



Neighbours, Friends and Families (NFF): Immigrant & Refugee Communities Campaign
Rexdale Women's Centre's "Opening Doors for Abused Women" Conference
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Rexdale Women's Centre's **NFF: "Opening Doors for Abused Women"** campaign includes the execution of a coordinated and collaborative approach to prevent violence against women and improve supports for survivors. We are committed to working across the province and with community organizations to develop and deliver training, implement public education campaigns and enhance service delivery, resources and supports.

At Rexdale Women's Centre (RWC), we recognize the complex and evolving nature of violence against women. Moreover, we acknowledge that violence affects different women, in different ways and that these experiences reflect particular and/or the intersection of social locations. As such, in order to address and appreciate the diversity of Ontario's communities, focused and unique responses, independent of a one-size-fits-all approach, are required

The Government of Ontario, through the Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD), has focused its efforts at investing in public education campaigns to help raise awareness and an understanding of violence against women. Employing bystander theory, the campaign premise maintains that *Neighbors, Friends and Family* (NFF) members all play an active role in not only helping end violence against women but also, preventing it from occurring in the first place. And so, these campaigns aim to encourage a mind-shift in societal perceptions, attitudes and behaviors that continue to perpetuate an understanding that violence against women is a private, rather than societal issue.

In 2011, RWC launched a NFF campaign which intended to mobilize community organizing. The NFF campaign is part of a province-wide initiative developed in partnership with the Government of Ontario, the OWD and the expert panel on NFF, through the Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children. Recognizing the importance of community and social accountability, RWC submitted a proposal to the OWD and was approved for funding. In 2011 – 2012 (18 months), RWC executed the campaign locally, with the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) as the focused catchment area.

Through this project, RWC established a local advisory committee; recruited community leaders to assist with the project; developed a training manual for community leaders; successfully trained a group of diverse community leaders; organized and delivered community education presentations; participated in the OWD-NFF provincial coordination committee with OCASI; and successfully organized and delivered a recognition ceremony for participants and community residents.

Our successes and positive reception of the campaign in 2011-2012 encouraged us to broaden our horizons and seek funding that would support us to execute the campaign on a provincial





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level. Our provincial partners include: (1) *Immigrant Women's Services Ottawa*; (2) *Newcomer Centre of Peel*; (3) *Thunder Bay Multicultural Association*; and (4) *Windsor Women Working with Immigrant Women*. RWC's "NFF: Opening Doors for Abused Women" project included the delivery of community-based public education campaigns across the province to teach frontline settlement, legal, health and social service providers how to recognize the signs of woman abuse and what they can do help support. RWC developed and executed local campaigns to frontline professionals working with immigrant and refugee communities, which is now culminating in a local conference or symposium with service providers.

Our deliverables include a combination of quantitative and qualitative outcomes. The *quantitative* outcomes include: (1) reaching 150 frontline workers/professionals through the public education sessions; (2) distributing 2,500 fact sheets; and (3) an engagement of 150 frontline workers/professionals in the symposium/conference. The *qualitative* outcomes include: (1) ensuring frontline workers/professionals are better equipped to identify signs / risk factors of violence against women and how to make successful referrals and offer support.

If you are interested in learning more about RWC's "Opening Doors for Abused Women" campaign, please feel free to contact:

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