

Karma
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Honour Abuse

-the victim's story -

April 2009

IZZAT

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- shame and honour -

‘The worth of an Asian girl is defined by how she conducts herself.’

‘It is the daughter’s duty to carry the family honour.’

HONOUR STATISTICS

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- At least 12 honour killings per year (Cowan 2004)
- Over 110 Murders Reviewed to identify link to honour killings? ACPO
- FCO deal with 300 cases of repatriation annually, 30% of which involve minors aged 11 -39yrs and receive around 5000 calls for support a year. FMU
- Asian women are 2-3 times more likely to commit suicide, self harm
- Thought are women driven to commit suicide, is suicide cleaner than murder?

HONOUR VIOLENCE

- An example:
- A mother holds down the legs of her pregnant daughter while her son strangles her to death and then stands in the dock and defended her actions in the name of honour

Why?

Why is izzat so powerful and persuasive?

Why is izzat more important than a person's human rights?

Right to life, personal liberty, security & equality

HONOUR VIOLENCE

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- How does honour impact on a woman/man?
 - Living in fear of immediate and extended family
 - Feeling of being monitored/watched/controlled
 - Creates dependency, isolation and loneliness
 - Loss of sense of self – not an individual in their own right
 - Ashamed, silenced - betrayal

REAL EXPERIENCES OF HONOUR

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- Recent izzat research asked three generations of Asian women a series of honour related questions (*Mental Health Trust Derby and Karma Nirvana research, June 2004*)
 - Group 1: aged 16-25
 - Group 2: aged 26-40
 - Group 3: aged 41-57
 - *A focus group exploration on the impact of izzat, shame, subordination and entrapment on mental health and service use in South Asian women living in Derby June 2004*

WHAT IS HONOUR?

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Groups definitions of honour:

- No single meaning
- Consists of a learnt complex set of rules that an Asian woman has to follow in order to protect the family 'name' and maintain family position
- Group 1: "It's like the weather, you can't question it, izzat is there, it's always been around ... izzat is special control"

Quotes

- "Izzat is the biggest issue in the Asian woman's life" - Groups 1,2,3
- "It has more impact on the woman's life than the man's. It affects how she dresses, behaves inside and outside the house, who she can talk to, marry, and have as friends" - Group 2
- "With every bad word a reputation can die" Group 1
- "Izzat puts more stress on any daughter and woman" Group 3
- 'Handing down' of attitudes through generations

Narratives From Interviews

2006 - 2007

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- Mere suspicion can lead to gossip & abuse
- A negotiation of freedom
- Resistance catalyst for regime of surveillance
- Concept of honour used in relation to family & wider community acceptance, linked to image
- Honour 'izzat' translated as the emotion shame
- Experience of guilt & feelings of shame due to having asserted personal freedom

FEEDBACK

- All women were asked the question:
 - If you had to choose between ‘izzat’ and your daughter – which would you choose?
 - Members of the two older generations said izzat every time
- “Izzat is almost like a veil...so it is impossible for people to talk about their feelings openly and honestly” Group 1
 - All consuming and powerful ‘fear’ of protecting family honour and izzat
- Izzat prevents women from seeking help

-Barriers To Getting Help –

- Disownment/Ostracised from community
- Not aware of services – key to minors
- Displacement/isolation/identity
- Lack of information and access to help
- Fear of being found – bounty hunters, reprisals
- From dependence to independence
 - Learning independent living
 - Establishing a new life for herself and children

Do Not

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- Do not underestimate that perpetrators of HBV really do kill their closest relatives and/or others for what might seem a trivial transgression
- Send the subject away, believing its not serious or a matter for your agency
- Approach the family or community leaders –
Collusion
- Share information without the consent of the individual
- Attempt mediation

CONSIDER

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- Domestic violence – partner, immediate and extended family – collusion
- Murder in name of Honour – view of death
- Forced marriage
- Suicide rates (higher than national average 16-24yrs), Depression
- Disownment/Displacement
- Witness Protection
- Victims can be perceived as morally corrupt
- Restricted Freedom/House Arrest?

Directions

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- Recognise your clients wishes
- Reassure about confidentiality
- See in a secure/private place not in family presence!
- Means of discreet contact
- Seek advice – e.g. Community Safety Unit, FMU, Karma Nirvana.
- Under 18 years, refer to Child Protection procedures - forced marriage is a child protection issue.
- Use of Ward of Court? Holding Passports?

Society We Live In?

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- “We must not allow political correctness to lead us to moral blindness”

(Mike O'Brien)

- “Cultural acceptance does not mean accepting the unacceptable”

(Sir Ian Blair)

KARMA NIRVANA

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- New Projects -

The Honour Network and Help line – funded by the FMU – ‘friends become family’

National Help-line launched 11th April

0800 5 999 247 9.30am -9pm

97 calls taken in first week

1458 calls in the first 5 months

A Resource for –

- *Victims male & female – potential, in crisis and surviving*
- *Those disowned & displaced*
- *Poster Campaign*

Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007

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- England and Wales
- Application to Magistrate's courts for protection orders to prevent forced marriages
- It considers deceptive conduct, such as aiding and abetting, by family members.
- It allows courts to take account of psychological pressure.
- Act enables guidelines to become statutory.

Training

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- Forced Marriage – The New Law
- Real Life Case Studies
- The Dos & Don'ts
- Real accounts of Survivors
- Moving from practices of Cultural Sensitivity
- Women with “No Recourse to Public Funds”
- Contact knevents@btconnect.com

THE ONE CHANCE RULE

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HONOUR VIOLENCE. IT'S A CRIME.
IT MUST NOT BE IGNORED.