alberta in the Department of Educational Psychology entitled: South Asian Men's Perspectives on Domestic Violence in their Community.

I agree to:

- Keep all research information confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form with anyone other than Jasmine.
- Review the letter of information and the interview questions beforehand. I agree to discuss with Jasmine if I have any concerns about what is being asked, problems with translating words or concepts, or if there are any culture-specific factors that should be considered.
- Inform Jasmine if there were important aspects of the interview that could not be properly translated
- Directly translate what the researcher and participant have said without making any alterations.
- Inform Jasmine if I have a conflict of interest with the participant that would prevent me from remaining objective and unbiased during the interpretation.
- Inform Jasmine if there were any culture-specific signs that participants were emotionally distressed during the interviews that Jasmine may not have been aware of or that may require further attention.

Name of Interpreter: ____________________________
(Please print)

Interpreter Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________________

Researcher Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________________