Four Aspects Screening Tool (FAST):

A Culturally Integrated Family Violence Risk Assessment Tool

Shared with the New Brunswick Multicultural Council
For the IMvisible NB Project

IMvisible NB aims to implement culturally sensitive programs and services for non-status, refugee, and immigrant (NSRI) women living with domestic or intimate partner violence (DIPV) and increase women's access to DIPV support services in the province.

The moving stories many non-status, refugee, and immigrant (NSRI) women hold about domestic and intimate partner violence (DIPV) matter to all of us. NSRI women's voices and undocumented pain need coordinated support from all of us as we continue to build an inclusive New Brunswick community. While women with DIPV experiences across the province face systemic barriers to accessing services, NSRI women face added challenges due to language differences, distinct cultures, traditions, and norms. These additional barriers result in overwhelming obstacles for NSRI women experiencing DIPV.

To help remedy these complications, NBMC's IMvisible NB project is working with frontline service agencies to develop intercultural tools and strategies designed to better support NSRI women impacted by DIPV.

Objectives of IMvisible NB

IMvisible is focused on developing capacity, tools, culturally sensitive resources, and training so that DIPV service providers can better respond to the needs of NSRI women.

The project's activities include:

- Conducting needs assessments to address barriers to equality for diverse women.
- Developing and implementing prevention-focused strategies for supporting intersectional feminism and gender equality.
- Developing in-depth staff training on cross-cultural communication, including toolkits for frontline workers.
- Developing appropriate resources for NSRI women and outreach strategies for improved contact and communications with NSRI women to support DIPV service providers while supporting NSRI women.
- Developing a personal journey map for NSRI women to facilitate their understanding of the DIPV support services.

Development of the Four Aspects Screening Tool (FAST)

This tool was developed by Dr. Mohammed Baobaid in 2007. Since then clinical staff at the Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support & Integration have been using it with clients who have experiences of family violence or who are at risk of experiencing family violence. Practitioners and risk assessment experts have provided feedback on the tool over the years

that it has been in use, and it has been periodically updated. Most recently Barb MacQuarrie reviewed and revised the tool.

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INTRODUCTION

To better identify risk of family violence in newcomer and immigrant communities we need to know that women in these communities are facing unique challenges while they are trying to balance their individual rights and their expected roles within their collectivist communities including their families. Faith, cultural norms and migratory experiences play a significant role in how and why women make decisions. Collectivist[1] societies involve obligations to extended family and the broader community and expectations that personal needs will be subordinated to those of the collective. Women, for example, are expected to maintain harmony to uphold the family's status and reputation and are expected to be patient in the face of domestic abuse. They often look to their extended families for support, and face ostracism if they ask for assistance from agencies or supports outside their family. Extended family abroad is still considered to be part of the family network. It is crucial for anyone who supports and provides services for abused women to understand that women in this context are trying to navigate two different systems, the individualistic system that protects their individual rights and the collectivist system which they belong to and to which they want to stay connected.

This framework has been developed to better identify risk of family violence, especially if the violence is in the early stage and the risk is not imminent. Note that this is not necessarily the experience of all newcomer and immigrant women. Immigrant women come from different cultural backgrounds and different lived experiences. But it is valid for many immigrant women, in particular those who experience isolation due to strong ties with their community of origin.

This guide aims to help service providers develop culturally informed and effective risk assessments that can guide responses to family violence, including "honour-based" violence and forced marriages, within collectivist cultural contexts. It begins by discussing complexities associated with family violence in immigrant communities, which embrace a collectivist perspective, while living within an individualist society. Main differences between collectivist and individualistic communities are explained as they relate to family dynamics and gender relations. Challenges for new Canadians and immigrant women facing family violence are reviewed as well as challenges mainstream agencies face in reaching out to victims of family violence and to effectively respond to their needs. The manual will also discuss key aspects that influence the risk of family violence. The focus will be on the Four Aspects Screening Tools (FAST). The Four Aspect Screening Tool (FAST) is a tool for the assessment and management of risk for family violence in collectivist communities.

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[1] Collectivism can refer to primary allegiance to the extended family, tribe, caste, ethnic group, or nation. Members of collectivist communities see that the overall benefit for the collective supersedes personal benefit, or at least carries equal weight. The entire family, and by extension, the collective community, is concerned about the reputation or standing of individuals given that the name of the family and collective is dependent on the behaviour of its members (Haj-Yahia & Sadan, 2008).

FAST focuses on dynamics that are unique to collectivist and immigrant communities that may negatively impact family wellbeing and safety, including: universal experiences; migratory experiences; ethno-cultural background; and religious/faith beliefs. This exploration of family dynamics and external influences begins to uncover risks to the safety of women and their children and potential resources and supports to provide safety within collectivist families and communities. FAST is also used as to identify key partners that can contribute to interventions and specific issues that need to be addressed by the team of coordinated organizations. FAST can be used on its own or in conjunction with standardized and procedural tools commonly used by mainstream service providers when assessing risk to family violence. Our goal is to provide a culturally meaningful risk assessment tool that will assist with the development a meaningful intervention strategy to manage risk and plan for safety.

CHAPTER 1: CONTEXT

Understanding context of family violence in collectivist immigrant communities

This section will discuss the complexities associated with family violence in newcomer and immigrant communities grounded in a collectivist culture while living within the dominant individualist culture. Understanding these complexities will provide insights into the cultural context of family violence, the dynamic nature of risk and the implications of these factors for the safety of women and children.

The continuum of both collectivist and individualist cultures will be explored along with their inherent values and beliefs. Next, the factors that affect families migrating to Canada from collectivist societies and conflict or disaster zones will be examined.

Collectivist vs. individualistic cultures

North American populations uphold Eurocentric perspectives that are characterized as individualistic in nature. These cultures encourage independence, uniqueness, autonomy, and personal goals (Baobaid and Ashbourne 2016). Families within this cultural context operate within the paradigm of a nuclear family, with parents and children interacting separately from their extended families. Children are nurtured to think and make decisions independently. While individualist societies place a high value on autonomy and individuation from one's family of origin, collectivist societies place a greater emphasis on interdependence, obligation to the group, and social reputation. Collectivism refers to holding a primary allegiance to the extended family, tribe, caste, ethnic group, or nation. For members of collectivist communities, the overall benefit of the collective supersedes personal benefit, or at least carries equal weight. The entire family, and by extension, the collective community, concerns itself with the reputation and standing of individuals. The reputation of the family and the collective is dependent on the behaviour of its members (Haj-Yahia, M. & Sadan, E. 2008). [1]

Challenges of working with newcomer and immigrant women and girls facing family violence

One of the major challenges that mainstream services face when working with newcomer and immigrant families experiencing family violence is their use of traditionally individualistic model of intervention (Baobaid, 2015). This model of intervention doesn't align with the values of collectivist cultures and lacks approaches that can be utilized effectively with individuals and families in these communities.

Protecting cultural and religious values is very important for families that hold a collectivist belief system. These families have their own rules and mechanisms for accountability. On the other hand, mainstream services focus on protecting individuals from any harm that could happen to them, including harm from family members. As such, the two belief systems have competing concepts of protection and safety. From a collectivist viewpoint, protection often means protection of the family as a unit and defense of the family's religious and cultural beliefs. In this instance, each individual in a collectivist family plays a role in keeping the family together. On the other hand, mainstream Canadian services are based on the protection of

individual rights, which supersede those of the family. This approach does not take into consideration the importance of relationships and dynamics between family members and between the family and the community. This difference in approaches is evident in cases involving child-parent conflict. In many cultural contexts corporal punishment is an acceptable way to discipline children and to ensure they behave according to religious and cultural norms. Families subjected to competing values regarding the acceptability of corporal punishment may isolate themselves to maintain secrecy. The isolation and secrecy can lead to increased risk of family violence.

Collectivist family systems are often protected by secrecy; therefore, mainstream service providers are unaware of early indicators of family violence within these families. Unless there is a critical incident of family violence, it is difficult to identify individuals at risk of family violence, or those who are already being victimized. The main goal of working within a culturally appropriate and integrative approach is to promote and maintain family safety, by addressing the safety of women and children while respecting the core values of their families. To do this, it is imperative to re-examine traditional intervention strategies that respond to family violence within collectivist communities. Gaining access to families experiencing or at-risk of experiencing family violence involves forming trusting relationships with collectivist cultural communities and engaging in a collaborative process of seeking culturally responsive solutions to violence.

Faith, cultural norms and migratory experience play a significant role the way women make decisions about family violence. Collectivist cultural norms call for women to maintain harmony in order to uphold the family's status and reputation. They are expected to be patient in the face of domestic abuse. They often look to their extended families for support, and face ostracism if they ask for assistance from agencies or supports outside their family. Their family includes extended family abroad. It is crucial for anyone who supports and provides services for abused women to understand that women in this context are trying to navigate two different systems, the dominant individualistic system that protect their individual rights and the collectivist system they belong to and to which they want to remain connected. This framework will help better identify risk of family violence, especially if the violence is in the early stage and the risk is not imminent.

Description

The Four Aspect Screening Tool (FAST) is a tool to guide the assessment and management of risk for family violence in collectivist communities. The tool is multidimensional and can be used by itself or with standardized risk assessment tools.

Format

FAST comprises four main domains. These include Universal Experiences, Migration, Ethno-cultural and Religion/Spirituality. Each of these domains contain a list of items that allows the assessor to understand the family context, and to explore, identify, and assess diverse risk factors of family violence in each aspect covered by the tool. The assessment will provide cultural context for the assessors and help them determine the risk posed by the abuser(s) and the victim(s)/survivor(s) vulnerabilities and the extent and level of risk.

Development

The need to develop a culturally-integrative response to family violence including a risk assessment tool has been identified research and practice (Baobaid & Ashbourne, 2016; Fernández, 2006; Fisher, 2013; Sawrikar, 2019).

The developer initially used the risk assessment tool informally with Muslim immigrant men involved with family violence and with survivors and/or victims to determine risk factors and level of risk. In 2009, after the establishment of Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support & Integration (MRCSSI) the MRCSSI clinical team used the tool with both Muslim and non-Muslim clients (abusive men, survivors—women and girls; and children. When used with young people and children questions were adjusted to be age appropriate. The tool proved to be effective in working with immigrant collectivist families at-risk or involved with family violence. Since then, the tool has been evolving through the input and feedback of the practitioners and researchers.

Limitations

Although the tool is being used by the Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support & Integration clinical team, it is not yet validated.

Along with risk factors for family violence, factors affecting family dynamics that are contributing to violence need to be identified. Here we will outline key aspects that need to be considered when working with newcomer and immigrant clients coming from a collectivist background. This information allows you to contextualize your understanding of risks and serves to inform risk management and safety planning strategies. We recommend starting with general risk factors that will provide significant information about risks related to the perpetrator(s) as well as the victim(s). In this tool we call these generic risk factors Universal Experiences. Experience an expertise in using evidence-based risk assessment tools and intervention strategies is valuable. However, failing to recognize and acknowledge the limitations of traditional risk assessment tools (based on individualist cultural assumptions) while working with individuals coming from a collectivist background and not being willing to learn from your clients about how they frame risk and safety and are factors that prevent them from seeking protection from mainstream services. Asking good questions about factors you will not find in your standardized risk assessment tools and screening process will help you to build understanding and trust with your clients.

We suggest using the **Four Aspects Screening Tool (FAST)** (Baobaid, M and Ashbourne, L, 2016) to identify risk and protective factors concerning family violence within collectivist immigrant communities. As mentioned previously, FAST can be used independently or in conjunction with standardized procedural tools used by mainstream service providers when assessing risk to family violence. FAST focuses on dynamics that are unique to collectivist and immigrant communities that may be negatively impacting family wellbeing and safety across the four domains of: universal experiences; migratory experiences; ethno-cultural influences; and religious/spiritual beliefs. This exploration of experiences and beliefs concerning family dynamics and external relationships begins to uncover risks to safety of women and their children and potential resources and supports to maintain safety within collectivist families and communities. Migration experiences, cultural differences, and religious beliefs may be identified as risk factors in some situations, but they can be protective factors and a source of strength for families under stress. Part of our expectation of FAST is to guide us to the positive elements in each aspect of FAST.

FAST maps out risk factors and protective factors. It can be used to guide better responses to violence in families from collectivist communities by identifying specific issues that need to be addressed and key partners that can support interventions. The following is an outline of the Four Aspects Screening Tool.

Section (1): Universal Experiences

Universal experiences are related to dynamics that exist across all cultures. These universal phenomena include risk factors that are "primarily associated with detecting early warning factors that may contribute to domestic violence such as depression, substance abuse, low socioeconomic status, power and domination, etc." (Wells, Abboud, & Claussen, 2012). General information about family composition and the presenting issues are also explored in this aspect. Risk and protection from risk can be correlated to demographic characteristics and lifetime or past-year experiences of domestic violence. "For example, while young age is

frequently found as a risk factor in studies of past-year domestic violence, older age is found to be associated with increased risk of lifetime domestic violence" (Wells, Abboud, & Claussen, 2012). Frequent use of substances, especially heavy alcohol consumption, has been identified as a risk factor for domestic violence.

The information collected from asking questions related to factors such as these will help to develop a general picture of risk factors and level of risk. Responses to these questions will provide guidance about what further information is needed, particularly information related to migratory experiences, cultural and religious traditions and norms.

Section (2): Migration Experiences

Individuals' migratory experiences have a significant impact on their behaviour and on their family relations as well as interpersonal relations. Understanding the migration journey of migrant families and individuals including victims and/or perpetrators of family violence is key to better assess and manage risk and develop an effective culturally informed intervention plan.

It is important to note that the migration journey is experienced differently by each individual. The migration journey is a continuum that happens in phases. It starts with the pre-migration phase, continues through the transit country and into the post-migration phase when the migrants arrive at their final destination in countries like Canada. Each phase of the migration journey presents different kinds of challenges and adjustments that ultimately impact the migrant's acculturation and integration process as they resettle in their final destination.

Migration related risk factors of family violence stem from each phase of the migration journey. It is important to recognize these factors and ultimately see how they influence life in the post-migration phase.

To understand your client's migratory experience, consider these dimensions:

Pre-migration experience

What was life like in the country of origin? Was there war or conflict? If the client and their family experienced war or conflict, how did it impact them directly and/or indirectly? If they escaped war or conflict, what was their journey from their country of origin to the transit country like?

Transit country or countries

What was life like in the transit country or countries? Did the family or members of the family experience major challenges and problems while staying in the transit country or countries? What was their housing situation? Were their basic needs met? Were there safety concerns? Did they experience violence? What kind of violence? What were the social relations like? Did they experience discrimination? Did they experience a change of social status? Were family members separated? For how long and under what circumstances? Were there any other challenges?

Post-migration experience

The impacts of the migration journey on newcomer and immigrant families include stressors related to post-migration experiences as well. These stressors relate to the process of adapting and resettling in their new home. Resettlement can be divided into three or more personal

stages. These stages include a stage of happiness and fascination; followed by disappointment, confusion, frustration and irritation; and leading to gradual adjustment and recovery; acceptance and adjustment (Winkelman,1994).

Understanding these stages can help service providers to 'locate' newcomers in the adjustment process and, as a result, better identify risk of family violence from one stage to the next and plan accordingly for culturally informed responses.

Section (3): Ethno-cultural Background

This domain focuses on understanding and assessing the cultural background of the family and how that culture influences family dynamics. Furthermore, it provides insights into family members' collective identity, the evolution of that identity and the meaning each family member ascribes to their cultural values and beliefs. It also offers a perspective on the interplay between family ethnicity and culture and a divergent mainstream culture. Factors such as where the family fits in their cultural continuum of collectivist versus individualistic values, and how far they would go to protect the collectivist cultural identity will influence the likelihood of being at-risk of or experiencing family violence. The stronger the feelings that the family's collectivist cultural identity is at risk of being compromised by the individualistic culture, especially in relation to changing attitudes and behaviours of the female members of the family, the higher the probability of family violence. Attitudes about changes in gender roles in the family will also influence the level of risk of family violence. Women who are perceived as more successful than their husband could be seen as a threat to some men. Any perceived threat to the leadership role and status of the principal male figure in the family is a potential risk factor.

This domain also assesses connectedness or disconnectedness of individuals and/or families to their ethnic community and the scope of this support or lack of support.

It is very important to note that not all people who have strong culturally influenced beliefs and a sense of belonging to their collectivist community are at risk of or involved with family violence.

The questions related to this domain allow the assessor to gain a better picture of a family's customs and traditions, and a sense of how they perceive changes or threats of changes. This gives a clearer understanding of potential risks and resources available to the family (Baobaid, Asbourne, 2016).

Section (4): Religious and Faith Beliefs

In many instances religion, spirituality, or faith is a major influence on determining what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour for members of collectivist communities. Furthermore, tenets of religion, spirituality, or faith can be misused to control and abuse women. Thus, faith can be a risk factor or a protective factor for family violence. Religion or faith is considered a key moral reference for many individuals coming from a collectivist background, and it determines how protection, gender roles, and accountability are interpreted. Assessing the role of religion, spirituality, or faith in the family context and to what extent each individual considers it as a guide and reference for their family relations provides insights into risk.

To understand the impact of religious and faith beliefs on the family, ask about the importance of religion in resolving disputes, ask what issues typically require religious consultations, if there

are any differences in religious beliefs or degree of adherence to religious beliefs in the family, and if there is conflict about different religious beliefs or the intensity of religious beliefs (Baobaid, 2013).

Approach and General Questions

It is extremely important to approach the family in a relational manner. For practitioners working from a non-authoritarian perspective and validating experiences is key to forming a trustworthy relationship where the client feels comfortable to disclose risks and experiences of violence (El-Amin & Nadir, 2014). It is important to ask these questions to demonstrate that you have some understanding of their values but show that you are open to hearing their interpretations.

It is also helpful to know how the individuals in the family and their community of origin define family violence, how people usually respond, and how safety concerns of victims of violence are addressed. Asking these questions will not jeopardize relationships and they help build information about family violence in the context of the identified community.

CHAPTER 4: FAST IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH A CASE EXAMPLE

How to use the FAST Tool

FAST is a structured professional judgement tool. It is not an actuarial tool that uses an algorithm to combine risk factors into a final decision. A structured professional judgement tool combines evidence about risk factors with an assessment of an individual and their situation. Professionals are asked to bring their experience, skills and knowledge to the risk assessment process to make an assessment. Structured professional judgement tools identify the most relevant risk factors to consider in a given context. The FAST identifies risk factors that are relevant for individuals from collectivist backgrounds, who have had migration experiences.

There are three steps to using FAST. In step one the practitioner gathers and document basic case information. Step two involves coding the presence of risk factors related to the four domains of FAST. Step three determines how the level of risk in each of the four domains interacts and examines the accumulations of risk indicators from all four domains.

Step (1): Basic information

Basic information about the perpetrator, victims, family members including children includes but is not limited to demographics, presenting issues, immigration status, marital and family status. This information should be gathered through an intake assessment process that involves interviewing perpetrators, victims/survivors. Information can also be obtained through police reports or other sources.

Step (2): Identifying risk factors

After documenting basic information, evaluators code the presence of individual risk factors related to the four domains. A simple 3-point response format is used to determine the presence of risk factors. The code "Y" indicates strong presence of factors. The code "P" indicates possible or partially presence. The code "N" indicates the absence of the factor.

Step (3): A summary of accumulated factors

After identifying which factors are present, evaluators create a chart to collate all the risk factors identified and combine them to determine how these will influence the person's decisions to perpetuate family violence.

A Case Example

A family doctor referred Noor, a refugee woman who came to see her to a shelter after she reported that her husband had used violence against her several times. Noor agreed to meet with a shelter worker to learn about how the shelter could help her and her children. During the intake interview with the shelter worker, the woman disclosed that her husband had been violent with her in the presence of her children several times. When the interview concluded said that she would like to remain in contact with the shelter, but that she did not want to go into shelter. She preferred to remain at home.

The shelter worker followed through on her obligation to report the violence witnessed by the children to child protection services. Child protection services then contacted Noor and arranged a date and time to visit the family for an investigation.

Upon arrival, child protection services met with Noor (42 years of age) and her children Nadir (17) Nada (15), Ali (11), Nadia (8), and Mohammed (5). The children seemed to be stressed and stayed close to their mother.

The child protection worker asked Noor, with the assistance of an interpreter, what had happened to her and to the children. She didn't want to talk, but her daughter, Nada said that her father Omar (54) had kicked her mother, Noor, and grabbed her by the throat. Noor lost consciousness and collapsed in the front hallway. Nada heard the disturbance and wanted to call 911. Omar shoved Nada and she dropped the telephone. He then stepped on the phone, smashing it.

Noor has a noticeable red mark on her left cheek. She motions with her hands that she was hit in the face with a fist, and Nada confirms that her dad did that. Noor doesn't remember losing consciousness, however Nada witnessed it, and states that her mom was confused when she awoke and had urinated on herself. She refused to go to the hospital when Nada suggested that she should, but Noor did make the appointment to see the family doctor.

When interviewed, the children disclosed that Omar yells at them and won't let them go outside alone. The children shared that the only time they are allowed out is to go to school. They are not allowed to visit with friends or invite them to their home. Ali and Nadia, disclosed that Omar threatened to send them back to their country of origin (Iraq) and leave them there if they disobeyed him. Further, the children disclosed that they had witnessed their mother being assaulted and had been assaulted themselves. The children also disclosed that their mother frequently stayed in bed for hours and sometimes days. Their oldest sibling, Nadia is the one who cares for them, completes the household chores, cooks for them, bathes them and puts them in bed.

The child protection worker finished her investigation with Noor and her children and then interviewed Omar. Noor didn't want to report to the police. The child protection worker reported to her supervisor, and they agreed to report the incident that took place in the presence of the children to the police. The next day, the police came to the house and arrested Omar for assault and mischief. He was taken to the station and had a bail hearing. Omar was found guilty and now has conditions in place that prevent him from having contact with his family. He is confused and cannot understand how it is possible that someone can prevent him from seeing his family, especially his children.

Background information about Omar and Noor

Here is some key background information about Omar and Noor that was gathered from the interviews with the shelter worker:

Noor says that at the beginning of their marriage, Omar was very attentive and kind. They got married and moved to Omar's father's large house, where he lived with his parents and siblings. One sibling married shortly after Omar, and he and his wife joined them in the same house known as the "family house". Noor's family is very proud of this marriage because of Omar's family tribal status. The "family house" is a common concept in their country of origin

and Noor was content to live there. After their first child was born Omar started to be aggressive towards her sometimes, especially when he drank. He drinks secretly and no one from his family knows about it.

Omar and Noor shared terrible stories about what happened to them during the civil war that took place before they were able to leave Iraq and go to Egypt. Omar's tribe became the enemy of the political and religious group that won the civil war. His father escaped Iraq with some of his family members and other members of his tribe. Omar and one brother stayed behind. The brother who also stayed behind was killed in front of his wife and children when Omar was away from the house. After that, the military were constantly looking for Omar. Omar was able to secure a safe place for the family outside of their city. They stayed in hiding and for more than three years until Omar was able to arrange a way to flee the country to Jordan. They stayed in Jordan for a few months, but they couldn't stay longer because it was very expensive and most of their savings were gone.

Omar had some friends who moved to Egypt, and they encouraged him to join them there. The family then moved to Egypt. In Egypt, Omar found a job through his friends who also belonged to their tribe. The situation was not ideal, but it was okay, and they could survive. Omar was working very hard to make sure that the family's basic needs were met, and the children could go to school. The family stayed in Egypt for five years before their application to move to Canada as refugees was accepted. The family moved to Canada, where they were sponsored by a church group in a small town. All their basic needs including shelter, health care, children's school were met, and they were very happy with that.

Omar was able to find work and the family has been able live independently for the past few years. Although they are grateful to be safe from the violence in their home country, both Omar and Noor miss their extended families and their old way of life. Their standard of living and social status has diminished a lot in comparison to their life in Iraq. Omar still has nightmares sometimes about his brothers' death. He feels guilty that he escaped with his immediate family and left members of his extended family behind. He is anxious about his children picking up a more Westernized lifestyle and he feels his children, particularly the older ones do not respect him the way they should. He drinks to try to forget about the past violence and his concerns about how his children are growing up. Omar is often moody and irritable and it's when he drinks that he becomes violent. Noor does her best to keep her family together but feels powerless in the face of Omar's anger. Noor is very religious, and she prays a lot and reads the Quran when she feels stressed and depressed. Sometimes she is just not able to keep up with house keeping and childcare. She knows that she relies too much on Nada and she worries about her, but she can't find the strength to take on the full responsibility of raising her family.

Omar is not very religious but her is very rigid in his cultural beliefs and traditions, especially regarding gender-roles and expectations.

Four Aspects Screening Tool (FAST) Worksheet

Instructions
This worksheet is intended to help complete a FAST assessment. The evaluator identifies individual risk factors related to each domain of FAST and codes them as "Y" if it is present, "P" if it is potentially present and "N" if it is absent. The evaluator can also make notes about each of the factors if there is any information that might be helpful in considering the overall context of this individual and family. The questions focus on the experiences and the behaviour of the person who is perpetrating violence in the family or who is at risk of perpetrating violence in the family.

Case Information
Identifying information Name of person being assessed for risk: Evaluators: Date completed: Sources of information reviewed: ☐ Interviews with perpetrator/suspect ☐ Interviews with victim/compliant ☐ Review of service agency records ☐ Review of police/criminal records ☐ Other
Basic Information: Demographics, presenting issues, immigration status, etc. (from intake form)
Names, ages and genders of family members
Current living situation of family

Presenting issue(s)			
Immigration Status			
How your does family and community define/understand family violence?			
How do people from your community of origin usually respond to family violence?			
How are concerns generally addressed when family violence poses a threat to the safety of one or more members of the family?			

Risk Factors			
Section 1: Universal Experiences	Responses		
	Y	P	N
1. Mental health concerns			
Notes:			
2. Drug or alcohol misuse/abuse			
Notes:			

3. Relationship instability/continuous conflict/emotional tensions			
Notes:			
4. Recent separation or divorce or consideration of separation or divorce			
Notes:			
5. Obsession/jealous behaviour towards victim			
Notes:			
6. Difficulties managing or expressing anger appropriately			
Notes:			
7. Access to weapons (recent or past)			
Notes:			
8. Has harmed victim, or other family member in the past			
Notes:			
9. Has threatened to harm or kill victim or other family member in the past			
Notes:			
10. Perpetrator has suicidal ideation or has attempted suicide			
Notes:			

11. Financial difficulties			
Notes:			

Section 2: Migration Experiences	Responses		
	Y	P	N
Migratory experience:			
1. Directly involved in or and impacted by armed conflicts (tribal/inter-group/ethno-racial/religious)			
Notes:			
2. Forced to leave their country for safety reasons			
Notes:			
3. Faced imminent dangers in fleeing from their home			
Notes:			
4. Witnessed a family member or close associate being subjected to acts of violence including kidnaping, sexual violence, torture or murder killing in their home country or in a transit country			
Notes:			
5. Forced to participate in acts of violence during the migration journey			

Notes:			
6. Experienced the loss of family members/friends/neighbours			
Notes:			
7. Family breakdown because of the impact of war and conflict			
Notes:			
Post-migration:			
1. Dramatic change in the socio-economic status of the family			
Notes:			
2. Unemployment, underemployment			
Notes:			
3. Language barriers			
Notes:			
4. Dramatic change of in gender roles and spousal relations			
Notes:			
5. Difficulties coping with acculturation and integration/Very isolated			
Notes:			

	Y	P	N
6. Feels disempowered by the system regarding parental role and authority			
Notes:			
7. Considering returning to their country of origin?			
Notes:			
8. Sense of loss is high			
Notes:			
9. Feels the justice system is biased against their family values			
Notes:			
10. Feels that Canadian society and the justice system discriminate against men.			
Notes:			
11. Intentionally resisting integration in the Canadian society			
Notes:			
Section 3: Ethno-cultural Background	Responses		
	Y	P	N
1. Believes it is a man's obligation to do whatever it takes to keep the family together and to protect the family reputation and honour			
Notes:			

2. Believes members of the family are obligated to protect the family bond and their family honour			
Notes:			
3. Considers putting personal interests before the collective interest of the family as selfish			
Notes:			
4. Believes wives and mothers should sacrifice for their family and obey their husbands			
Notes:			
5. Believes that maintaining and nurturing the family connection with the tribe, extended family, and cultural traditions of the community of origin is a priority			
Notes:			
6. Believes that using a certain amount of violence may be necessary to protect the family's reputation and honour			
Notes:			
7. Perceives changes in gender roles as a conspiracy against men's traditional leadership role in the family			
Notes:			
8. Believes men's violence against women is justified when women engage with mainstream services in ways that challenge tradition and family order			

	Y	P	N
Notes:			
9. Believes that Canadian institutions encourage children to rebel against their traditional family culture and to become Westernized			
Notes:			
10. Believes that only extended family or people from the community of origin can be trusted to solve family problems			
Notes:			
11. Believes that the state doesn't have any business in family affairs			
Notes:			
Section 4: Religious/Faith beliefs	Responses		
	Y	P	N
1. Fully abides by the religious teachings of their faith			
Notes:			
2. Practices the same religion/faith as my whole family			
Notes:			
3. Religion guides every aspect of their life			

Notes:			
4. Believes they are accountable to God and no one else			
Notes:			
5. Believes their religion obligates them to protect their family's religious identity			
Notes:			
6. Their religion dictates their relationship with their family			
Notes:			

Summary and conclusions

The FAST results show that there are important risk indicators related to Universal Experiences as well migration pressures and cultural differences. There are no significant risk factors related to religious or faith beliefs. Identified risk factors can be summarized as follows:

- Alcohol misuse
- Relationship instability and emotional tensions as well as previous assaults towards family members and difficulties managing anger appropriately
- Although he is working, the family's socio-economic status has declined, and this has been difficult.
- Migration-related stressors, especially those related to pre-migration trauma, pose some of the most significant risk factors for this case. There are clear indications of the negative impact of the war experiences on the perpetrator. He also suffered hardships in his journey to escape the war.
- Although remaining family members have not talked about the lasting impacts of war experiences, it is possible they are also struggling with these experiences. This is an area for follow-up with the entire family.
- Post-migration stressors include a sense of loss and a feeling of being disempowered by the system. Together these experiences and circumstances indicate a clear risk that Omar will use violence against his partner and children.

Intervention plan

This plan has been formulated based on the risk factors identified by the FAST assessment.

Intervention Focus	• Assessment and treatment for possible war trauma • Culturally informed psycho-social support to address post-migration integration difficulties • Community connections and mentorship • Culturally informed management strategies
Key Players in Interventions	• Psychologist/psychiatrist/social worker • Cultural broker/community connector • Interpreter • Police • Child protection services • D/IPV advocate
Risk Management	• Provide safety planning for the victim and her children • Find an appropriate ethnocultural organization to be part of this process to reduce the sense of helplessness and hopelessness, thus mediating and managing risk • Create culturally meaningful monitoring and supervision for the perpetrator by including a cultural broker in this process • Providing informal culturally meaningful psycho-social support and therapy (through a culturally based service or an individual with knowledge and experience in cross-cultural counseling)
Other Actions to be considered	

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Appendix A: FAST Items

Domain	Items
Universal Experiences	1. Mental health concerns 2. Drug or alcohol misuse 3. Relationship instability/consistent conflict/emotional tensions 4. Recent separation or divorce or consideration of separation or divorce 5. Obsession/jealous behaviour toward victim 6. Difficulties managing or expressing anger appropriately 7. Access to weapon (recent or past) 8. Has harmed victim, family members in the past 9. Has threatened to harm or kill victim or other family member in the past 10. Financial difficulties
Migration Experiences	Pre-migratory & migratory experiences: 1. Directly involved in or and impacted by armed conflicts (tribal/inter-group/ethno-racial/religious) 2. Forced to leave their country for safety reasons 3. Faced imminent dangers in fleeing from their home 4. Witnessed a family member or close associate being subjected to acts of violence including kidnaping, sexual violence, torture or murder killing in their home country or in a transit country 5. Forced to participate in acts of violence during the migration journey 6. Experienced the loss of family members/friends/neighbours 7. Family breakdown because of the impact of war and conflict Post-migration: 1. Dramatic change in the socio-economic status of the family 2. Unemployment, underemployment 3. Language barriers 4. Dramatic change in gender roles and spousal relations 5. Difficulties coping with acculturation and integration/very isolated 6. Feels disempowered by the system regarding parental role and authority 7. Considering returning to country of origin 8. Sense of loss is high 9. Feels the justice system is biased against their family values 10. Feels that Canadian society and the justice system discriminate against men 11. Intentionally resisting integration in the Canadian society

Ethno-cultural Background	1. Believes it is a man's obligation to do whatever it takes to keep the family together and to protect the family reputation and honour 2. Believes members of the family are obligated to protect the family bond and their family honour 3. Considers putting personal interests before the collective interest of the family as selfish 4. Believes wives and mothers should sacrifice for their family and obey their husbands 5. Believes that maintaining and nurturing the family connection with the tribe, extended family, and cultural traditions of the community of origin is a priority 6. Believes that using a certain amount of violence may be necessary to protect the family's reputation and honour 7. Perceives changes in gender roles as a conspiracy against men's traditional leadership role in the family 8. Believes men's violence against women is justified when women engage with mainstream services in ways that challenge tradition and family order 9. Believes that Canadian institutions encourage children to rebel against their traditional family culture and to become Westernized 10. Believes that only extended family or people from the community of origin can be trusted to solve family problems 11. Believes that the state doesn't have any business in family affairs
Religious / Faith Beliefs	1. Fully abides by the religious teachings of their faith 2. Practices the same religion/faith as my whole family 3. Religion guides every aspect of their life 4. Believes they are accountable to God and no one else 5. Believes their religion obligates them to protect their family's religious identity 6. Their religion dictates their relationship with their family

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