



A REVIEW OF LITERATURE RELATING TO
FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
IN CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE
COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA

JULY 2006



Department for Community Development
Government of Western Australia
Family and Domestic Violence Unit

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ASETTS	Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors
CaLD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
DIMA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
DIMIA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
DVIRC	Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre
DVPU	Domestic Violence Prevention Unit
ECAV	Education Centre Against Violence
FACS	Family and Children's Services
FDVU	Family and Domestic Violence Unit
IVAWS	International Violence Against Women Survey
LISWA	Library and Information Service of WA
MWAS	Multicultural Women's Advocacy Service
MWC	Multicultural Women's Consortium
MWLG	Migrant Women's Lobby Group
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
NSW	New South Wales
PADV	Partnerships Against Domestic Violence
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
TIS	Translating and Interpreter Service
UNSW	University of New South Wales
UWA	University of Western Australia
WA	Western Australia
WESNET	The Women's Services Network
WRWP	Women's Refuge Working Party

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Family and Domestic Violence Unit gratefully acknowledge the support of the Unit's CaLD Stakeholder Group in the development of this literature review.

Thank you to Yvonne Cox and Noelene Proud of the Department for Community Development Library for their efforts in locating resource material.

The Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse website was an invaluable resource in locating material for this review.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this literature review is to identify the recent literature and current research on issues and initiatives relating to family and domestic violence in culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities throughout Australia. The term 'family and domestic violence' includes the range of violent and abusive behaviours that occur in families. It is common knowledge that family and domestic violence occurs in all socioeconomic and cultural groups and is predominantly gender-based, with women most commonly being the victims. Therefore, the current review was initiated in response to the increasing awareness of the barriers that women from CaLD communities experience when seeking assistance in relation to family or domestic violence issues.

There is no current national, empirical research available regarding the nature and extent of domestic violence experienced by women in the mainstream population, due to the hidden nature of family and domestic violence. This is further exacerbated for women in CaLD communities, as research has suggested that these women are less likely to seek assistance or report to Police than women in the mainstream population. Conversely, research has been carried out with specific ethnic groups within CaLD communities, but it remains difficult to provide accurate statistics for the extent and nature of family and domestic violence within those communities.

A need exists for an integrated national data collection system that includes identification and analysis of the incidence of family and domestic violence experienced by women in order to provide accurate statistics for the nature and extent of family and domestic violence in CaLD communities.

There have been a number of national competency standards developed for service providers who come into contact with people affected by family and domestic violence who come from CaLD backgrounds. These standards provide consistency, and they identify the skills and knowledge required to work effectively in the field with men, women and children who are experiencing domestic violence. Although research findings have consistently indicated that many of the current agencies and service providers have presented rationales that support procedures that are more inclusive of women from CaLD communities, in practice the strategies do not appear to be implemented.

It is necessary to develop best-practice standards that are uniform across Australia, although Western Australia has developed a number of best-practice models for the provision of services to both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. The various models highlight the need for services to be accessible and for all materials and services to be presented in a range of languages and formats that are culturally sensitive. Additionally, new culturally appropriate models and interventions are needed to ensure that professionals follow good-practice models and guidelines.

There also needs to be a focus on rural and remote communities and the development of innovative strategies that suit Western Australia's unique geography and demographic distribution.

Women from CaLD backgrounds are less likely to use mainstream services due to a perception that these services would not be responsive to, or understanding of their particular situation. Other factors include fears about involving the Police, anticipating a racist or unhelpful response, or a response that could place them in jeopardy within their own communities. It is generally acknowledged that women who are sponsored by Australian citizens and residents are particularly vulnerable to abuse due to the threat of deportation.

The importance of General Practitioners and the health system for women from CaLD backgrounds is highlighted in research and the lack of qualified interpreters and knowledge of appropriate referral options needs to be addressed as a key strategy to address this issue for CaLD women.

More recent research has indicated that the level of understanding and awareness of family and domestic violence in CaLD communities has increased in recent years due to both community education and generational change, however there is still a great need for community education strategies particularly for new and emerging migrant communities.

The research suggests that positive messages reinforcing community values, such as family harmony and healthy relationships, may be much more effective than confronting and aggressive messages, especially those that ostracise men.

Mainstream domestic violence services appear to experience great difficulty in dealing with the complex needs of marginalised groups within the community, including those from CaLD backgrounds. There are a number of reasons for this difficulty, many of which are outside the control of those services.

Although services are expected to be accessible and relevant, it is acknowledged that CaLD people may choose not to access a service for a variety of reasons. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that specific, specialised services for these groups of people may be required.

There are numerous national and State initiatives that attempt to provide services for people from CaLD backgrounds who are experiencing domestic violence. Most of these projects demonstrated that although it was possible to adapt a mainstream 'Western' model to meet the needs of a CaLD community, it would be more appropriate to develop initiatives that are specific to each community. Many of the difficulties experienced were also common to the mainstream programs, including a significant lack of resources.

A recurring theme of the literature relating to the prevention of domestic violence, the protection of victims and the provision of services was the assertion that 'one size does not fit all' and that mainstream domestic violence services are ill-equipped to deal with the complex needs of marginalised groups in the community, including those from CaLD backgrounds.

Although in many cases incidents of family and domestic violence preceded a couple or family's migration to Australia additional factors following resettlement — such as unemployment, poverty, the changed role of women, awareness of women's rights, lack of family support and intervention, social isolation and intergenerational conflicts — cause additional stresses and often lead to an escalation of violence. Settlement issues have been well documented and there is a significant need for new and emerging communities to be informed of Australian law and services in relation to domestic violence 'within a culturally sensitive and appropriate forum.'

There is an urgent need to develop and implement culturally appropriate interventions and holistic, preventative programs that specifically target men from CaLD backgrounds who perpetrate family and domestic violence. Education on domestic violence, Australian law and how to access assistance needs to be provided to new settlers. This should be part of a comprehensive family support package for migrant communities and refugees, particularly where severe trauma has been experienced prior to migration to Australia.

Another common theme to emerge from the literature was the need to engage key community and/or religious leaders in the task of addressing family and domestic violence in CaLD communities. The principle underlying this theme is the importance of working within a culture to develop appropriate solutions, rather than imposing alien culture and beliefs. In many CaLD communities, promoting 'family harmony' is preferable to focusing on 'domestic violence' when attempting to engage key stakeholders.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Objective

The main purpose of this literature review is to identify existing research and initiatives — including prevention, service provision, and program evaluation — relating to family and domestic violence in CaLD communities in Australia. The knowledge acquired will inform the development, design and implementation of policies, strategies and interventions aimed at addressing family and domestic violence in CaLD communities in Western Australia.

1.2 Definitions and terminology

It has long been espoused that the term ‘Non-English-Speaking Background’ (NESB), did not accurately describe migrants who came from countries where English is widely used (such as India) but which are culturally dissimilar to Australia. In May 1996 the Ministerial Council for the then Ministers for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs agreed to the use of the term ‘Culturally and Linguistically Diverse’ as a replacement. This change in terminology recognised that the language of the country of origin was just one among many potential barriers to a person interacting as an equal with other citizens in this country.

The Department for Community Development’s recently released Cultural Diversity Policy and Strategic Framework 2006 – 2009 acknowledges that this is a cumbersome term and its use risks separating the people it describes from a mainstream Western Australian community, which is in fact very heterogeneous. The Policy uses the term or its anagram, CaLD, to capture the diversity of language, religion, culture and ethnicity in the Western Australian community and lists the following diversity indicators: ancestry, country of birth, parents country of birth, a language other than English being spoken at home, religious affiliation, and the length of time resident in Australia.

It has been postulated that establishing an appropriate definition for family and domestic violence can be problematic due to its multidimensional nature. In 1997, Heads of Government at the National Domestic Violence Summit agreed on the following definition of domestic violence:

Domestic violence is an abuse of power perpetrated mainly (but not only) by men against women either in a relationship or after separation. Domestic violence takes a number of forms, including physical and sexual violence, emotional and social abuse and financial deprivation. Many Indigenous communities prefer the term family violence that includes all forms of violence within intimate and family relationships (cited in WESNET 2000:2).

Research has suggested that Indigenous peoples generally prefer the term ‘family violence’ to describe the matrix of violent and/or aggressive behaviours occurring within extended family relationships, members of a kinship group and/or the immediate community (Blagg 2000; Bagshaw et al. 2000; Gordon et al. 2002; Stanley et al. 2002).

Similarly, within many culturally and linguistically diverse communities, the term 'family and domestic violence' better encompasses the range of violent or abusive behaviours that may occur in extended families. It has been suggested that perpetrators are not limited to the partners of victims but may also include mothers-in-law, parents or siblings (Vietnamese Women's Association of Queensland Inc. 1995), adolescent children (Phoenix Projects 2000) or, in the case of elder abuse, the adult children of the victims (Bagshaw et al. 2000; Ana-Gatbonton 1999).

Family and domestic violence transpires within each and every one of the socioeconomic and cultural groups within Australia (Easteal 1996c). To date, research has also suggested that it is predominantly gender-based, and this notion was supported by Ferrante et al. who found that women comprised between 88% and 92% of victims in Western Australia. Additionally, Edwards (2002) found that 95% of perpetrators are men who are (or were) in an intimate relationship with the female victim.

1.3 Background to the literature review

The current review was motivated by the increasing awareness, understanding and recognition of the difficulties experienced by women from CaLD communities who seek assistance when their safety is threatened by family and domestic violence (FDVU 2004b).

Priority areas in the Western Australian Family and Domestic Violence Action Plan 2004–2005 included the development of strategies to increase access to family and domestic violence services for CaLD families, and the development of appropriate working relationships with CaLD communities. These objectives attempt to foster community capacity to ameliorate family and domestic violence (FDVU 2004a).

More specifically, there is an identifiable action in the Action Plan relating to providing legal education to CaLD communities, focusing on newly arrived migrant groups. This action was devised in response to the growing number of migrants from African communities settling in Western Australia. In 2003, 33% of refugee and humanitarian arrivals in Western Australia were from African countries, and 61% in 2004; between 1 January and 30 April 2005, the statistics indicate that 76% of arrivals were from African countries (DIMIA electronic database, May 2005). Three women from African families were killed by their partners between 2001 and December 2004 in WA. The distress experienced by the affected communities intensifies the importance of developing new strategies to address family and domestic violence in CaLD communities.

The development of new initiatives, policies and strategies dealing with family and domestic violence in CaLD communities will be informed by the findings of a mapping exercise which will examine initiatives in CaLD communities in Western Australia, and by the current literature review.

2. METHODOLOGY

An exploration of websites and electronic databases, particularly the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, yielded more than one hundred articles and book titles relating to domestic violence in CaLD communities in Australia. This complemented the literature obtained via the Western Australian Department for Community Development library and the in-house libraries at the Family and Domestic Violence Unit and the Office for Women's Policy. The review encompassed:

- research reports and surveys;
- textbooks, case studies, journal articles and monographs in library collections;
- conference and seminar papers;
- Australian government publications, databases and unpublished discussion and policy papers;
- homepages, websites, databases and electronic journals;
- newspaper articles, issues papers and the newsletters of relevant organisations; and
- domestic violence training manuals and guidelines for professionals.

The literature reviewed was written by practitioners and recognised experts in the field of family and domestic violence in Australia, from 1995 to the present.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Review of Australian statistics regarding family and domestic violence in culturally and linguistically diverse communities

There has been no comprehensive national statistical research regarding the extent of domestic violence experienced by women from CaLD backgrounds in Australia (Mulronev 2003; WESNET 2000). However, research has been conducted with specific ethnic groups (Szczepanska 2004; Cunneen & Stubbs 2002) and in particular localities or regions (Marshall & Fitzroy 2003; Pham 2000; Easteal 1996b; Connolly & Manson 1996).

One study conducted by Easteal (1996a; 1996c) found that women from non-English-speaking backgrounds in search of assistance regarding domestic violence were more strongly represented in shelters, legal aid and ethnic welfare services than in Police call-outs. Interestingly, most service providers who responded to Easteal's study emphasised that many migrant women lacked knowledge of legal and refuge services, indicating that those who had sought help were in the minority.

This notion is evidenced by the national data collected during 2004–2005, which established that 14% of women accessing assistance through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) were from CaLD backgrounds (AIHW 2006).

Importantly, Dimopoulos et al. (2000) reported that women from immigrant backgrounds appeared to be less likely to receive appropriate assistance from services when they attempted to leave a violent relationship. Findings also indicated that women from immigrant backgrounds were more likely to be murdered as a result of family violence. It was therefore postulated that these women are at an increased risk of severe injury or death as a direct result of the delayed disclosure of a violent relationship.

According to Easteal (1996b:26), if a woman accesses assistance and support in the early stages of a violent relationship, she is less likely to experience more severe consequences, such as physical injuries resulting in death. More specifically, Filipino women in Australia were found to be particularly vulnerable to violence, and they were six times more likely than other Australian women to be victims of homicide (Cunneen & Stubbs 2002).

There are a number of factors that affect the accuracy of statistics relating to the extent of family and domestic violence in the general population in Australia. These factors include the hidden nature of family and domestic violence, the lack of an integrated system of statistical collection, and the under-reporting of incidents of family and domestic violence (Bagshaw & Chung 2000; Carcach 1998; Carrington & Phillips 2003; Ziaian 1997; Easteal 1996c).

In 1996, the Australian Bureau of Statistics conducted the *Women's Safety Australia* survey (McLennan 1996). This survey established the first national data regarding the extent and nature of all forms of violence against women in Australia (Phoenix Projects 2000). The findings indicated that:

- 5.9% of female respondents (490,400) had experienced an incident of physical violence, and 1.5% had been sexually assaulted in the 12 months prior to the survey;
- 4.9% of female respondents (338,700) had experienced physical violence at the hands of a man in the 12 months prior to the survey;
- 2.6% of female respondents who were married or in a de facto relationship (111,000) had experienced violence at the hands of their current partner in the 12 months prior to the survey, while 8% (345,400) reported an incident of violence at some time during the relationship;
- 3.3% of female respondents experienced violence from a previous partner during the previous 12 months, while 42% (1.1 million) reported violence from a previous partner during and after the relationship;
- younger women were found to be at higher risk of violence than older women were; and
- 7.5% of women born in non-English-speaking countries had experienced violence at the hands of their partner during the relationship.

The *Women's Safety Australia* survey also found that, of the female respondents who had experienced violence in the 12 months prior to the survey, 4.5% were born in non-English-speaking countries (McLennan 1996).

Although information was collected regarding the respondents' countries of birth, it was not possible to analyse the experiences of women born in particular countries, nor to compare the rates of domestic violence occurring in metropolitan and regional locations, as a consequence of the nature of the sample (McLennan 1996; WESNET 2000).

Another study conducted by Ferrante et al. (1996) investigated the incidence and prevalence of domestic violence in Western Australia by examining the demographic, geographic and social factors affecting its distribution. Findings indicated that younger women were at greater risk of domestic violence than older women were. Moreover, Indigenous women were found to be 45 times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be victims of reported incidents of domestic violence.

In essence, the *Women's Safety Australia* survey and the research conducted by Ferrante et al. (1996) provided important data against which to measure and delineate future trends. However, it is important to note that surveys generally require fluency in English and, unless interpreters or bicultural interviewers are utilised, individuals from CaLD backgrounds may not be adequately represented (DVIRC 1996). It is worth mentioning that the findings from a subsequent women's safety survey are due to be released in 2006.

On reviewing the research and data on violence against women in Australia, Putt and Higgins (1997) identified the experiences of women from CaLD backgrounds and their contact, or lack of contact, with the justice system as one of the priority areas for research. Furthermore, Jurak (2003) highlighted the difficulty of obtaining an accurate profile of the children accompanying adult clients of SAAP Services, particularly in relation to those children born in Australia from CaLD backgrounds. Data available from the SAAP Program and the National Data Collection Agency, was found to be limited in this area and it is possible these children may be placed in mainstream programs that do not meet their needs.

A crime survey undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that only 31% of assault victims and 20% of female victims of sexual assault reported the incident to the Police (ABS 2002). Similarly, only a small number of female respondents to the Australian component of the *International Violence Against Women Survey* reported the most recent incident of violence to the Police. Importantly, incidents perpetrated by strangers were more likely to be reported to the Police than incidents perpetrated by known males (27% versus 10%) (Mouzos & Makkai 2004:4). One possible explanation for the aforementioned findings was revealed by the Australian component of the 2004 *International Crime Victimization Survey*: 28% of women who were assaulted or threatened by intimate partners did not report the assault due to fear of retaliation (Johnson 2005).

The Australian component of the *International Violence Against Women Survey* was conducted in 2003 (Mouzos & Makkai 2004). The findings of the survey indicated that:

- 10% of female respondents had experienced at least one incident of physical and/or sexual violence, though they were more likely to have experienced physical violence (8%) than sexual violence (4%);
- 57% of female respondents reported at least one incident of physical or sexual violence, though they were more likely to have experienced physical violence (48%) than sexual violence (34%);
- younger women experienced higher levels of physical and sexual violence than older women did;
- Indigenous women reported higher levels of physical violence over their lifetimes than non-Indigenous women did;
- women who were not in a relationship reported higher levels of physical and sexual violence during the 12 months prior to the survey than women who were in a current relationship did; and
- more than a third of women who had a current or former intimate partner reported experiencing at least one form of violence over their lifetime, though the level of violence from a former partner (36%) was much higher than that from a current partner (10%).

Of the 6,677 women who participated in the survey of *International Violence Against Women*, 1,122 identified as being from a non-English-speaking background, and a further 62 interviews were conducted in a foreign language by a bilingual interpreter. The findings indicated that violence against women from non-English-speaking backgrounds was less prevalent than violence against women from English-speaking backgrounds; however, Mouzos and Makkai (2004) highlighted some of the factors that may have resulted in women from non-English-speaking backgrounds either not participating in the survey or being less likely to report or openly discuss incidents of physical or sexual violence with the survey interviewers.

Some of these factors were personal, cultural and religious considerations, as well as institutional and informational barriers. The authors commented that although the survey questions are on topics considered to be 'private' across a wide range of cultures, the topic of family and domestic violence was reported to be even more 'private' for women from a non-English-speaking background.

3.2 Summary

There are recognised difficulties in determining accurate statistics for the extent and nature of family and domestic violence in the mainstream population in Australia, such as the hidden nature of the violence, the lack of an integrated system of national data collection, and the under-reporting of incidents of violence. However, there are even more difficulties in determining the extent of family and domestic violence experienced by women from CaLD backgrounds, as research has found that such women are less likely to report the violence to the Police and less likely to seek help until the later stages of a violent relationship. Further, it has been suggested that those women who do seek assistance are regarded by service providers as being in the minority.

A need exists for an integrated national data collection system that includes identification and analysis of the incidence of family and domestic violence experienced by women in order to provide accurate statistics for the nature and extent of family and domestic violence in CaLD communities.

3.3 General research

It has been suggested that women who are sponsored by Australian citizens and residents are particularly vulnerable to abuse due to the threat of deportation (Bagshaw et al. 2000; Dimopoulos 2000; Eastal 1996c). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, domestic violence service practitioners became concerned about the number of repeat or serial sponsors (men who sponsored three or more women) abusing women and causing their deportation (Nancarrow 2003). Predominantly, the concern related to the abuse of Filipino women by serial sponsors (Cunneen & Stubbs 1996; Marginson 1996), although concerns have increased in relation to women sponsored from other countries, such as Russia, Thailand, Indonesia and Fiji.

Research conducted by Iredale, Innes and Castles (1992, cited in Nancarrow 2003:2) investigated 110 cases of repeat sponsors and found that 53 had sponsored on two occasions, and 57 had sponsored between three and five times. The authors reported that 80 of the 110 sponsors were known to have perpetrated some form of domestic violence. Their research indicated an increased number of repeat sponsors in Queensland, the Northern Territory and the northern half of Western Australia. A number of recommendations were made regarding the identification of serial sponsors, such as better counselling for prospective overseas spouses/fiancées, greater access to community support, and for the sponsored woman to be informed if her sponsor has any history of domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

Both the Australian and Philippine governments have addressed some of the issues relating to domestic violence experienced by Filipino women in Australia (Woelz-Stirling et al. 1998). In essence, Filipino women applying for permanent residency overseas are now legally required to attend an orientation program and counselling sessions for people migrating to another country. This program is provided by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, and Australian immigration authorities will not accept immigration application forms from Filipino women who have not attended the sessions.

A further study by Stoyles (1995) identified equity and access barriers to Commonwealth-funded marriage/relationship counselling services for people from CaLD backgrounds. The author also examined the cultural and religious appropriateness of the services for different groups. One of the objectives of this project was to determine the extent that services could meet the needs of CaLD clients through a mainstream model of service delivery, rather than an 'ethno-specific' model. The findings were that various stresses associated with being a migrant in Australia result in specific cultural and relationship counselling needs that are distinct from those of the mainstream population.

In Stoyles's study, the females from Vietnamese, Arabic-speaking, Jewish, Greek and Filipino backgrounds who participated in focus groups indicated that domestic violence was a problem in their communities, particularly with newly arrived migrants. However, the male participants did not view domestic violence as a common source of marital discord, stating that it had been 'exaggerated by the government and the media' (Stoyles 1995:84).

Despite the challenges involved, Stoyles (1995) reported that a mainstream model of relationship counselling is the most suitable service for this population. He outlined the following suggestions for improving services:

- Improve the targeting and cultural relevance of promotional and advertising material for NESB people;
- Increase NESB people's knowledge and understanding of the counselling process through a broad-based community education strategy;
- Review and develop service models that are more culturally relevant for NESB clients;
- Increase the cultural flexibility and responsiveness of Commonwealth-funded organisations by providing cross-cultural training for staff, translating printed material, employing more bilingual/bicultural counsellors and establishing a closer working relationship with local ethnic community organisations;
- Identify and address actual or potential language barriers for NESB people using these services;
- Expand the ethnic mix of marriage counsellors to be more reflective of surrounding residential communities; and
- Provide outreach marriage counselling services to areas of high NESB concentrations. (Stoyles 1995:xvii.)

In 1997, the Office of the Status of Women commissioned a study on the needs of women experiencing domestic violence who do not use crisis services or the Police. The key objectives were to ascertain the reasons why women did not use those services, how they dealt with the violence, what their needs were, and how those needs would best be met (Keys Young 1998a).

This was a qualitative social research project comprising anonymous and confidential telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews with women identified through community networks, and in-depth interviews with a range of key informants, including service providers and professionals. Those interviewed included 30 women from CaLD backgrounds, who revealed that the motivation for not using crisis services was that they were not convinced that they would be comfortable using mainstream services, nor were they confident that the service would be responsive to, or understanding of, their particular situations.

Other factors highlighted by the women as reasons for not using crisis services were fears about involving the Police, anticipating a racist or unhelpful response, or a response that could place them in jeopardy within their own communities.

The authors concluded that:

Domestic violence services [need] to be more accessible to women with 'special needs', in particular women in rural and remote communities; women with disabilities; Indigenous women; women in lesbian relationships and women of non-English-speaking background (Keys Young 1998a:xiii).

Research was conducted in 1995 to examine community attitudes to violence against women, and findings indicated that people from CaLD backgrounds were generally less well informed (ANOP 1995). More recent research has indicated that the level of understanding and awareness of family and domestic violence in CaLD communities has increased in recent years due to both community education and generational change (Phoenix Projects 2000).

Consultations were held with more than 280 people using focus groups, in-depth interviews and community meetings. Participants were drawn from the general community, Indigenous Australians and six language groups, including Vietnamese, Cantonese, Bosnian, Tagalog, Turkish and Arabic. This research supported the development of targeted community education strategies that are culturally and linguistically framed, and which consequently address the specific issues and values of a particular community. It was suggested that:

Positive messages reinforcing community values, such as family harmony and healthy relationships, may be much more effective than confronting and aggressive messages, especially those that ostracise men (Phoenix Projects 2000:55).

The report cautioned that care needs to be taken to ensure that stereotypes are not reinforced and that no particular community is stigmatised as having a problem with regard to family and domestic violence. Communication strategies and guiding principles for conducting community awareness campaigns were outlined (Phoenix Projects 2000).

The financial and social hardships that migrant and refugee women face due to being denied permission to work or to access income support via Centrelink, and how those difficulties are compounded by domestic violence and homelessness, have been well documented (Aldunate 1999b; Ali & Pham 2001; Dunbar 2001; Pham 1999; Quek 2001).

Between January and March 2000, the Immigrant Speakout Association and the NSW Refuge Movement Migrant Support Group conducted a survey in women's refuges in NSW to gauge the number of non-English-speaking women and their children who were being assisted by refuges and who were experiencing issues related to immigration. Of particular interest were those women who were without, or ineligible for, income support (Pham 2000). The survey also investigated the issues faced by women and children in the target group, and the impact of the lack of income support on both the clients and the refuges.

The survey was conducted in response to an observable increase in the number of women requiring assistance and accommodation as a result of experiencing domestic violence from their sponsoring Australian (citizen or permanent resident) partners. The findings from the survey indicated that:

- 43% of NESB clients in the refuges surveyed migrated to Australia on a Prospective Spouse visa;
- 96 NESB women and 111 accompanying children accessing the refuges were without, or ineligible for, income support (another 79 women were supported through outreach);
- 95 women were identified as having immigration issues, and 64 of these did not have income support due to their visa category classifications; the remainder did not have an income pending the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs' assessment of their permanent residence application;
- 87 women were turned away due to lack of space within a refuge; and
- in 46% of cases, women and children were turned away from refuge accommodation due to existing clients within the service who did not have income support.

In addition, refuge workers reported that in the 12 months prior to the survey, there were 24 cases in which women had been faced with threats of deportation from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. As a result of the fear of deportation, 13 clients returned to abusive partners, while 29 women returned to their abusive partners because they had no financial support (Pham 2000:2–3).

In 2001, the Queensland Department of Families commissioned a review of the options for delivering family and domestic violence responses State-wide (Siggins Miller Consultants 2001). The consultants reviewed services in Queensland, the national and international literature on family and domestic violence responses, and models of best practice, and they summarised responses in other Australian jurisdictions. The report concluded that, due to its particular geography, demographic spread, and the unique situation in the Gulf, the Cape and the isolated North West, Queensland needed to develop its own models of service delivery, or to trial and modify models developed elsewhere.

In relation to women from CaLD backgrounds, the consultants also identified women who are not permanent residents as having particular difficulties, because they had no access to income support:

One key informant noted that the main problem from the point of view of access and social justice is the fact that refuges will usually not take women who have no access to income or government income support. It leaves a very vulnerable group of women and their children out in the cold (Siggins Miller Consultants 2001:62).

In 2001, the Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women conducted consultations in each State and Territory to obtain the views of migrant and refugee women. The aim was to inform policy development in four major areas:

- women's economic security;
- the elimination of violence in the lives of women;
- women's optimal status and position; and
- health and well-being. (Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women 2001:3.)

In relation to family and domestic violence, the women consulted recommended that information on legal issues and the services available to victims of domestic violence should be made available to both men and women when they come to Australia. It was considered that programs should also focus on men who perpetrate violence, and a whole-of-family approach to developing effective solutions to family and domestic violence was favoured.

Women also expressed concern about General Practitioners, who were often the only contact a victim of domestic abuse may have outside their family. The women reported that General Practitioners were not making appropriate referrals for women presenting with signs of abuse and that they often made judgements based on stereotypes or their own perceptions. A number of strategies were recommended to address these concerns. One of the issues raised by migrant and refugee women in Western Australia was that although women who were physically abused may be eligible to apply to remain in Australia, immigration procedures did not recognise psychological and/or emotional abuse.

Partnerships Against Domestic Violence funded a major research project to examine the needs of women, men and young people who are affected by family and domestic violence in South Australia. The main objective was to gather information in order to inform the design and implementation of more effective strategies and interventions. The strategies were to be inclusive of people from Indigenous, rural, migrant, lesbian and gay communities (Bagshaw et al. 2000). A multi-method approach of qualitative data collection included literature reviews, phone-ins, focus groups, interviews with service providers who work with marginalised groups, and networking with various communities.

Researchers interviewed workers who specifically service two migrant groups: firstly, the Vietnamese community; and, secondly, women from the Philippines married to Australian men. The findings indicated that new theories and more inclusive interventions are required to provide a greater diversity of approaches to family and domestic violence. It was also recommended that additional and separate specialist services be provided for people from CaLD backgrounds.

There was also an identified need for generic services to improve service delivery to this group:

There was a general perception that a great deal of research has been done on the special needs of NESB communities and many of the gaps in services have previously been identified. It was noted, however, that in spite of this, generic services are only paying lip service to the special needs of migrants (Bagshaw et al. 2000:104).

Bagshaw et al. (2004) suggested that although hospital strategies acknowledged the need for culturally appropriate service provision, they failed to implement workplace procedures that would allow this to be followed through in practice. In effect, workplace procedures did not allow health professionals to adequately address domestic violence issues with patients from CaLD backgrounds, due to the extra time and resources required, such as interpreters. Their recommendations included implementing and monitoring workplace protocols and assessment practices to ensure access and equity, and developing appropriate strategies to monitor service delivery.

This notion of 'limited access to interpreter services' was supported as being one of the barriers to screening identified in an evaluation of the pilot NSW Health Domestic Violence Screening Project (Irwin & Waugh 2001:36). In one of the two areas involved in the pilot study, the South Eastern Sydney Area Health Service, 25% of residents were born in non-English-speaking countries, as compared to 16% of residents in NSW. Therefore, the unavailability of interpreters indicates that women from CaLD backgrounds were not being adequately screened.

Health practitioners undertaking screening were to complete a four-hour training session prior to participation in the pilot project; however, this proved to be 'logistically impossible' for some services, which resulted in a reduction of training time in some situations. In the South Eastern Sydney Area Health Service, 28 training sessions were conducted, varying in length from 20 minutes to four hours, 'depending on the amount of time staff could be released from their normal duties' (Irwin & Waugh 2001:15).

A report on the screening program conducted in 2004 indicated that 70% of eligible women had been screened. A breakdown of the reasons given for not screening was also provided (NSW Health 2004). The findings were:

- Presence of partner 54%
- Presence of others 38%
- Too unwell 5%
- Woman refused to answer questions 2%
- Lack of privacy 1%

'Lack of interpreters' was not a nominated category. Any reason given for not screening outside the nominated categories listed above was deemed to be 'not stated'. In 52 cases (29%), the reasons were 'not stated'. The report explained this category as follows:

Some services noted that there were other reasons for not screening, such as that a previous service had already screened or domestic violence had already been disclosed, or no health care interpreter was available (NSW Health 2004:9).

Although the NSW Health policy states that qualified and accredited interpreters will be used by health professionals to enable access to domestic violence screening for people of all language groups (NSW Health 2003), the results of the report and the earlier evaluation of the pilot project both support the finding of Bagshaw et al. (2000) that workplace procedures do not allow health professionals to adequately address domestic violence issues with patients from CaLD backgrounds. Women from CaLD backgrounds may be being 'screened out' of the domestic violence screening process. 'Unless they're asked', they are unlikely to disclose (Irwin & Waugh 2001).

Adequate resources for effective staff training and for the provision of qualified health interpreters is a prerequisite for the implementation of policies, procedures, and good-practice standards that facilitate access and equity for people from CaLD backgrounds. Aside from issues of domestic violence, how do health professionals manage to communicate with their patients from CaLD backgrounds regarding general health matters, if or when there are no qualified interpreters available?

It is also of concern that the presence of a partner was the reason given for 54% of women (within the nominated categories) not being screened. It has been suggested that men who are violent towards their partners are less likely to leave them unattended, for fear that they will disclose the abuse. One woman whose husband poured turpentine over her and set her alight when she was holding their child noted how attentive he was to her when she was in hospital being treated for serious burns:

It was not because he was concerned for her welfare, but because he feared the woman he had brought to Australia as a 14-year-old bride from a traditional Afghan Muslim background would tell nursing staff about the horrific act of domestic violence that put her there (James 2005:5).

The victim is now a spokesperson for woman's rights and commented that she suffered years of violent outbursts and was kept locked indoors by her husband (James, 2005). She further stated that she was unaware that assistance was available to her, until she finally disclosed the abuse to a social worker at the hospital.

This highlights the notion that mechanisms for separating women from their partners need to be identified, or those who are most at risk will not be included in the screening process due to gate-keeping by their partners.

A South Australian study by Bagshaw and Chung (2001) was conducted in order to explore the needs of children who witness domestic violence. The authors found that the availability of generic services for children was limited. This situation was exacerbated for children from CaLD backgrounds due to workers often being unaware of the special needs of this group of children. Bagshaw and Chung recommended culturally appropriate specialist services and additional training for support workers.

A pilot study was conducted in Western Australia to identify the needs of accompanying children from CaLD backgrounds who use SAAP services and who are exposed to domestic violence (Jurak 2003). Key issues identified by the study were:

- the need for accompanying children, especially those aged 10–18 years, to have their own space and activities within refuge services;
- the significance of language as a barrier to cultural understanding;
- the importance of training, education and community awareness programs across all sectors;
- the impact of services that come into direct and indirect contact with accompanying children; and
- the importance of obtaining an accurate profile of children from CaLD backgrounds.

The following broader issues were highlighted for further research:

- the needs of those who do not use services, or where services are underutilised;
- the impact of immigration laws and processes;
- domestic and family violence as a public health issue; and
- the limitations of law reform and the criminal justice system to address domestic and family violence. (Jurak 2003:22.)

Szczepanska (2004) conducted a research project to investigate the issue of domestic violence within the Polish community. The author examined the experiences of Polish women, the barriers they face in seeking assistance, and the impact of domestic violence on the mental health of women and young people in Victoria. Data collection included a statistical review, a literature review, a questionnaire, structured interviews and a survey.

The findings suggested that domestic violence is a significant issue in the Polish community, and that family breakdown and the level of violence increased in 44% of relationships within the first two years of arrival in Australia. More than 60% of female participants experienced multiple forms of abuse, including humiliation, criticism and threats, on a daily basis; many participants reported being physically assaulted on a regular basis.

Survey results demonstrated a strong association between the frequency and extent of domestic violence and the level of symptoms of depression. In effect, more than 90% of all victims of domestic violence who had accessed women's refuges disclosed that they experienced symptoms of depression. In relation to the Polish community, recommendations included increased resources for culturally appropriate domestic violence prevention and education programs; culturally appropriate service provision for Polish women and young people experiencing domestic violence; culturally appropriate men's behavioural change programs; and education and information for Polish professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, teachers and priests. Findings relating to the wider CaLD community suggested a need for:

- an increase in the awareness and availability of services for CaLD women that can be accessed in the pre-crisis stage of domestic violence and in the post-crisis recovery process;
- free culturally and linguistically appropriate services to provide relationship counselling for newly arrived migrant families;
- free psychological services for CaLD women who experience domestic violence and who suffer from depression or other complex emotional problems related to the deprivation of psychological needs.

(Szczepanska 2004:40.)

Research has also been conducted to explore family violence within the Eritrean and Somali communities in Melbourne's western region in order to gain an understanding of the key issues involved and how current services can be improved to meet their needs (Gordon & Adam 2005). Three groups were targeted, including Eritrean and Somalian women and service providers (ethno-specific and mainstream). A literature review was carried out, and focus groups and semi-structured interviews were conducted. Key research findings indicated that:

- the family violence service system meets needs regarding housing and food, but it may not meet other needs (for example, the crisis refuge system may require women to share facilities or to move away from their communities);
- ethno-specific workers deal with family violence issues in a culturally sensitive way, but this may not provide the most appropriate response for women;
- there is a lack of service responses for Eritrean and Somali men to assist them to adapt to Australian society and laws, to access unemployment benefits, or to deal with their own violence; and
- Eritrean and Somali communities prefer to deal with family violence within the family and community rather than seeking outside assistance.

Most participants disagreed with legal intervention as a means of addressing family violence:

Families can solve their problems at home, without involving outsiders or authority. It could be solved by community elders, religious leaders or by mediation process (Gordon & Adam 2005:17).

3.4 Summary

Women from CaLD backgrounds are less likely to use mainstream services due to a perception that these services would not be responsive to, or understanding of their particular situation. Other factors include fears about involving the Police, anticipating a racist or unhelpful response, or a response that could place them in jeopardy within their own communities.

Research findings consistently indicate that this situation is exacerbated by the fact that although many agencies and service providers have presented rationales that support practices that are more inclusive of women from CaLD communities, in practice these strategies do not appear to be implemented.

It is generally acknowledged that women who are sponsored by Australian citizens and residents are particularly vulnerable to abuse due to the threat of deportation.

The importance of General Practitioners and the health system for women from CaLD backgrounds is highlighted in research and the lack of qualified interpreters and knowledge of appropriate referral options needs to be addressed as a key strategy to address this issue for CaLD women.

More recent research has indicated that the level of understanding and awareness of family and domestic violence in CaLD communities has increased in recent years due to both community education and generational change, however there is still a great need for community education strategies particularly for new and emerging migrant communities.

The research suggests that positive messages reinforcing community values, such as family harmony and healthy relationships, may be much more effective than confronting and aggressive messages, especially those that ostracise men.

3.5 Good-practice guidelines and models

There are many examples of good-practice guidelines for service providers who work with victims, perpetrators or children affected by family and domestic violence in Australia. Many such guidelines make specific reference to the need for culturally appropriate practices, models, programs and services for people from CaLD backgrounds.

3.5.1 Working with women and families

The Department of Health Western Australia published *Guidelines for developing protocols on intervention and management of family and domestic violence for hospitals in Western Australia* (Mwaiteleke 1998), followed by a comprehensive resource manual (Mwaiteleke 1999). A clinically focused guide for healthcare professionals was published in 2001 (Mwaiteleke & Macourt 2001). The documents provide facts, figures, definitions and indicators of family and domestic violence, offering professionals a comprehensive guide to assessment, intervention, coordination and policy development, and information on the availability of appropriate resources. The accessibility of services to CaLD people is specifically addressed in all three documents.

The Department for Community Services Victoria (1999) developed *Practice Principles for Working with a Multicultural Community* as a supplement to their Case Management Resource Kit for SAAP Services in order to ensure equitable access to accommodation services for people from CaLD backgrounds who are homeless and/or experiencing family and domestic violence.

In 1999, the NSW Women's Refuge Working Party published *An Open Door*, a comprehensive good-practice manual to improve access and equity within women's refuges. The manual was updated in 2003. It specifically addresses issues of access and equity in relation to women from CaLD backgrounds, as well as cultural issues for children (NSW WRWP 2003).

National competency standards have been developed for service providers who come into professional contact with those affected by family and domestic violence (Brendan Mulhall & Associates 2000). The standards provide a consistent benchmark and identify the skills and knowledge required to work effectively in the field. One of the competency standard units specifically relates to the provision of support to victims of domestic and family violence in 'NESB communities'. An information booklet was developed to provide an overview of the competency standards and how these might be implemented by professionals in a range of practice settings (PADV 2000).

In July 2000, the Office of the Status of Women commissioned a national study, with the objective of researching good-practice models in order to improve access to the justice system for people experiencing family and domestic violence. Additionally, they examined the documentation and dissemination of information on innovative practices in Australia, with a particular focus on regional and remote locations (Urbis Keys Young 2003).

This study identified a number of good-practice guidelines and models relevant to victim's access to justice. Of the 22 projects reviewed and presented in the report, only one specifically targeted women from CaLD backgrounds. This was the Women's Multicultural Support and Advocacy Centre in Perth, Western Australia, which provided a one-stop shop to assist women (and their children) from CaLD communities who were experiencing domestic violence.

This service was re-tendered by the Department for Community Development and now operates as the Multicultural Women's Advocacy Service (see section 3.7).

In NSW, the Community Relations Commission has developed a guide to the use of interpreters in domestic violence and sexual assault cases in order to assist service providers to offer more effective services to women from CaLD backgrounds (2002).

The NSW Department of Health (2003) has developed *Policy and procedures for identifying and responding to domestic violence* as well as an implementation package for universal, routine, State-wide screening for the clients of NSW Health Services, through which significant numbers of women have been found to be at risk (ECAV 2001). There is a specific policy relating to 'diversity and effective service delivery' for health professionals working with people from CaLD backgrounds (NSW Health 2003:44–46). The screening process includes offering women an information card, which is available in eight major community languages.

A *Domestic & Family Violence Resource Manual* for generalist health, community and welfare workers has been developed for the Barwon – South-Western Region of Victoria in order to assist them to respond appropriately to the needs of women and children experiencing family and domestic violence, and men who perpetrate violence (Quill 2004). The manual contains a comprehensive list of service providers located both within the region and State-wide. It also includes a series of guidelines for responding appropriately to clients, information regarding professional responsibilities, and contact details for organisations that provide education, training and other resources. Contact details are given for the Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service and the Translating and Interpreter Service.

As part of the NSW strategy to reduce violence against women, *Domestic Violence Interagency Guidelines* were developed for service providers working with the legal system to support women and children experiencing domestic violence, with the aim of improving coordination between agencies and services (Bullen 2003). The following were outlined as good-practice guidelines to working with clients from CaLD backgrounds:

- ensuring that the staff and management committee of a service reflects the cultural diversity of the community;
- providing staff training in cultural awareness and communication (including identifying individual values, assumptions and prejudices, knowledge of parenting practices and attitudes to violence in different cultures);
- ensuring the availability of interpreters, and providing training in the use of interpreters and interpreter services, including the Commonwealth Government's Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) and on-site interpreters;
- networking and coordinating with ethno-specific services;

- ensuring that information is available in different languages;
- linking the client with culturally appropriate services
- ensuring that the client can access community resources and relevant government benefits; and
- ensuring that the services provided are relevant to clients and respect their cultural and religious beliefs. (Bullen 2003:186.)

3.5.2 Working with children

Gevers has developed practice standards and models of service for working with children and young people who have lived with domestic violence (1999b; 1999c) as well as a handbook for evaluating service delivery, which includes a checklist for the implementation of the practice standards (1999a). The standards were developed through consultation with service providers throughout Australia, and they provide a guide to service development that has the general endorsement of the family and domestic violence service field. Practice standards relating to the provision of culturally relevant services are outlined below:

- People from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds are able to access the service and receive an equitable level of service delivery.
- Service providers are aware of which cultural and language groups are represented within the local community, and have some understanding of the cultural issues that arise when working with those groups.
- The service encourages diversity of community input into its management and operation.
- Services to Indigenous people are provided from an understanding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of family violence.
- The service is promoted to all cultural groups in the community.
- The service has an organisational structure that is inclusive and reflects the diversity of the community.
- Staff reflect the cultural diversity of the community. (Gevers 1999c:iv–vi.)

Building on this work, Gevers and Goddard-Jones (2003) scoped and mapped existing resources, services and interventions; documented good practice in Australia and internationally; developed good-practice standards and quality tools to inform training and education competency and continuous improvement; and identified the features necessary for replicating good practice in working with children exposed to domestic violence. In addition, the project developed a comprehensive internet-based package of resources for service providers (www.ggj.biz).

Gevers and Goddard-Jones (2003) found that there were few services specifically for children from CaLD backgrounds, and that there were only limited resources to assist service providers to provide support and assistance to such children. Two resources were named. One was the 'Diversity Training Project' completed by the Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS) in Queensland, which developed three resources for working with children from CaLD backgrounds.

These included a resource manual, a children's book in several languages, and worksheets that can be used by workers or women and children.

These resources can be downloaded from the IWSS website (www.iwss.org.au). The other resource named was Jannawi Productions, which has adapted the 'Creating the Future' video into Vietnamese and Arabic versions. Jannawi Resources video kits received a National Violence Prevention Award Certificate of Merit in 2001 (www.jannawi.com.au). A formal evaluation of Jannawi Resources has been conducted with positive results (Bagshaw et al. 2002).

Rendell (2000) outlined two best-practice models for working with children experiencing family and domestic violence: firstly, a *Child Support Worker's Model*; and, secondly, a model on responding appropriately to children from CaLD backgrounds.

Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (PADV) funded research into community education and interventions for children who live with violence in five Australian States (Cunningham et al. 2004). The focus was on issues relating to communicating with diverse groups, including people from CaLD backgrounds, people with disabilities, Indigenous people and people who live in remote areas. The objectives of the project were to:

- develop strategies for appropriate and effective responses in community level services;
- develop training programs and related core resources that relevant professionals can implement; and
- integrate the resulting new resources and materials into existing training programs and systems.

The framework for training was developed and trialled in all States, with 23 trials held using 16 different trainers, 12 reviewers and a total of 340 participants. Comprehensive training materials and resources were developed, and a resource kit, *Point of Contact: responding to children living with family and domestic violence*, was the final outcome of the project (Cunningham et al. 2004:2). The kit is currently being printed, and it will also be available from the PADV website (ofw.facs.gov.au/padv/).

3.5.3 Working with men

In South Australia, competency standards for professionals who work with men who perpetrate family and domestic violence were developed to promote best-practice interventions (Colley et al. 2001). These complemented competency standards developed in 1988 for professionals working with women subjected to domestic violence (cited in Colley et al. 2001:3). Practices that are sensitive to, and respectful of, the diversity of men's experiences and the cultural appropriateness of interventions are included in the competency standards.

The Office of Women's Policy, Victoria, developed a framework for developing best-practice programs for men who perpetrate family and domestic violence (2002). The need to develop appropriate programs for men from CaLD backgrounds is acknowledged in the framework.

Best-practice models for the provision of services to both victims (DVPU 1999) and perpetrators of domestic violence (DVPU 2000) have been developed in Western Australia. One of the underlying principles is that services need to be accessible and relevant to the diversity of the client population. Materials need to be presented in a range of languages and formats, and services need to be easy to contact and culturally sensitive. In relation to perpetrators, the following comment is made:

Although services are expected to be accessible and relevant, it is acknowledged that Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse people may choose not to access a service for a variety of reasons. It is also acknowledged that specific, specialised services for these groups of people may be more suitable (DVPU 2000:4).

These best-practice models are currently being reviewed and up-dated by the Family and Domestic Violence Unit.

In 2001, an evaluation of perpetrator programs for mandated and voluntary participants run by Centrecare and Relationships Australia was conducted in Western Australia (Cant et al. 2004). Program effectiveness was defined as:

the extent to which the programs incorporated best practice as identified in the literature, were successful in engaging participants through to program completion and succeeded in changing the men's abusive behaviour (Cant et al. 2004:4).

This evaluation gauged conformity to the *Best Practice Model for the Provision of Perpetrator Programs for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in Western Australia* in relation to victim safety, program length, service delivery, data collection and evaluation. The programs were found to be effective in the first three areas, but neither agency implemented the best practices for data collection or evaluation, as set out in the best-practice model. No mention was made of accessibility or the relevance of programs to men from CaLD backgrounds, although Cant et al. noted in their review of the literature that most programs in Australia and overseas were delivered in urban or large regional centres and target male English-speaking perpetrators only, and that few programs were available for people with 'special needs or poor language skills'. They reported that:

Practitioners and academics have been concerned that 'one size fits all' intervention is neither effective nor appropriate for the diverse population of perpetrators (Cant et al. 2004:10).

The data regarding ethnicity from both agencies was incomplete, but 63% of those assessed by Centrecare were Australian-born, 23% overseas-born, and 14% unknown. Approximately 45% of those born overseas were of 'Anglo-Celtic' origin, with 28% from Western Europe and 3% from South-East Asia (Cant et al. 2004:31).

Of those who joined a men's group at Relationships Australia, 54% were Australian-born, 41% overseas-born, and 5% unknown. Among the overseas-born, 28% were of 'Anglo-Celtic' origin, with 19% from Eastern Europe (Cant et al. 2004:35).

Bhattacharjee (2004) explored issues of cross-cultural practices in working with men from CaLD backgrounds. He provides a framework for culture and gender-sensitive cross-cultural practices. Bhattacharjee also discussed the 'limitations of Western knowledge' and the lack of acknowledgement of other forms of knowledge and other terms of cultural reference, adding that it is culturally insensitive and arrogant to define the 'healthy family' only in relation to Western knowledge, which is not universal (2000:41).

Best practices for working with perpetrators of domestic violence are unlikely to be achieved until specific courses are made available at undergraduate level or as an accredited post-graduate qualification (Cant et al. 2004). The most comprehensive training available in Western Australia is a three-day package. Those who wish to gain expertise in delivering perpetrators' group programs undertake supervised co-work with an experienced service provider in an established program. This can mean many weeks of unpaid work until the service providers are satisfied that proficiency has been achieved.

3.6 Summary

There have been a number of national competency standards that have been developed for service providers who come into contact with people from CaLD backgrounds who are affected by family and domestic violence. These standards provide a benchmark and identify the skills and knowledge required to work effectively in the field with men, women and children experiencing domestic violence. Importantly, the research discussed suggests that sound cross-cultural practices for working with men from CaLD backgrounds need to incorporate culture and gender as fundamental considerations when working in the area of family interventions.

Best-practice standards that are uniform across Australia are necessary, although such standards are unlikely to eventuate without the establishment of courses at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels. Importantly, Western Australia has developed best-practice models for the provision of services to both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. The various factors highlighted as being relevant to the diversity of the client population are that services need to be accessible, and all materials and services need to be presented in a range of languages and formats that are culturally sensitive.

Additionally, new culturally appropriate models and interventions are needed to ensure that professionals follow good-practice models and guidelines. There also needs to be a focus on rural and remote communities and the development of innovative strategies that correspond with Western Australia's unique geography and demographic distribution.

Although services are expected to be accessible and relevant, it is acknowledged that Indigenous or CaLD people may choose not to access a service for a variety of reasons. It is also acknowledged that specific, specialised services for these groups of people may be required.

3.7 Culturally appropriate responses to family and domestic violence

The information in this section has mainly been sourced from abstracts obtained via the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse website (www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au), which has been an invaluable resource in locating documents for this literature review. This is by no means an exhaustive list, however it aims to provide a good overview of general programs, projects and services targeting people from CaLD backgrounds. They have been grouped by State or Territory. Those specifically targeting men are grouped separately.

NATIONAL

National Domestic Violence Campaign for People from Non-English-Speaking Backgrounds

This \$500,000 campaign to raise awareness in CaLD communities was launched in September 2002, funded by the Partnerships Against Domestic Violence initiative. Information on the damaging impact of domestic violence on individuals, children and families, the law and where to get help appeared in the ethnic press and radio.

The campaign materials included a full-colour, four-page press insert and a minute-long radio commercial. The press insert appeared in 38 ethnic newspapers, targeting 13 different language and cultural groups. Radio advertisements were broadcast to 19 language and cultural groups. Languages included Arabic, Mandarin, Bahasa Indonesia, Russian, Bosnian, Spanish, Cantonese, Tamil, Thai, Greek, Tongan, Hebrew, Tagalog, Turkish, Hindi, Vietnamese, Italian, Yiddish and English.

The campaign was strongly supported by a wide range of religious leaders, who signed an Interfaith Declaration against domestic violence. Religious leaders were identified in the developmental research for the campaign as a key influence for CaLD communities in relation to domestic violence responses and prevention. Religious values were seen as a strong deterrent to domestic violence in many communities (www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au).

Preventing Family Disintegration in CaLD Communities: A Partnership Approach

The Multicultural Women's Consortium (MWC) obtained funding from the Family and Domestic Violence Unit to manage a pilot project established to develop and implement a whole-of-community approach to preventing family disintegration arising from family violence in CaLD communities. The project was devised in response to increasing concerns expressed by ethnic communities and service providers regarding the incidence of family disintegration and domestic violence (Jurak 2004).

The project was adapted from a successful initiative conducted in NSW in 2000–2001. Four agencies make up the consortium. They are the Multicultural Women's Advocacy Service, the West Australian Transcultural Mental Health Centre, the Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre and the Canning Division of General Practice. The consortium acted as Steering Committee for the project. The project objectives were:

- to implement a 'whole-of-community' approach in the development and implementation of a culturally appropriate strategy to prevent family disintegration arising from domestic violence;
- to raise awareness in ethnic communities of the adverse impact that domestic violence has on each member of the family and the community;
- to make available culturally appropriate resources and support for CaLD families undergoing a cultural transition, during which problems may arise, affecting family harmony;
- to promote links between communities and relevant domestic violence service providers, thereby enabling communities to deal with domestic violence in a culturally appropriate manner; and
- to build the capacity of ethnic communities by mobilising their collective resources to develop culturally meaningful solutions to domestic violence and to strengthen the family unit through the cultural transition process.

(Jurak 2004:8).

In response to calls for expressions of interest, the Ethiopian Community in WA and the Muslim Women Support Centre (WA) chose to participate. A representative bilingual worker was appointed for each community as a coordinator for the project and a link to the Steering Committee. Each community set up a working party, comprising between six and eight respected and influential community members, to develop appropriate strategies. Information gained from gender-segregated focus groups, which were conducted at the commencement of the project, informed the strategies and activities selected by each group.

In addition to the focus groups for men, women and youth, the Ethiopian community held meetings and a general community forum. The strategies developed were a radio program, which was broadcast every Sunday for 12 months to discuss issues around domestic violence and what help is available, and a magazine titled *Ychalal* (meaning 'anything is possible', or 'if there is a will, there is a way'), which was produced in English and Amharic and was launched in April 2004 (Durkin 2004).

The Muslim community believed that a value-oriented, educative strategy based on Islamic teachings was the most appropriate approach. A holistic approach, based on the model family as envisaged by Islamic ideals, was chosen. A soft approach showcased the beauty of family life and demonstrated how conflict affects family members and how violence is detrimental to both the family unit and the wider community. Evaluation surveys conducted in both communities indicated that both community strategies were successful in raising awareness of issues relating to domestic violence, and were culturally appropriate and cost-effective. Recommendations were made to ensure the sustainability of the projects (Jurak 2004).

Due to the success of the project and the framework used, the MWC was funded in February 2005 to continue the project for a further 12 months in order to work with new and emerging communities. The expected outcomes of the project are that:

- The participating communities will derive a sense of **empowerment** and '**ownership**' of the responsibility to address domestic violence issues among their members.
- Communities will be **informed about the appropriate pathways** for seeking early intervention for domestic violence incidences within the respective community.
- Community members will have **factual based awareness of the legal implications** surrounding domestic violence, as it pertains to Australian civil law.
- Diminishing of confusion among community members concerning religious and civil laws that address domestic violence leading to reconciliation **between community attitude towards religious and civil law** surrounding domestic violence.
- Religious and community leaders within the respective communities are provided a 'platform' upon which to **develop community-appropriate and community-derived strategies** to prevent domestic violence.
- **Development of culturally and religiously sensitive resources** to sustain community awareness about domestic violence (MWC 2005:2–3, emphasis in original).

Multicultural Women's Advocacy Service

This service is available to women from CaLD backgrounds who have experienced, or are at risk of, domestic violence (MWAS information leaflet). It offers support, outreach, advocacy, information, counselling, and assistance and referral services to women, in a manner that is sensitive to their cultural and religious beliefs and practices, and to their language needs.

MWAS maintains strong community links and networks with ethnic and multicultural service providers, communities and mainstream domestic violence services. Where appropriate, MWAS also provides information and other service options and treatment programs for men in relation to domestic violence. The service operates from four metropolitan sites in Northbridge, Gosnells, Mirrabooka and Fremantle in Western Australia.

Dar Al Shifah (Islamic) Inc.

Dar Al Shifah (Islamic) Inc. (House of Healing) in Perth has developed a parenting program for Muslim families based on Islamic teachings, reasoning and solutions (FDVU 2005). The program has been developed with reference to Western parenting programs, including Triple P, First Steps and Protective Behaviours. Dar Al Shifah delivers a program to service providers, with the aim of facilitating a greater understanding of Islamic teaching in relation to parenting and family dynamics, to increase the capacity of service providers to work more effectively with Muslim families, and to facilitate inclusive and collaborative ways of working. Topics covered in the program include:

- domestic violence;
- child-rearing practices;
- practices and beliefs in pregnancy;
- step-parenting;
- grandparenting;
- foster care;
- supporting married children;
- marriage dynamics — function/rights/responsibilities; and
- mental health.

Muslim Women's Support Centre of WA

The Muslim Women's Support Centre of WA Inc is a not for profit, specialised agency committed to the enhancement of the social well-being of Muslim women and their families.

The core focus of the agency is settlement services. With the aid of bilingual workers, the agency provides information, referral and advocacy services to best serve the needs of migrant women and youth with a focus on Muslim women and youth in the southern suburbs. Within this role it also offers social support to isolated Muslim women who as new arrivals to Australia may seek gender appropriate services within what they perceive as a familiar and non-intimidating environment in their initial years of settlement.

Apart from the settlement services, there are several programs organised and run by the agency, including an educational and life skills information sessions program run weekly; a youth program with a range of activities for young Muslim women; emergency relief - providing short term material support to needy Muslim families; a playgroup; and a volunteer program.

In its representation of the needs of the community and its operation within an Islamic framework, the agency plays an important role as a link between the Muslim community and mainstream service providers. On the one hand, it lobbies for the proper representation of Muslim women's needs and on the other, provides information for service providers on the appropriate ways of handling social issues concerning Muslim families.

Families in Cultural Transition Program

This program consists of nine modules, each module being of approximately three hours' duration. It is run by the Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASETTTS) in Western Australia (FDVU 2005). The aim of the program is to assist migrants from new and emerging communities to settle in Australia. Topics include gender, domestic violence, family values, children and corporal punishment issues.

Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre

Based in Mirrabooka, Western Australia, the Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre is part of a national network of approximately 30 migrant resource centres across Australia that provide services to migrants and refugees (MMRC 2004). The centre employs a number of bilingual facilitators.

A variety of programs, including a Family Support Service, are run by the centre. The Family Support Service provides individual and family counselling and community development initiatives. The counselling component employs a culturally sensitive casework approach, addressing such issues as family and domestic violence, family conflict, intergenerational conflict, communication problems between spouses, low self-esteem, social isolation and anger management. Men comprise approximately 40% of the program's clients.

It's Not Part of Our Culture

In October 2002, a forum was held targeting service providers, with the aim of raising awareness of issues of domestic violence in CaLD communities (Sivarajah & Varusay 2002). Among the key themes arising from the forum were: that the reasons behind family violence can be complex and can involve a range of factors; the 'one size fits all' approach does not work; reconciliation should be attempted in the first instance, and mediation and support should be provided; and, if the situation escalates, services need to ensure that language and cultural barriers do not prevent women from seeking safety and support. The main themes to emerge from the forum were that more emphasis needs to be placed on providing support to families and communities before the family breaks down, and the Family and Domestic Violence Unit needs to remain engaged with the various CaLD communities.

Bi-Cultural Community Educator Domestic Violence Training Project

In June–July 2003, family and domestic violence education training was conducted in Perth for CaLD communities, with the aim of raising awareness of domestic violence issues (Centrecare 2003). Participants included migrants from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Liberia, Sudan and Sierra Leone.

Training components included:

- understanding family and domestic violence;
- resources and services available in the community;
- the role of the bicultural community educator; and
- developing an action plan to deal with family and domestic violence in CaLD communities, including referral to other services.

Outcomes of the project were an increased awareness of family and domestic violence issues in the new and emerging communities targeted, and the development of pamphlets in Arabic, Farsi, Swahili, Amharic, Malay and English, which were distributed by bicultural workers.

CaLD Radio program: World Radio 6EBA FM

The CaLD Radio Program is an initiative of the Family and Domestic Violence Unit and the community. The program commenced in December 2003 and is ongoing (FDVU 2005). It is designed to inform women from CaLD backgrounds of domestic violence issues and the impact of family and domestic violence on children. It provides information regarding the services available for both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, with the aim of reducing the barriers associated with accessing services.

A project working group includes representatives from the Central Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, the Multicultural Women's Advocacy Service, World Radio 6EBA FM and the Family and Domestic Violence Unit. World Radio 6EBA FM gives free air-time each fortnight for domestic violence community education purposes.

World Radio 6EBA FM, in partnership with the Family and Domestic Violence Unit, has also created radio 'stings', 25- to 30-second community education messages regarding domestic violence, which are presented in nine community languages. This initiative commenced in November 2004.

African Project

In November 2004, a member of the Sierra Leone community in Perth was murdered by her estranged husband. The community was supported at the time by representatives from a number of agencies and organisations, including the Department for Community Development and the Ethnic Communities Council of WA. The then Chairperson of the Sierra Leone Organisation of Western Australia met with officers from the Family and Domestic Violence Unit (FDVU) to discuss options for providing further long term support to the broader African communities in Western Australia.

Further meetings with the community led to the formation of the African Communities Family Support and Domestic Violence Planning Group with initial representation from the Sierra Leonean, Liberian, Ugandan and Ethiopian communities. Representation from other African communities and women's groups gradually increased over the early months of 2005, resulting in representation from the Sudan, Somalia, Tanzania and Rwanda.

The group also includes representatives from the Department for Community Development, Office for Women's Policy, Office of Multicultural Interests, Ethnic Communities Council of WA, Multicultural Women's Advocacy Service, Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASeTTS), Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

The identified objectives of the planning group are:

- To engage mainstream service providers so that appropriate services can be provided to African families.
- To support African communities to achieve a safe and supportive environment and build community capacity and resilience.
- To improve the provision of family support and domestic violence information to African families on settlement in Western Australia.
- To explore and provide appropriate supports and services for men, women and children.

The Family and Domestic Violence Unit has provided support and coordination to the planning group, and linked it to other groups, organisations and service providers that can assist in achieving the above priorities.

The Planning Group's major focus in early 2005 was the organisation of an African Communities Forum on Domestic Violence. The purpose of the forum was to engage "grass roots" members of the African communities in discussion regarding solutions to family and domestic violence and family disintegration.

The Forum provided an opportunity to examine, with a diverse group of African communities, their understanding of family and domestic violence and what they saw as possible ways of addressing this issue in their communities. The report from the Forum contains a number of recommendations and is available at www.familyanddomesticviolence.wa.gov.au.

QUEENSLAND

Immigrant Women's Support Service

The Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS) is a community-based crisis and support service that provides culturally appropriate support, information, short-term counselling and referral to women and children from CaLD backgrounds who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual assault. The service employs bilingual, bicultural workers who are qualified in social work or behavioural science. IWSS works within a feminist framework that values cultural diversity and recognises the difficulties and disadvantages faced by their clients as a result of the structural inequalities existing in Australian society.

IWSS is based in Brisbane and has produced a number of publications and resources in relation to domestic violence and sexual assault, which are available from their library. IWSS conducted a Diversity Training Project and produced a kit containing three resources, which can be downloaded freely from the IWSS website. One item is a comprehensive training and resource manual aimed at workers, non-abusive parents and caregivers who work with children exposed to domestic violence (Reed 2002a). The second is a children's book, which is available on the IWSS website in an interactive format in five languages: English, Tagalog, Bosnian, Vietnamese and Spanish (Reed 2002b). Worksheets for use by workers or women and children exposed to domestic violence form the third part of this resource (www.iwss.org.au).

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

The Law in Australia: A Community Education Project for Women of Non-English-Speaking Backgrounds

This was a community legal education project conducted in the Australian Capital Territory in 2000–2001 in order to raise awareness of the Australian legal system in CaLD communities (Women's Legal Centre (ACT & Region) Inc. 2002; Szirom et al. 2001). The project placed a particular focus on domestic violence and family law. Female community members were trained to act as Bilingual Community Educators, capable of conducting women-focused legal education sessions in their first languages.

This was to overcome the tendency for men to act as gatekeepers to information in many ethnic communities.

Although the project was regarded as highly successful, that success was not achieved in the form originally intended. It was found that although there was a demand for the type of legal information covered in the training course, the demand comes from workers and active members of CaLD communities, rather than community members. Community members were more likely to require information specific to their circumstances, rather than the general information provided in the training. The project allowed the Women's Legal Centre to strengthen links with CaLD communities in the Australian Capital Territory, and the training courses increased the number of highly committed women who can enhance their communities' knowledge of, and access to, legal services, particularly in relation to domestic violence and family law.

VICTORIA

The Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service (IWDVS) is funded by the Department of Human Services Victoria. IWDVS gives voice and provides culturally sensitive services, statewide, to meet the needs of women and children from CaLD backgrounds affected by domestic violence.

Currently linguistic support is provided with the following languages: Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Turkish, Dari, Pushtu, Farsi, Kurdish, Persian, Amharic, Tigray, Tigrenyan Sudanese (Arabic, Dinka and Nure Shilluk), Russian, Ukrainian, Bel Russian, Bulgarian, Greek, Serbian, Macedonian, Bosnian, Croatian, Slovenian, Spanish (covering more than 20 Spanish speaking countries) and Arabic (covering more than 20 Arabic speaking countries). The service works with interpreters when it does not have a caseworker who speaks the client's language.

Women's Liberation Halfway House

This is a Melbourne refuge focused on accommodating a diversity of needs in providing culturally appropriate services for women and children from CaLD backgrounds who are experiencing family and domestic violence (Pateras 1997). The service uses a feminist and cross-cultural approach, and a number of elements of the service model contribute to a level of practice that is participatory, empowering and appropriate for maximising cross-cultural support. These elements include the cultural diversity of its management structure and staff (the refuge has a requirement that workers are bicultural and/or bilingual), its feminist collective membership, and the active participation of residents.

Centre for Philippine Concerns — Australia (CPCA)

A number of case studies were undertaken by various groups around Australia under the Regional Domestic Violence Program administered by the Department of Transport and Regional Services.

One of the aims was to document the critical factors contributing to good practice in addressing domestic violence issues (PADV 2002). Of the 16 case studies, only one targeted women from CaLD backgrounds.

The CPCA project aims to stop violence against Filipino women in rural and regional Victoria. A community settlement worker, three part-time workers and a pool of community volunteers provide a range of welfare services and support to Filipino women and children experiencing family violence and related settlement issues. The project has created pathways through which Filipino women and children can access information and services in a supportive environment. CPCA is part of a regional consortium engaged in domestic violence responses and prevention.

Children and Young People's program

Annie North Inc, in Epsom, Victoria, is funded under the SAAP to provide short-term crisis support through refuge and post-refuge support through its 'Community Connections' and 'Kid's Connections' programs, which promote the family's connection to the community. It was one of seven organisations funded under the Partnerships Against Domestic Violence initiative to document good practice in supporting children and young people affected by family violence.

Children are regarded as important service users in their own right, and the Children's Support Worker manages the support plan for children. The support plan includes work such as assisting with parenting, liaising with schools and helping with schoolwork, making referrals and supporting the best possible outcome for the child in Family Court matters. Children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds are respected, and the resources and books provided by the program are culturally inclusive and linguistically accessible. Work practices and programs are based on clearly articulated aims and objectives, which reflect the principles of social justice, feminist understandings of power imbalances, access and equity, cultural inclusiveness and community development (www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au).

'They come from a violent culture' — Domestic violence and cultural issues

This two-day training course was developed by the Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre in Collingwood, Victoria. The training targets service providers who work with women from diverse backgrounds on a very short-term basis. The diversity includes class, race, sexual preference, values of the family of origin, whether the client is from a rural or urban community, and a long list of other variables. The course does not talk about the characteristics of people of certain ethnic groups. While cultural commonalities are acknowledged, it is considered important to explore ways of working that are based on respecting the individual client, rather than cultural stereotypes. Over two days, participants explore ways of working that are based on respecting the individual and, at the same time, developing a sense of curiosity and acceptance of difference.

Role-plays, videos and scenarios are used. The course covers:

- seeing people as 'the other';
- the changing nature of culture;
- characteristics of political oppression and domestic violence;
- principles for refugee counselling;
- counselling across cultures;
- popular beliefs about domestic violence in other cultures;
- the addressing model;
- working with interpreters; and
- providing culturally sensitive services.

(www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au.)

NEW SOUTH WALES

Immigrant Women's Speakout Association

Immigrant Women's Speakout Association is the peak advocacy, information/referral and research body representing the ideas and issues of immigrant and refugee women in NSW. The Association also undertakes community development projects and provides direct services including in the areas of domestic violence and employment, education and training.

Speakout is a community-based organisation, managed by women of non-English speaking background.

Mimosa House: a refuge for Indo-Chinese Women

Mimosa House opened in Western Sydney in 1992 with six bilingual workers who spoke Vietnamese, Khmer, Lao, Thai and four Chinese dialects, providing accommodation and services for Indo-Chinese women and children experiencing family and domestic violence (Sous 1996). Demand for services outstripped the available accommodation, and many referred clients had to be turned away. As a result, a halfway house was opened in 1996. Early challenges included:

- the reluctance of many clients to use counselling services, which were unfamiliar to many women who were used to getting advice from older family members and friends;
- insufficient numbers of bilingual counsellors;
- the lack of interpreters qualified in the field of domestic violence, which led to instances where interpreters criticised the clients or tried to persuade them to reconcile with their husbands.

The Muslim Women Support Centre (Refuge)

The Muslim Women Support Centre was established in 1988 in Sydney to provide support, counselling and temporary shelter to women and children experiencing family and domestic violence within the Muslim community (Krayem-Abdo 1996). The demand for accommodation increased, and the needs of Muslim women experiencing domestic violence were not being met by mainstream services.

A refuge was subsequently established, which is mainly used by Muslim women who are experiencing domestic violence, marital disharmony or homelessness. The refuge also accommodates girls who are facing homelessness through conflicts with parents.

The refuge has accommodated women and children from Lebanese, Egyptian, Turkish, Iranian, Indian, Pakistani, Singaporean, Bosnian, Indonesian, Fijian and Anglo-Celtic backgrounds. The centre is staffed by a number of bicultural workers, who provide religious and culturally relevant counselling and support to the women. The centre caters to the religious needs of the women and children, including the provision of suitable ablution facilities and a private area for prayers. Halal food is provided, and no alcohol is allowed on the premises. The refuge has been used as a model in other countries, such as Pakistan.

ECAV Domestic Violence Training Programs: Interpreting in Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Cases

The Education Centre Against Violence in Paramatta, NSW, develops and delivers a comprehensive range of training programs relating to domestic violence. 'Interpreting in Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Cases' targets healthcare interpreters and is aimed at helping them to work effectively with sexual assault counsellors, social workers and other healthcare professionals.

Interpreting in sexual assault and domestic violence cases can present particular challenges for interpreters, and it is important that they have a clear understanding of the nature of these crimes and their effect on the victim.

Day 1 focuses on sexual assault, day 2 on domestic violence. The program addresses legal processes, roles and responsibilities in relation to relevant policy and protocol, and it also deals with the importance of maintaining professional boundaries (www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au).

Women, Group Work and Surviving Domestic Violence

In Western Sydney, over a three-year period, 12 support groups for women experiencing domestic violence were conducted (Flannery et al. 2000). Nine of the groups were conducted in English, and participants included women from CaLD backgrounds. Two groups were conducted in Vietnamese and one in Turkish, with the assistance of an interpreter and bicultural workers. Feminist group work challenged the personal and private nature of domestic violence by identifying it as a public issue. Working collectively was found to be extremely empowering for women, and it had the potential to encourage women to recognise their survival skills, their resilience and their strengths, to acknowledge the diversity and richness of their experiences, and to recognise that they are not to blame for the abusive behaviour of others.

Living Without Violence Community Arts Project

Living Without Violence was a visual art exhibition by the women of Western Sydney held in March 1999 to coincide with International Women's Day. The aim of the exhibition was to raise awareness of issues of violence against women in the wider community, to empower women with the knowledge and understanding that they have the right to live without violence, and to highlight women's strengths in challenging violence. Women were invited to create artworks on this theme.

To include women from CaLD backgrounds, the exhibition was advertised in the local ethnic media and held in two parts, in two local government areas. It was publicised in four different languages in posters, postcards, flyers and the local media. Women from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds came forward with artworks, which included craft, painting, sculpture and objects. This was a joint project between the Auburn and Parramatta City Councils, the Immigrant Women's Speakout Association and the Western Sydney Area Health Service. The project was a great success and, as a result, the two local councils joined with some non-government organisations to organise a similar event the following year. Posters, catalogues and videos of the event were made available (www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au).

‘Have a Chat’: A Support Group for Women with Children who have Experienced Domestic Violence

This is a support group run by Barnados, which targets mothers from CaLD backgrounds in Auburn, NSW. The group offers a safe environment for sharing experiences, an opportunity to be heard and have thoughts and feelings validated, free childcare, an opportunity to develop supportive and trusting relationships, access to useful information, and an opportunity for growth and creating new paths to recovery.

Group work often occurs in conjunction with individual practical support, and it is tailored to individuals’ needs. The program is run one morning per week during the school term (www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au).

The Women’s Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme at Redfern Local Court and the Downing Centre Local Court

The scheme began in 1990 in recognition of the difficulties women faced in seeking protection from violent relationships, negotiating the court system and obtaining legal information or advice. Many women were not receiving continued support or follow-up services, and these problems were exacerbated by communication difficulties for women from CaLD backgrounds, Indigenous women and women with disabilities. The target group also includes young people, lesbians and transgender people.

Highly skilled support people from approximately 15 community agencies participate in the scheme through a roster system. They perform a variety of essential tasks, including explaining the court process and layout to clients, providing emotional support, advocating the client’s needs to the solicitor or Police Prosecutor, investigating the practical or non-legal needs of the client and ensuring appropriate referrals and follow-up.

Women who are not represented by a private solicitor or the Police Prosecutor may obtain representation and support via the scheme.

Home + Harmony = Happiness (3H) Project

This project was part of the Police and Community Training (PACT) Program, which aims to promote and foster positive relationships between the Police and the communities they serve. In the St Mary’s and Penrith areas of NSW, a 3H project was conducted with a focus on domestic violence and effective Police responses in CaLD communities in order to address key community concerns regarding the impact of domestic violence. The four identified communities were Arabic, Filipino, Pacific Islander and people from the Indian sub-continent (the latter including Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Gujarati and Tamil groups). Art workshops and informal social gatherings were held.

The four communities produced culturally appropriate domestic violence resources for their communities, which included posters, banners, CDs, videos, magnets, pens and brochures. All the resources carried the message of harmony in the home. Each project had a project coordinator. The second part of the project involved providing cultural awareness and domestic violence training to 300 Police officers in the two areas (Venkatraman & Johar 2001; www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au).

Jannawi Family Centre

This is a specialist child protection service based in Sydney, which has developed clear practice guidelines and innovative resources that address the interface between domestic violence and child protection. Jannawi aims to reduce the incidence of child abuse, neglect and domestic violence through its Family Program, Community Connections Program and Jannawi Resources, which feature the award winning Jannawi Kids puppets.

Jannawi produces innovative videos and publications for children, families and communities, promoting positive family relationships and social and community networks. Jannawi has produced a set of video kits, 'Change Could Come', a community education and training package for adults, and 'Creating the Future', a video resource package for children and families affected by domestic violence. Together, the packages constitute a comprehensive set of resources, including videos, leader's handbooks, posters, activity books, stickers and soundtracks on a compact disc. A supplementary video in Arabic and Vietnamese is available (www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au).

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Migrant Women's Support and Accommodation Service

The Migrant Women's Support and Accommodation Service offers support and emergency accommodation for migrant women and children who are victims of domestic violence.

2000 and Beyond Domestic Violence Forum

The Migrant Women's Lobby Group (MWGL) held the forum, in February 2000 in the western suburbs of Adelaide, where there is a high proportion of people from CaLD backgrounds (MWLG 2000). More than 100 people attended, including people of African, Vietnamese, Chinese, Khmer, Indian, Filipino, Muslim, Sri Lankan, Samoan and European backgrounds. There were a number of presentations given by professionals in the domestic violence service field who gave presentations on four main topics: health/industrial issues, Police issues, legal issues and welfare issues. The planning group collected and collated the various presentations, reviewed the findings, formulated the proposals, devised a plan of action for the MWLG and compiled a report of the proceedings.

WOWSafe

Women of the West for Safe Families Incorporated is an action group based in Adelaide and comprised of women who have survived family and domestic violence. Its goals are to increase community awareness; provide a 'sister system' to support women; participate in the training of workers, the Police and the judiciary; increase the accountability of government organisations; and provide opportunities for women to have an audience to honour their experience and growth.

WOWSafe women are available at all hours to assist a woman in crisis, to provide a service for women who are attending court, and to assist women to remove possessions from a home where they have been abused.

Safety guidelines have been developed, and WOWSafe women are encouraged to debrief regularly with the program coordinator, who is a psychologist. Telephone support is an integral component of the 24-hour service provision. All active members of WOWSafe have an answering machine to screen calls or refer them to other members if necessary. The ethnic composition of the group in 2002 was 14 Anglo-Australian women, one Aboriginal elder, while the remainder of the women were from Cambodian, Filipino, Croatian, Scottish and North American backgrounds. The service is promoted through the wide distribution of pamphlets and business cards (www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au).

Violence in the home has many forms: Multicultural Domestic Violence Radio Announcement Project

This project involved collaboration between a range of services in South Australia in 1998–1999, including the Southern Domestic Violence Action Group, the Migrant Women’s Support and Accommodation Service, women’s health and community health services, mainstream government departments, community organisations and ethnic community organisations. The aim of the project was to provide diverse communities with culturally appropriate information on domestic violence and the services available.

The project produced 65 radio announcements, each one minute long, in 13 languages: Arabic, Bosnian, Cantonese, Greek, Italian, Khmer, Mandarin, Filipino, Polish, Russian, Serbian, Spanish and Vietnamese. The messages were developed and recorded by members of the individual communities targeted, primarily drawing on experiences and issues relevant to their own communities. The announcements have led to an increase in the number of women accessing support, and there has also been a change in community perceptions of domestic violence (www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au).

TASMANIA

Let’s Face It Project

This project, based in Hobart, incorporated a ‘whole-of-family’ early intervention approach in working with families where relationship violence was emerging as a problem, connecting families to counselling and support services before violence and abuse became entrenched. The work was conducted via community development activities, and case management of services. Service providers participated in workshops on the recognition of domestic violence and its impact on women, children, young people and men. The project also facilitated workshops on increasing service providers’ capacity to respond appropriately to domestic violence. Workshops were also provided to ‘first contact’ people — the family and friends who are often the first point of contact for victims of domestic violence — to increase their capacity to respond appropriately.

Specific target groups were identified for the implementation of particular community development activities. Targeted groups included the hearing-impaired, gay and lesbian people and the Sudanese community. Various resources were developed by the different groups, and a weekly information group evolved entitled the 'Sudanese women's sewing group'. A website was produced for the duration of the project, and a drama and presentation day with students from Years 7–9 at a local high school was organised. Brokerage of services was an important component of effective service delivery for the whole family, while a key agency could provide an overall case management role (www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au).

3.8 Specific culturally appropriate men's programs

There are few domestic violence perpetrators' programs targeting men from CaLD backgrounds (Bagshaw et al. 2000; Keys Young 1998b; TNS 2002), and research indicates that there is an urgent need for the development of such programs (Szirom et al. 2001; Laing 2003; Laing 2002a; Laing 2002b). A literature review conducted by the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse in 2001 identified only two such programs (Laing 2002a). One was a pilot Multicultural Men and Family Relationships Program developed in the Fairfield/Cabramatta area of Sydney for Khmer, Lao, Vietnamese and Chinese men (Bhattacharjee 2000), and the other was the Vietnamese Family Violence Men's Group, a family violence research and intervention pilot project developed by Relationships Australia, Victoria (Melvin et al. 1999).

Another Men and Family Relationships Pilot Program was developed in Melbourne for Chinese and Arabic men (Yong et al. 2000) and the Family and Domestic Violence Unit has recently provided funding for an African Men's Project. The four projects are described below.

Multicultural Men and Family Relationships Program, Sydney

This pilot program was developed at *UnitingCare* Burnside due to a high number of Police reports of domestic violence, family breakdown and child abuse in the Fairfield/Cabramatta area, and the lack of any services in the region — and, indeed, in Australia — for men from CaLD backgrounds (Bhattacharjee 2000). The impacts on families and children were enormous, leading to truancy, behavioural problems, emotional instability, drug abuse and drug-dealing. There were three components to the program: community development, family counselling and men's groups.

The community development component aimed to work with CaLD communities to overcome issues stemming from cultural differences and to improve their access to mainstream services. Community development is regarded as crucial to the successful provision of education and resources to communities, and in raising the social capital of the area.

The family counselling component offered relationship counselling to men from CaLD backgrounds and their families. There was a strong focus on parenting education and relationship issues.

The men's groups offered relationships skills training and education group work to men from Vietnamese-, Khmer- and Lao-speaking backgrounds. There was a strong focus on parenting education and relationship issues in the group work, which provided men with the opportunity to support one another in redefining their roles as husbands and fathers.

Bhattacharjee (2000) attributes the success of the program to the services being client-focused and driven by clients' needs — and to the fact that the service providers understand the needs of their target groups. He points to the need for services to diversify to meet clients' needs, rather than expecting clients to fit in with culturally inappropriate services. Ethnic radio, local newspapers and magazines gave the program very positive coverage.

The number of clients accessing services quadrupled in the second quarter of the first year, and the number of clients referred by other agencies increased by 50% during the same period.

An evaluation of this service, which complemented the other services provided by UnitingCare Burnside, was conducted in 2001 (Paul van Reyk Consultancy 2001). By then, the group work programs included men from Serbian- and Arabic-speaking backgrounds. Participant feedback indicated that it was the area of 'discipline' that the men found most confronting, as it was the factor that most challenged their cultural positioning within the family and their social networks. The main focus of their discussions was on how to adapt their parenting and family practices to an Australian social and cultural context.

The findings of the evaluation demonstrated that the program was highly effective in attracting and retaining men from CaLD backgrounds, and in developing participants' skills and understanding of family relationship issues. Three significant factors were identified by the consultants to serve as models for the future development of such programs:

- a) Conducting the groups within the language and cultural framework of the participants.
- b) The flexible approach taken to recruitment, particularly the willingness to see the groups as not only beneficial for the participants but for their communities and so the key men who could become in effect change agents within their community through their everyday interaction with others in their community.
- c) The choice of group leaders who had standing within the communities, at times prioritising this over formal qualifications. This recognised the need to build the credibility of the groups and the interventions for the longer term engagement of the communities in what is for them a new mode of intervention in dealing with relationships.

(Paul van Reyk Consultancy 2001:19.)

Some of the limitations were:

- the program was not very successful at attracting young male participants due to a number of factors, including the lack of programs offered outside the hours worked by most young men;
- the lack of funds for hiring interpreters limited the success of the individual counselling programs, which could only target men with a good command of English; and
- the lack of access to suitably trained staff from other cultural backgrounds.

Vietnamese Family Violence Men's Group

This was a joint project between Relationships Australia, Victoria, and Centacare Catholic Family Services, which aimed to develop and trial an ethno-specific program for men from the Vietnamese community in Victoria (Melvin et al. 1999). A reference group, largely composed of members of the Vietnamese community, was established to monitor and advise on the project. Two Vietnamese males were recruited and trained to deliver the program. All promotional and program material was translated into Vietnamese. Of seven referrals and assessments, five men were selected to participate in a 12-session program. There was a mixture of mandated and self-referred clients. The project demonstrated that it was possible to adapt a mainstream 'Western' model of working with men to meet the needs of a CaLD community.

Many of the difficulties experienced in running the pilot are common to mainstream programs, such as recruiting experienced and competent leaders to facilitate the groups.

Leaders who had the skills and experience to work within their own culture often lacked skills and experience in family violence and group work. It was noted that the project was severely hampered by a lack of resources.

Men and Family Relationships Pilot Program, Melbourne

This program was based at the Migrant Resource Centre North East in Melbourne, targeting Chinese- and Arabic-speaking men (Yong et al. 2000). The pilot program was a joint initiative with Relationships Australia, the Preston Creative Living Centre (Family Violence Intervention Unit) and the Chinese Health Foundation of Australia. A steering committee and Arabic and Chinese reference groups were established to guide and monitor the project. The program was promoted in English and in the languages of the target groups via ethnic radio and community publications. Pamphlets were also distributed to service providers. The four major aims of the program were:

- to promote and maintain quality family relationships;
- to prevent the breakdown of family relationships, which may result in separations or divorces; and
- to assist newly arrived males and their families to come to terms with the pressures of starting a new life within a different culture.

(Yong 2000:44–45.)

The program had three components: community education, skills development and focus group activities, and client casework.

The community education component covered general issues, such as access to other services, employment issues, legal issues and tax systems. A range of health issues, such as diabetes and chronic disease management, were also covered. Anger management and stress management were included in the health-related issues. Men and family issues incorporated such topics as domestic violence, child protection, and access to family services, family laws and the impact of migration on family relationships.

The skills development and focus group activities covered parenting workshops relating to Australian, Chinese and Arabic approaches; intergenerational conflicts and communicating with teenagers; personal development in relation to communication, self-esteem awareness and emotional and behavioural adjustment; assertiveness training; and hobbies, recreation and sporting interests.

The client casework component included mediation and counselling; parenting and intergenerational conflict issues; difficulties in communicating with teenagers; housing, employment and service access issues; and issues relating to a lack of familiarity with Australian social systems.

Some of the challenges in running the program included establishing trust at both community and individual levels, overcoming the taboo of revealing family or relationships issues to non-family members, developing counselling programs in communities that reject the notion of 'counselling' and find it culturally unacceptable.

Both the Chinese and Arabic males preferred a mediation process involving seeking advice from respected community leaders, elders or religious leaders. They had more confidence in this method of resolving family disputes.

In a five-month period in 2000, 502 Chinese people (291 women and 211 men) attended the community education sessions. The skills development and focus groups were attended by 109 Chinese people (57 women and 52 men), and 20 Chinese people (19 men and one woman) attended as casework clients. Despite the program targeting men, the community education and skills development sessions were popular with Chinese women. A large proportion of participants were elderly, with few young or middle-aged Chinese males attending. This was thought to be due to work commitments, and it was planned to organise recreational activities, such as karaoke or social nights, to attract younger men.

An evaluation of the Men and Family Relationships Initiative noted that men's cultural background has a strong bearing on the most appropriate methods to use in working with them and attracting them to participate in programs:

For the Arabic men, gender-specific activities are a normal feature of their culture, so providing services for the men only is quite natural within the community. However, within the Chinese community a culturally appropriate service needs to be inclusive of all family members, often including grandparents as well. It would be considered quite inappropriate to provide activities specifically for men (O'Brien & Rich 2002:33).

O'Brien and Rich (2002) pointed to the need for service providers to identify and utilise those places to which men go, instead of expecting men to attend the premises of an organisation, as a key strategy in engaging the target group. They gave the example of a Chinese worker observing that many Chinese men transported their children to Chinese-language classes at the weekend and often waited around for the classes to finish.

The worker organised a series of parenting seminars to be run at the same venue. The seminars were popular and well attended.

Communicare's African Men's Project

Family and domestic violence has been identified by a number of newly arrived African communities as an issue that has serious implications for families and impacts on the successful settlement of new migrants. These communities have also identified that men need particular support in settlement as the role, functions and power of men within families is significantly changed as a result of settlement.

The project aim is to provide domestic violence information and support to newly settled African men across the Perth metropolitan area through:

- Development and distribution of culturally appropriate information on family and domestic violence to recently settled African men.
- The provision of groups for recently settled African men on issues of family and domestic violence laws and services, the role of men in Australian families and healthy relationships.
- The provision of support to men who identify or are identified as perpetrators of family and domestic violence. This support should include referral to appropriate services and ensure the provision of appropriate support services for women involved. The service will develop appropriate links and share information with services for women effected by family and domestic violence to enhance safety.

The project is being undertaken in conjunction with the provision of Community Settlement Services Scheme services funded by the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

3.9 Summary

There are numerous national and State initiatives that attempt to provide services for people from CaLD backgrounds who are experiencing domestic violence, including the Multicultural Men and Family Relationships Program in Sydney, the 'Violence in the home has many forms': Multicultural Domestic Violence Radio Announcement Project in South Australia, the Children and Young People's program in Victoria, and the Multicultural Women's Advocacy Service in Western Australia. Most of these projects demonstrated that although it was possible to adapt a mainstream 'Western' model to meet the needs of a CaLD community, it would be more appropriate to develop initiatives that are specific to each community. Many of the difficulties experienced were also common to the mainstream programs, including a significant lack of resources.

3.10 Barriers to accessing services

People from the mainstream Australian population often encounter barriers when attempting to access family and domestic violence services; however, there may be many additional barriers for people from CaLD backgrounds.

3.11 Barriers for women

The barriers that prevent women from CaLD backgrounds from accessing services or assistance relating to family and domestic violence are well documented (Bullen 2003; Urbis Keys Young 2003; Bagshaw et al. 2000; Phoenix Projects 2000; Aldunate 1999a; Dimopoulos 1998; Ziaian 1997; Easteal 1996c; Echevarria & Johar 1996), and include the following:

- a lack of knowledge of Australian law, which results in victims tolerating abusive behaviour
- a lack of knowledge of the services available or the pathways used to access those services
- communication and language difficulties
- fear of the escalation of violence
- loneliness and isolation, which may be deliberately maintained by abusive partners
- traditional gender roles
- fear of isolation from family or community
- socialisation to keep family together, no matter the circumstances
- fear of bringing shame and dishonour to family
- a belief that domestic violence issues should be dealt with within the family unit
- a sense of responsibility for the perpetrator's abuse
- fear of being judged and blamed
- fear of loss of anonymity
- fear of authority figures, such as Police
- a lack of financial support, accommodation or other resources
- fear of deportation

- fear of losing children
- racial prejudice
- a lack of self-esteem
- a lack of culturally appropriate or culturally specific services
- a lack of appropriate outreach programs
- counselling may be an alien concept
- the intimidating nature of court proceedings
- cultural insensitivity and discrimination by criminal justice, and other, professionals
- a lack of multilingual and culturally appropriate information regarding legal entitlements and processes
- a lack of awareness of what constitutes family and domestic violence, particularly for people from countries where the right of a man to 'discipline' his wife may be enshrined in family law
- assumptions that mainstream services would encourage women to leave relationships, which may be considered inappropriate in many cases;
- the isolation of CaLD community leaders and helpers from mainstream culture and services
- a lack of networking opportunities between mainstream workers and CaLD community members.

In rural areas, the difficulties may be compounded by a lack of early intervention and prevention services, such as relationship counselling and family support services; a lack of specialist domestic violence services; geographical isolation; and a lack of anonymity for those wishing to seek help (Urbis Keys Young 2003). Additional barriers may include a lack of public transport, a lack of crisis accommodation, fears of breaches of confidentiality in a small community, complicated financial arrangements in farming families, and the prevalence of guns (Hastings & MacLean 2002). A lack of female doctors is also noted as a barrier in rural areas (Orlando 2004). In rural towns, Police officers may socialise with, or be involved in the same sporting groups as, perpetrators of domestic violence; therefore, their partners may be reluctant to take any action against them (Ombudsman WA 2003).

Women from CaLD backgrounds who have a disability and who experience domestic violence are among the most disadvantaged and marginalised (NEDA 2001). They are often stigmatised and isolated. The many issues and barriers faced by these women include:

- a lack of culturally appropriate services;
- the shuffling of responsibility between services and government departments;
- a lack of accessible information in community languages;
- financial vulnerability;
- carer/family 'burn-out'; and
- multiple layers of discrimination and prejudice due to both ethnicity and disability (NEDA 2001).

3.12 Barriers for men

The barriers that prevent men from accessing domestic violence services have also been well documented (Bhattacharjee 2000; Bagshaw et al. 2000; TNS 2002). One of the major barriers is the lack of culturally appropriate programs or services for men from CaLD backgrounds who perpetrate domestic violence (Keys Young 1998).

Some of the barriers that prevent CaLD women from accessing services apply equally to men, such as:

- communication and language difficulties;
- a lack of multilingual and culturally appropriate information;
- a lack of knowledge of services available;
- a lack of appropriate outreach programs;
- counselling may be an alien concept;
- employment commitments, particularly shift-work;
- traditional gender roles, which make it difficult for men to admit they need help; and
- a belief that family issues should be dealt with within the family.

In 2001, the Family and Domestic Violence Unit commissioned consultants to conduct research into the barriers that prevent country men from accessing domestic violence services (TNS 2002). The target groups were mainstream men, key informants, Aboriginal men and CaLD men. Group and in-depth interviews were conducted in eight regions of Western Australia. While some of the barriers that prevented mainstream rural men from accessing domestic violence services also applied to men from CaLD backgrounds, there were some specific issues that applied to the latter group:

- CaLD men often felt particularly marginalised and were reluctant to approach any government department with any problem or issue in case it reflected on their permanency or residency status. This was particularly true for recent migrants.
- Most CaLD men felt that their role as head of the family had been diminished, and they were deeply concerned about the resultant feeling of anomie, particularly in relation to family discipline.
- There was a perception that service providers often lack cultural sensitivity.
- Many CaLD men already felt isolated, and it was perceived that seeking help for any issue such as domestic violence would increase their sense of isolation.

Several suggestions were made to address the above issues, which included the need to enlist key local community leaders to engage CaLD men in dialogue on relevant issues and to provide support and referral services (TNS 2002).

Some of the barriers preventing men from accessing services were outlined by Bhattacharjee (2000), and included:

- a lack of bicultural and bilingual workers
- the domination of mainstream services by 'female Anglo professionals'
- unsuitable hours
- a feeling that the entire experience of seeking assistance, from intake to reading materials, was intimidating.

Some CaLD men perceived that services were biased towards women (Paul van Reyk Consultancy 2001; TNS 2002) and were more attentive to women's needs (Bhattacharjee 2000).

3.13 Summary

The barriers preventing women from CaLD backgrounds from accessing services or assistance relating to family and domestic violence are extensive. Such barriers include a lack of knowledge of Australian law and the services available, as well as communication and language difficulties, which can result in victims tolerating abusive behaviour. This tolerance is reinforced by traditional gender roles and feelings of loneliness and isolation, which may be deliberately maintained by abusive partners. Additionally, issues such as fear of shame and isolation from family or community and a fear of deportation inhibit these women from accessing services and/or assistance.

This situation is further complicated by a lack of multilingual and culturally appropriate information on legal entitlements and processes, and a lack of awareness of what constitutes family and domestic violence. In some countries, the right of a man to 'discipline' his wife is enshrined in family law. Ultimately, the existing difficulties that prevent men from accessing domestic violence services, such as the perception that services are biased against men, also contribute to their lack of accessing services. In essence, there is an urgent need for networking between mainstream domestic violence workers and CaLD community members.

3.14 Key issues and themes

A recurring theme of the literature relating to the prevention of domestic violence, the protection of victims and the provision of services was the assertion that 'one size does not fit all' (Cant et al. 2004; Dimopolous 2000; Moore et al. 2002).

One size does not fit all

According to San Pedro (1996), most services in Australia work within a monocultural and monolingual framework, which does not reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of Australian society. Migrant women experiencing homelessness and/or domestic violence are seen as a 'set of problems', by service providers and their needs are considered to be 'special' (2004:365). Culture and ethnicity are viewed as some kind of disability. San Pedro argues that migrant women do not require special treatment but 'just and equal treatment'.

Individuals have unique needs, and people from CaLD backgrounds do not belong to a homogenous group (Dimopoulos & Assafiri 2004; Dimopoulos 2000; Bagshaw 2002; Cunningham et al. 2004; Phoenix Projects 2000; Aldunate 1999a).

Quek expresses reluctance to use the term 'culturally and linguistically diverse' for similar reasons:

The terms used can sometimes mask or assume the homogeneity of CaLD women. To lump all women under the same umbrella is to gloss over the diversity of experiences, backgrounds, religious beliefs, educational level, class etc. (Quek 2001:7).

Bagshaw et al. (2000) described mainstream domestic violence services as ill-equipped to deal with the complex needs of marginalised groups in the community, including those from CaLD backgrounds. According to Bagshaw et al., research has already identified gaps in service provision, but service providers have only paid lip service to addressing this. They recommended separate specialist services to address the needs of people from CaLD backgrounds.

Lack of research on extent and nature of domestic violence

There is no current national, empirical research available regarding the nature and extent of domestic violence experienced by women in the mainstream population, due to the hidden nature of family and domestic violence. This is further exacerbated for women in CaLD communities, as research has suggested that these women are less likely to seek assistance or report to Police than women in the mainstream population. Conversely, research has been carried out with specific ethnic groups within CaLD communities, but it remains difficult to provide accurate statistics for the extent and nature of family and domestic violence within those communities.

A need exists for an integrated national data collection system that includes identification and analysis of the incidence of family and domestic violence experienced by women in order to provide accurate statistics for the nature and extent of family and domestic violence in CaLD communities.

Migration and resettlement issues

Although in many cases incidents of family and domestic violence preceded a couple or family's migration to Australia (Easteal 1996c), additional factors following resettlement — such as unemployment, poverty, the changed role of women, awareness of women's rights, lack of family support and intervention, social isolation and intergenerational conflicts — cause additional stresses and often lead to an escalation of violence. Settlement issues have been well documented (Dimopoulos 1998; Bagshaw et al. 2000; Phoenix Projects 2000), and there is a significant need for new and emerging communities to be informed of Australian law and services in relation to domestic violence 'within a culturally sensitive and appropriate forum' (Bouloukos 2002:39).

Importance of involving key community/religious leaders

Another common theme to emerge from the literature was the need to engage key community and/or religious leaders in the task of addressing family and domestic violence in CaLD communities (Easteal 1996c; Bagshaw et al. 2000; Kaur 1996). The principle underlying this theme is the importance of working within a culture to develop appropriate solutions, rather than imposing alien culture and beliefs. In many CaLD communities, promoting 'family harmony' is preferable to focusing on 'domestic violence' when attempting to engage key stakeholders (Gordon & Adam 2005; Venkatraman & Johar 2001; Kaur 1996).

Need to target men

There is an urgent need to develop and implement culturally appropriate interventions and holistic, preventative programs that specifically target men from CaLD backgrounds who perpetrate family and domestic violence. Education on domestic violence, Australian law and how to access assistance needs to be provided to new settlers. This should be part of a comprehensive family support package for migrant communities and refugees, particularly where severe trauma has been experienced prior to migration to Australia.

Community education

More recent research has indicated that the level of understanding and awareness of family and domestic violence in CaLD communities has increased in recent years due to both community education and generational change, however there is still a great need for community education strategies particularly for new and emerging migrant communities. The research suggests that positive messages reinforcing community values, such as family harmony and healthy relationships, may be much more effective than confronting and aggressive messages, especially those that ostracise men.

Importance of the health system

Women from CaLD backgrounds are less likely to use mainstream services due to a perception that these services would not be responsive to, or understanding of their particular situation. Other factors include fears about involving the Police, anticipating a racist or unhelpful response, or a response that could place them in jeopardy within their own communities. It is generally acknowledged that women who are sponsored by Australian citizens and residents are particularly vulnerable to abuse due to the threat of deportation. The importance of General Practitioners and the health system for women from CaLD backgrounds is highlighted in research and the lack of qualified interpreters and knowledge of appropriate referral options needs to be addressed as a key strategy to address this issue for CaLD women.

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