

Barriers faced by the Nepali community affected by domestic abuse

1. Introduction

Gurkha units recruit from Nepal and are a long-established element of the Army. They are based within the UK and Brunei and can be located at sub-unit level. It should also be recognised that when faced with redundancy a significant number of Gurkhas transferred to other Regiments and Corps, resulting a redistribution of Nepalese soldiers throughout the Army. There is also a third category of ethnically Nepalese soldiers who are serving in the Army but hold British National (Overseas) status.

2. Cultural barriers: the importance of respect ('honour')

Anyone wishing to support a potential victim of domestic abuse from the Nepalese community must understand the importance that is placed upon respect. The need to protect and maintain the respect of the family permeates throughout the community and will be the primary factor that influences the behaviour of a victim of domestic abuse; the need to protect their respect within the community may outweigh their personal safety.

To support a Nepalese victim of domestic abuse the importance they place on protecting their respect must be recognised and understood if trust is to be developed. This will take a significant amount of time, but as trust is established further disclosure will take place. It is incredibly difficult to establish the trust that is needed if the support provider is not Nepalese, and it should also be recognised that victims are unlikely to respond to male support workers, regardless of nationality.

3. Other cultural barriers

Language and education. English is usually the second or third language within the Nepalese community. Women from the older generation are often poorly educated and are likely to be illiterate in both Nepalese and English, although it should be noted that this dynamic is changing as dependents who join their serving spouse are increasingly better educated. Illiteracy will impact on confidence, and it should also be understood that although individuals may be able to speak English, they may not be able to read.



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Significant restraint regarding the disclosure of personal circumstance.

Within the Nepalese community details which are deemed to be very personal, including sexual relationships, are not normally discussed openly. This means that a Nepalese victim of domestic abuse will be very unwilling to discuss their personal situation which makes crimes such as rape and child abuse very difficult to identify. It takes time and the creation of trust to overcome these barriers.

Historical perception that men are superior within the community.

Although this does not reflect current social attitudes within Nepal or the Brigade of Gurkhas, there is a historical perception that men are superior within the Nepalese community.

Total reluctance to consider divorce or separation. It is important to recognise and understand that very few Nepalese victims of domestic abuse will consider divorce or separation; those that will are likely to be younger, better educated or be able to access support from their wider family e.g. parents living in the UK or older children. The priority should be to ensure a victim's safety if they are to remain with the perpetrator, the primary solution being the use of court orders.

Addictive behaviour in the perpetrator. Nepalese men may demonstrate addictive behaviours, the most likely being alcohol and gambling. This could impact on their personal relationships and can be an additional factor in cases of domestic abuse.

4. Other sources of support and information:

- [Domestic Abuse: Guidance and Support for the Armed Forces Community](#)
- Email support through Citizens Advice:
fandc@citizensadvice.rushmoor.org.uk
- Nepali [booklet](#) covering domestic and sexual abuse (see North East Hampshire DA Forum, resources)
- Local support in Rushmoor and Aldershot Garrison:
 - [Nepalese help group](#)
 - [Gurkha Chautari](#)
 - [Naya Yuva](#)
 - [Greater Rushmoor Nepalese Community \(GRNC\)](#)
- [Asian Mahila Association \(AMA\)](#)



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