

# Newcomer Survivors

## Newcomers' Experiences of Partner-Inflicted Traumatic Brain Injuries



### Definitions

<b>Newcomer</b>	Individuals who are new to Canada, including immigrants, refugees, permanent residents, international students, asylum seekers, and migrants. In this context, newcomer women and gender-diverse individuals may face elevated risks of intimate partner violence (IPV) and experience unique, under-researched challenges in accessing care, particularly with a partner-inflicted traumatic brain injury (TBI).
<b>Structural Violence</b>	Systemic and institutionalized ways in which social structures harm or disadvantage individuals or groups. This includes discrimination and exclusion within healthcare, legal/ justice, and immigration systems that prevent newcomers from accessing appropriate and timely care.

### Key Themes and Challenges

#### Disproportionate Risk & Gaps

- Newcomer women face higher rates of IPV compared to the general population. However, peer-reviewed research on the intersection of IPV and TBI within newcomer communities is limited (Costello & Greenwald, 2022).
- Partner-inflicted TBI may significantly affect newcomers' resettlement, legal participation, and access to care (Giesbrecht et al., 2023).

#### Intersectional Oppressions

- Overlapping systems of oppression, including racism, sexism, and classism, create unique vulnerabilities for newcomer women (Njie-Carr et al., 2021)
- Institutions often treat newcomer women as homogenous group, leading to services that fail to meet the specific needs of newcomer women with a partner-perpetrated TBI.

#### Barriers to Accessing Care

- Limited first-language access and interpretation services (Ahmad et al., 2013)
- Immigration-related fears related to deportation, child apprehension, loss of status, as examples (Giesbrecht et al., 2023).
- Cultural stigma and face ostracization with faith or cultural communities.
- IPV survivors with uncertain immigration or residency status may lack access to public health insurance and therefore avoid or delay seeking medical care.

#### Barriers to Diagnosing TBI

- Newcomers are frequently underdiagnosed with TBI due to lack of provider awareness (Jahan et al., 2025).
- TBI symptoms among newcomer women are often misattributed to PTSD, depression, or migration trauma (Jahan et al., 2025).

### Pathways Forward

- Adopt intersectional, culturally responsive approaches that recognize the impacts of migration, race, gender and trauma experienced by newcomer women.
- Ensure linguistic accessibility at each stage of care.
- Remove structural barriers through flexible intake policies.
- Leverage technology-based and community partnerships to expand outreach and enhance continuity of care.

Scan the QR code to learn more about our project!



This document was developed with the assistance of AI (OpenAI's ChatGPT) for drafting and phrasing, based on our literature review findings