

RECOGNIZE

Honor Violence

KNOW

Your Rights

EMPOWER

Yourself

Resources and practical

guidance for individuals

at risk of honor violence



ahafoundation



Honor Violence

can happen to anyone regardless of their ethnicity, religion, level of education, or whether they were born in or outside of the US. If you or someone you know is experiencing honor violence, **help is available**. This pamphlet identifies resources and provides practical guidance for people at risk from honor violence so they can reach out for help or learn more about this form of abuse that is so often misunderstood or unrecognized.

What is honor violence? What are examples of this abuse?

Honor violence is committed to protect, defend, or regain perceived family or community “honor.” Honor violence is often linked to the belief that someone has brought shame to their family or community by doing something that supposedly counters the traditions or beliefs of their culture or religion. Women and girls may be seen as endangering the honor of their family or community through expressions of independence, especially if this independence is related to their sexuality. Men and boys may be subjected to honor violence too; for example, they may be targeted by the family of a woman who believe the family has been ‘dishonored’ by their marriage, in which case both may be at risk, or if a man or boy are believed to be homosexual or transgender.

Honor violence can take many forms such as verbal abuse, physical assault, attempted murder, rape, torture, kidnapping, forced marriage, shunning/ostracism, harassment, and even murder. In some cases, those experiencing honor violence are driven to or even encouraged by their families to commit suicide.

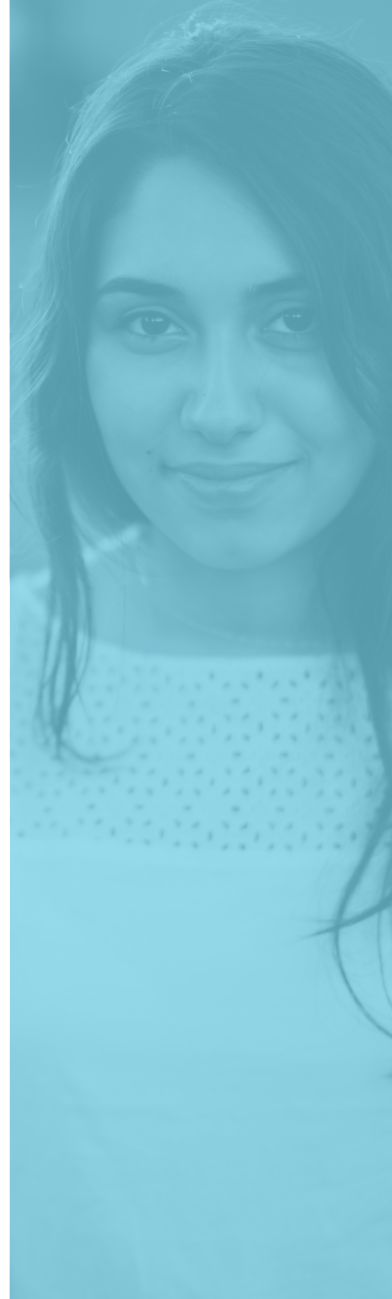
Acknowledging the signs of honor violence is the first step to protecting yourself. No one should live in fear of his or her family or community. If you recognize yourself or someone you know in the descriptions of honor violence below, please reach out. Help is available.

When and where honor violence may occur

There are many reasons honor violence may be committed but some examples include:

- Becoming involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion;
- Being perceived as promiscuous or involved in a relationship of an intimate or sexual nature outside of marriage;
- Refusing to get married or expressing the desire to get out of a marriage;
- Taking part in activities such as wearing clothing or makeup that a family or community may view as “immodest,” or “too Western” or socializing with members of the opposite gender.

No one should be subjected to violence and abuse because of the choices they make.



What is a forced marriage and how is it related to honor violence?

Forced marriage is a marriage in which one and/or both parties have not personally expressed their full and free consent to the union. Even if both parties enter a marriage with full, free consent, the union can later become a forced marriage if one or both parties are forced to stay in it.

There is no religion, culture or tradition that can justify forcing you into a marriage you don't want. You are not betraying your faith, culture or tradition by refusing such a marriage.



FINDING Help

If you or someone you know are facing honor violence or a forced marriage and need assistance please contact:

In the US: text the word "FREE" to 741-741 to speak anonymously to a compassionate, non-judgmental Crisis Counselor for free 24/7. Texts are private and secure.

In the UK: call Karma Nirvana 0800 5999247 or the Forced Marriage Unit 020 7008 0151 (from overseas +44 (0)20 7008 0151)

Have you experienced honor violence and are not sure how to protect yourself?

The most important thing is that you speak to someone. Even if you have to reach out to more than one person, don't stop until you find someone who can help you. Here are options to consider when deciding whom to reach out to for help:

■ You may find it difficult or even dangerous to talk to someone in your own family because you don't know whose side they're on. If so, find another adult you trust from outside the family. If you are in school, you could speak to a teacher, school counselor or other staff member.

■ A local domestic violence organization might also be a good option for you to find someone you can talk to for help. Visit www.theahafoundation.org/get-help/ to find a domestic violence organization near you or call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) to speak to someone at the National Domestic Violence Hotline. Another good option is to look for resources on the National Coalition to End Domestic Violence website at www.ncadv.org.

When you reach out to organizations and professionals for assistance, consider asking them if they are required by law to report to the authorities what you tell them, so you know before you say anything what will happen with any information you share.

Legal and Undocumented Immigrants

Lack of citizenship should not prohibit anyone from seeking help if they are the victim of abuse. US law provides several options for obtaining residency to victims of domestic violence and other crimes. Ask a domestic violence professional about whether or not your situation makes you eligible for these protections.

source: uscis.gov



Reporting to the Authorities

You can contact the resources below when you're ready to report to the authorities that you are at risk from honor violence or that you have been abused. It's important you come forward even if you worry that whoever is responsible will get into trouble. It's better to tell someone rather than for you to be unsafe, hurt or live in fear of violence.

- You can contact your local police.
- If you think you are in immediate danger, call 911 or your local emergency services and flee at once to a safe location if you are able.

If you are worried for your safety, after the police have arrived, don't let them leave you alone with anyone who you are concerned may hurt you. You are allowed to ask to speak to the police without your family present. If you are hurt, ask for medical help. If you fear for your physical safety, you can request that you be removed from your home even if you are a minor (under 18).

You could ask someone to speak to the authorities on your behalf, like a friend or relative, a trusted community leader or an attorney.

Taken Overseas for Forced Marriage

If you think you are being taken out of the country for a forced marriage, consider doing the following:

- If at all possible, try to avoid leaving the US. It is much harder and sometimes impossible to find help once taken outside of the country.
- Find emergency safe housing (shelter or foster care).
- Contact local law enforcement to explore protective options.
- Contact the Office of Overseas Citizens Services of the Department of State (888-407-4747) and alert them to your situation. The Department of State may be able to help if you are taken abroad.
- Consider how to achieve safety if you are being taken abroad:
 - Think of ways to alert TSA officers to your situation if you are taken to an airport, such as hiding a spoon or other metal object in your clothing to set off metal detectors and obtain a private screening where you can explain your situation and ask for help.
 - Memorize contact information for the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the country where you may be taken.

ARE YOU INTERESTED in learning more about honor violence and what you can do to prevent it?

Become knowledgeable about honor violence and get involved by reading the resources available at theAHAfoundation.org.

Books written by survivors and advocates of forced marriage, female genital mutilation and other forms of honor violence are also an effective way of learning about harmful traditional practices. We recommend:

Infidel by Ayaan Hirsi Ali

Cut: One Woman's Fight Against FGM by Hibo Wardere

A Father's Betrayal by Gabriella Gillespie

The Seven Perfumes of Sacrifice by Amy Logan



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**Support the work of organizations like
the AHA Foundation to protect girls at risk from
honor violence and help end harmful traditional practices.
Visit theAHAfoundation.org to make a donation.**