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## **Statewide Teach In - Immigrants' Rights**

### **Protecting Victims and Children**

#### **I VAWA (Violence Against Women Act)**

- A) created by Congress in 1994, subsequently reauthorized & expanded**
- B) to address domestic violence, sexual assault, & other crimes against women, but covers all victims of these crimes (men, women, children, LGBTQ, Native American women, college students, and immigrants)**
- C) provides services & remedies for victims**

#### **II What is the VAWA Self Petition?**

- A) An immigration remedy for victims of domestic violence who are married to a LPR or citizen (or within 2 years of marriage ending)**
- B) Who is eligible:
  - 1) Includes women, men, and same-sex marriages**
  - 2) Children or parents of abuser may also be eligible****
- C) Allows eligible immigrants a way to petition for lawful status (a green card) on their own and without relying on their spouse to do so**
- D) Allows work authorization**
- E) Confidential process**

**F) Victims must show:**

- 1) Good-Faith marriage (not exclusively for immigration benefits)**
- 2) Married to LPR or US Citizen**
- 3) Battery or Extreme Cruelty**
- 4) Residence with Abuser at some point**
- 5) Good Moral Character**

**III Why is it important?**

- A) Immigrant women may face a more difficult time escaping abuse due to their immigration status.**
- B) Immigrant women often feel trapped in abusive relationships because of immigration laws, language barriers, social isolation, and lack of financial resources.**
- C) It's another way that abusers can gain power and control over their victims – see Power and Control Wheel (refusing to file, threat of deportation, report to police, loss of custody)**

**IV How can you help?**

**A) Help them gather important documents (for them and children)**

- 1) Birth certificates**
- 2) Passport, IDs**
- 3) Copy of marriage license, invitation**
- 4) Photos of wedding, marriage, family**
- 5) Photos of abuse**
- 6) Text messages, emails**
- 7) Affidavits from friends, family, DV program**
- 8) Criminal records**

**B) Refer them to Resources**

- 1- An Immigration Attorney**
- 2- DV Program - Centre County Women's Resource Center**
- 3- Others – see Resource List**

**C) Be a safe person for them to talk to**

# Power and Control Wheel for Immigrant Women

