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## FAMILY VIOLENCE FIRST RESPONDERS

Wellsprings for Women has been assisting women who experience family violence since the organization started in 1994. However, Wellsprings did not have dedicated funding to focus on this work until late in 2017 when it secured federal funding to design and implement a program on gender equality, respectful relationships and prevention of violence against women.

*“We wanted to focus on education and prevention but the demand for support from women who are either living in family violence or have exited such circumstances has increased tremendously over the last few years. We consider ourselves as first responders to family violence ” said Dalal Smiley, Wellsprings for Women CEO*

Women who do disclose are often not ready to leave the relationship and therefore cannot be assisted by existing specialized family violence services.

*“Especially women from migrant, refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds face enormous barriers to leaving a violent relationship. Many factors stand in their way, such as their full dependence on their partners financially, or being on a spouse’s visa, or simply having no support networks to rely on, or just imagining the consequences of leaving as being worse than staying ”*

Wellsprings helps any woman who needs support. Wellsprings’ first priority is to ensure that she and her children are safe. They work with her by providing her with information about her rights and options, explaining the family violence service system and the kind of help she can receive, offering assistance with referrals and reassuring her of continued support should she choose to take the next step.

*“Our federal funding runs out in August this year and we will be pursuing other sources of funding to build on our existing work. We hope to continue supporting migrant and refugee women who are experiencing family violence by facilitating safe and supportive pathways to specialized family violence services.”*

Wellsprings for Women is committed to continue delivering its Prevention of Violence Against Women Program through education, awareness raising and building women’s confidence and self-determination.

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