

Who/If/When  
To Marry

# It's A Choice

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You can get confidential help and advice.*

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# Who/ if/ when to marry: It's a Choice

A marriage is something that must be entered into with the full and free will of the people getting married. **Both** individuals should feel that the marriage is something that they have chosen for themselves: with full and free choice.

## **What is a forced marriage?**

It is a practice in which a marriage takes place without the free consent of the individuals getting married, where pressure or abuse is used to 'force' one or both people to marry against their will.

### **'Force' is a form of violence.**

This violence may take emotional, mental or physical forms where, an individual may be 'forced' by: using threats, beating them, isolating them, using restrictions on them, inducing guilt, and, many such forms of coercion.

In some cases, individuals may be taken abroad to be forced to marry.

A forced marriage can happen to anyone; of any gender, of any age.

A marriage that is forced is a form of violence and an abuse of human rights.

It is against the law in Canada to force someone to get married.

*If you or someone you know is being forced into a marriage, help and advice is available.*

# Are you being forced into a marriage?

**Do you know someone who may be being forced to get married? Have you been forced into a marriage?**

**Every situation is different.**

If this is happening to you, or someone you know—it is not your fault and you are not alone. You can get help.

**Is there help for people experiencing the threat or situation of a forced marriage?**

**Yes.** This brochure provides general information to guide you in understanding the issue and the resources that are available for your help. You may also access an extensive resource guide from the forcedmarriages.ca website.

A **Network of Agencies Against Forced Marriages** (NAAFAM) has been established, which includes a range of committed community partners, who are equipped to help you. They will work with you to identify strategies that promote your safety and your right to choose marriage freely.

Find out information on local and international resources available, including **free** and **confidential** support. Resources include health, housing, counselling, legal and financial help. **[www.forcedmarriages.ca](http://www.forcedmarriages.ca)**

For immediate **assistance** contact the 24 hour support lines at **1-888-579-2888** or **416-314-2447**, if you are calling from within Toronto.

If you are worried about your immediate safety and well-being, contact your local police at **911**.

# How do I know if someone is being forced into a marriage?

The following can be signs to look out for if you are concerned about someone you know:

- The person begins to miss appointments, school, work or social events.
- The person may seem more anxious, depressed or scared.
- The person no longer meets with you alone.
- The person has injuries that he/she cannot explain.
- The person's eating habits change.
- The person expresses that he/she wants to hurt themselves

# What if I suspect that I or someone I know may be forced into a marriage overseas?

If you or the person in concern have not yet traveled overseas and are worried for your safety, get in touch with an agency or a service provider that can help you!

You can contact the local police, a school guidance counselor, a social service agency, or a community legal clinic. Check the resource list for some agency numbers that you can call for guidance.

## **If travel becomes unavoidable, provide a trusted person with:**

- Address and telephone number of where you are going to stay
- Your passport details
- All your flight details (there and back)

## **You should also:**

- Register with the government prior to traveling by filling out the 'Registration for Canadians Abroad' form (<http://www.travel.gc.ca>).
- Keep some emergency cash with you
- Carry the contact information of the nearest Canadian embassy or consulate.

If you are overseas and require assistance, you can contact a Canadian embassy or consulate abroad, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) **[www.travel.gc.ca](http://www.travel.gc.ca)**.

For a list of embassies, view **[www.voyage.gc.ca/contact/offices-list\\_liste-bureaux-eng.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/contact/offices-list_liste-bureaux-eng.asp)**.

While abroad you can email for help at **[sos@international.gc.ca](mailto:sos@international.gc.ca)** or call the Emergency Operations Centre if in North America at **1-800-267-6788** or call collect from anywhere in the world at **1-613-996-8885**.





# What are some resources I can access?

**www.forcedmarriages.ca** is set up to be a primary source of information on seeking help around the issue of forced marriages. It has an updated list of 'Network of Agencies Against Forced Marriages,' community partners that have experience and knowledge to help you.

## 24-hour Emergency Contacts

**Emergency**  
911

**Community Connection**  
211  
[www.211toronto.ca](http://www.211toronto.ca)

**Ontario Victims Support Referral Line**  
1-888-579-2888  
416-314-2447 (Toronto)

**Distress Centres of Toronto/  
Distress Centres of Ontario**  
[www.torontodistresscentre.com](http://www.torontodistresscentre.com)  
[www.dcontario.org](http://www.dcontario.org)  
416-408-HELP (4357) (Toronto)  
416-408-0007 (TTY)

**Assaulted Women's Helpline**  
[www.awhl.org](http://www.awhl.org)  
1-866-863-0511  
416-863-0511 (GTA)  
1-866-863-7868 (TTY)  
#SAFE (#7233) (cell)

**Femaide (Francophone phone line)**  
1-877-336-2433  
1-866-860-7082 (TTY)

**Kids Help Phone**  
[www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)  
1-800-668-6868

## Children's Aid Society of Toronto

[www.torontocas.ca](http://www.torontocas.ca)  
416-924-4646

## Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies

[www.oacas.org](http://www.oacas.org)  
416-924 4646

## Telehealth Ontario

1-866-797-0000  
1-866-797-0007 (TTY)

## Community Resources

### Assessment and Referral Centre

(Shelter, Toronto)  
[www.shelternet.ca](http://www.shelternet.ca)  
416-338-4766  
1-877-338-3398

### Legal Aid Ontario

[www.legalaid.on.ca](http://www.legalaid.on.ca)  
1-800-668-8258  
1-866-641-8867 (TTY)

### Justice for Children and Youth (Toronto)

[www.jfcy.org](http://www.jfcy.org)  
1-866-999-JFCY (5329)

## South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)

[www.salco.on.ca](http://www.salco.on.ca)  
416-487-6371

## Family Service Association of Toronto/Family Service Ontario

[www.fsatoronto.com](http://www.fsatoronto.com)  
[www.familyserviceontario.com](http://www.familyserviceontario.com)  
416-595-9230

## Barbra Schlifer Clinic (Toronto)

[www.schliferclinic.com](http://www.schliferclinic.com)  
416-323-9149  
416-323-1361 (TTY)

## LGBT Youth Line

[askus@youthline.ca](mailto:askus@youthline.ca)  
1-800-268- YOUTH (9688)

## When Abroad

### Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)

[www.travel.gc.ca](http://www.travel.gc.ca)  
1-800-267-6788 (North America)  
1-613-996-8885 (Call Collect anywhere from the world)  
[sos@international.gc.ca](mailto:sos@international.gc.ca)

# About Us

This information resource is part of the Forced Marriage Project, an initiative of South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO). The Forced Marriage Project, funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), denounces the threat and practice of forced, non-consensual marriage and is aimed at beginning a dialogue around the issue of forced/ non-consensual marriages in order to:

- Prevent Coercion
- Promote Safety, and
- Build Community Accountability

For more information on SALCO, please visit [www.salc.on.ca](http://www.salc.on.ca).

For updates on the project, and for resources around forced marriages: [www.forcedmarriages.ca](http://www.forcedmarriages.ca).

