

THE HORROR AND FEAR OF HONOUR KILLING

Introduction

Focus

The sensational Shafia murder trial involving the deaths of four females at the hands of their own family members has brought the controversial topic of honour killings into the spotlight. This *News in Review* story explores what honour killings are, gives details of the Shafia murder trial, and looks at how different cultural groups have responded to the issues of gender-based and domestic violence.

Note to Teachers: Honour killings can be a very emotional and culturally sensitive issue. A safe environment should be provided for students to consider this topic, and students should not be required to share their answers publicly. However, they should be encouraged to express them confidentially should they choose to do so. It is also recommended that students be advised of the sensitive nature of this topic prior to watching the video and completing the related resource guide activities. Due to its disturbing content, this *News in Review* story may not be appropriate for younger viewers.

On June 30, 2009, a submerged Nissan Sentra with four female victims inside was found at the Kingston Mills lock situated where the Rideau Canal meets Lake Ontario near the city of Kingston. What was initially thought to be a horrible joyriding accident by police was soon viewed as suspicious.

The four victims in the vehicle were identified as the Shafia sisters—Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti, aged 19, 17, and 13 years respectively—as well as their father’s first wife, Rona Amir Mohammad, known to the girls as Aunt Rona. By July 2009, police had charged the girls’ father, Mohammad Shafia, their mother, Tooba Mohammad Yahya, and their 21-year-old brother, Hamed Mohammad Shafia, with first-degree murder.

According to the Crown, the accused staged an accident to reclaim their family honour, which had been disgraced by their daughters’ lifestyle choices. As well, Rona had requested a divorce from Mohammad Shafia,

which would have exposed their illegal polygamous relationship and threatened their status in Canada. All three defendants pleaded not guilty to the murder charges. Three years later, the now internationally known Shafia trial ended with each defendant being convicted of four counts of first-degree murder.

The Shafia case has generated widespread discussion on the controversial topic of so-called honour killings.

Muslim community leaders have publically stated that honour killings are wrong. Others have argued that gender- and family-based violence is not exclusive to any one culture or religion as it crosses all sectors of Canadian society.

The jury’s verdict in the Shafia trail has sent a strong message condemning honour killings in Canada. But in reality, the case is far from closed on the broader question of the treatment of women in Canadian society.

To Consider

1. Why did the Shafia trial and its verdict attract so much media and public attention in Canada and around the world?
2. Do you think the verdict in the Shafia case will help deter others who might be considering committing an honour killing of a family member?

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Video Review

Pre-viewing Questions

With a partner or in a small group discuss and respond to the questions below.

1. Brainstorm what you think the term *honour killing* means.

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2. Have you heard the term *honour killing* used before? If so, in what context?

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3. How closely did you follow media coverage of the Shafia trial? What were your reactions to it?

Viewing Questions

As you watch the video, respond to the questions in the spaces provided.

1. What individuals are accused of murdering four female family members?

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2. According to police, why did this murder take place?

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3. How many known cases of honour killing have occurred in Canada over the past decade?

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4. Why is Canada no longer immune to the incidents of honour-based violence?

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5. List the characteristics of honour killings.

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6. How does the culture clash negatively influence the relationship between males and females?
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7. In the wake of the Shafia trial, why is the Muslim community on the defensive?

8. What suggestions are given to help counter honour-based violence?

9. Why does Aisha continue to be on the run?

10. As a teenager living in Canadian society, how do you respond to Aisha's story and the broader issue of honour killings?

Post-viewing Questions

Join with your partner or small group again to respond to the following questions.

1. Now that you have watched the video, revisit your responses to the Pre-viewing Questions. Add any information you learned from the video, or otherwise update your answers.

2. Should honour killings be considered a type of murder specific to certain cultural communities or should they be classified as domestic violence? Justify your stance.

3. Who should take responsibility for the prevention of honour-based violence: the ethnic communities it has been linked to or all of Canadian society? Discuss.

4. Is it possible to eradicate, or remove, the problem of honour killings? If not, what actions should be taken to at least address this problem?

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What is honour killing?

Pre-reading Activity

Record any words, ideas, or events that come to mind regarding the term *honour killing*. Write continuously for one to two minutes. Expand your answer using information from the following section.

There is no straightforward definition of *honour killing*. Some people view it as another form of domestic violence, while others believe it is a distinct cultural phenomenon. Unni Wikan, a professor at the University of Oslo, Norway, defines honour killing as “a murder carried out as a commission from the extended family, to restore honor after the family has been dishonored . . . when a female family member has behaved in an immoral way” (*Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2009). For example, the female—usually a teenaged daughter or young woman—may be perceived to have disgraced the family through her personal appearance, sexual behaviours, and demands for greater independence. She may also have been subjected over time to threats, verbal and physical abuse, and confinement by fathers or older brothers. This pattern of abuse is often ignored by the mother.

Phyllis Chesler further states that honour killings differ from domestic abuse because they are carefully planned in advance and often directly or indirectly involve multiple family members (CBC News online, December 2, 2012). However, the use of the term *honour killing* is criticized for singling out certain immigrant groups, particularly from Middle Eastern and Islamic communities, rather than focusing on the prevalence of domestic and gender-based violence throughout Canadian society.

A Widespread Phenomenon

The practice of honour killings is thought to be tribally based and pre-date the

religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. But despite this, some groups have used their religions and cultural traditions to justify honour killings (*The Guardian* online, May 11, 2008, www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/may/11/iraq-humanrights1#history-link-box). Most often associated with Muslim cultures, honour killings can also happen among Christians, Hindus, and Sikhs worldwide and tend to occur primarily in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, and the Middle East (CBC News online, December 2, 2011, www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2011/12/02/f-honour-killings.html).

According to the *European Journal of Public Health*, one in every five homicides in Pakistan is classified as an honour killing despite laws that punish a convicted offender with the death penalty (*The Globe and Mail*, June 17, 2010). Human Rights Watch estimates that over 900 honour killings occur each year, mainly in India’s northern states and the nation’s capital, New Delhi. There is concern that this number will rise as India’s economic shift witnesses more women becoming educated, going out to work, and asserting greater independence against traditional societal and cultural norms that expect them to remain at home, under the control of their fathers or husbands (*Toronto Star*, August 2, 2010).

Courts in Turkey have been criticized for handing down lower sentences to those accused of honour or “customary” killings of approximately 200 female victims annually (*Toronto Star*, June 30, 2010). A 2009 report by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of

Women indicated that approximately 12 honour killings take place in the United Kingdom every year, the majority in South Asian communities. However, in all of these cases, the recorded numbers are likely to be only a fraction of the true number of so-called honour killings since many go unreported.

Honour Killings in Canada

Between 2002 and 2010 it is estimated that 15 women in Canada have been killed in the name of family honour (*Toronto Star*, July 15, 2010). Most recently, Mohammed Shafia, his wife Tooba, and son Hamed were convicted of the 2009 murders of three teenaged daughters and Mohammad's first wife in order to "cleanse the family name and restore the family honour" (CBC News online December 2, 2011). Other murders include:

- In 2000, Jaswinder "Jassi" Kaur Sidhu was kidnapped and murdered in India. Her husband, whom she married against her family's wishes, was severely beaten. Her mother and uncle are alleged to have organized and hired the killers. They have been arrested in British Columbia and await an extradition hearing as of early 2012.
- Amandeep Atwal, 17 years of age, was killed by her father in 2003. He was

convicted of her murder. Apparently he "disapproved of her relationship with her boyfriend, who was from a different ethnic group" (CBC News online December 2, 2011).

- Khatera Sadiqi and her fiancé were shot to death in 2006 by her brother, who was later found guilty. He told the court that their father did not approve of the fiancé and he killed his sister to restore the Afghan family's honour (*The Globe and Mail*, June 22, 2010).
- Sixteen-year-old Aqsa Parvez was strangled to death in 2007 by her father for rejecting Muslim traditions. Her father and brother were sentenced to life imprisonment (*The Globe and Mail*, June 16, 2010).
- Amandeep Dillon was stabbed to death in 2009 by her father-in-law, who thought she was having an extra-marital affair. He was convicted of second-degree murder (*Toronto Star*, June 11, 2010).

While immigration results in a more culturally diverse society, concerns of culture clash increase when traditional family norms come into conflict with Western values. As these tragic stories continue to make news headlines, the question for Canadians is how to address this controversial topic of honour killings.

Follow-up

1. Examine your list of words and ideas from the Pre-reading Activity and select the top three that you think best describe the term *honour killing*. Why do you think the term *honour killing* lacks a clear and concise definition? What makes this term so controversial?
2. Would you agree or disagree that honour killings should be identified as a distinct type of domestic violence? Explain.
3. Do you think concerns around increased family conflicts driven by a culture clash are valid or just heightened in the wake of the Shafia murder case?
4. Do you think it is unfair to single out Muslims in Canada as group within which most honour killings occur?

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The Shafia Case

Reading Prompt

Copy the following KWL (Know . . . Want to Know . . . Learned . . .) chart into your notes. Before reading this section, complete as much information in the first two columns as possible. While reading this section, you may record relevant information in the third column.

KNOW What do I already know about the Shafia case in terms of: a) its legal proceedings and b) link to the term <i>honour killings</i> ?	WANT TO KNOW What questions do I have about the Shafia case in terms of a) its legal proceedings and b) link to the term <i>honour killings</i> ?	LEARNED What I have learned about the Shafia case in terms of: a) its legal proceedings and b) link to the term <i>honour killings</i> ?

Definitions

Section 231 of the Criminal Code classifies murder in two categories: first- and second-degree. Both have mandatory minimum sentences of life imprisonment, but second-degree offenders can usually apply for parole after 10 years in prison, while first-degree offenders may apply after 25 years.

First-degree murder is qualified by any one of the following: the killing is planned and deliberate; the killing is contracted to another to commit murder; the victim is a police officer; the murder is caused while committing or planning to commit another serious offence. Second-degree is any murder not classified as first-degree and does not require the same proof of planning.

Kingston, Ontario, a historic city situated along the eastern shores of Lake Ontario, attracted much media attention in June 2009 when a vehicle containing the bodies of four female victims—Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti Shafia and Rona Amir Mohammad—was discovered submerged in the shallow waters of the nearby Kingston Mills lock. One month later, Mohammad Shafia,

Tooba Mohammad Yahya, and Hamed Mohammad Shafia were each criminally charged with four counts of first-degree murder in the deaths of these women. The city was back in the media spotlight again when the Shafia trial commenced on October 20, 2011, in the Frontenac County Courthouse and concluded three months later with the jury’s decision, handed down on January 28, 2012.

What happens in a criminal trial?

In the Criminal Court structure in Canada, there are the Federal Court and the provincial courts. Provinces cannot enact criminal law, but Canada’s Parliament, under the Constitution Act, 1867 grants jurisdiction for sections of the Criminal Code to be tried or heard. Since the accused in the Shafia trial were charged with the serious offence of murder, the case had to be tried by a judge and jury in Ontario’s Superior Court. Justice Robert Maranger presided over the trial. The seven female and five male jurors were selected from a pool of over 1 000 local citizens by the Crown attorney (or prosecutor) and defence counsel (lawyers for the accused, or defendants).

Once the jury is selected, the Crown begins with its opening statement and then calls witnesses who can be cross-examined by the defence. The defence then has its turn and follows the same procedure. The Shafia trial called an estimated 58 witnesses, of which 21 were police officers. The court was also presented with a wide variety of evidence, including photographs, videos, wiretap recordings, statements, and even an on-site visit to the Kingston Mills lock (*Montreal Gazette*, January 23, 2012, www.montrealgazette.com/story_print.html?id=6035174&sponsor=).

The Crown's Position

The Crown prosecutors, Gerard Laarhuis and Laurie Lacelle, alleged that Mohammad Shafia, Tooba Yahya, and Hamed Shafia planned and murdered Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti Shafia and Mohammad Shafia's first wife, Rona Amir Mohammad. According to the Crown, the accused staged an accident by placing the bodies of the four females in the Nissan Sentra and pushing the car into the Kingston Mills lock.

The Crown argued that the murders were honour killings committed in a bid to restore the family's status and good name. They claimed that the family's traditional values were stained by their daughters' independent and rebellious actions such as wearing revealing Western clothing and keeping secret boyfriends (*The Globe and Mail*, November 29, 2011). In addition, Shafia's first wife, Rona (they were married in Afghanistan but told Canadian immigration officers that she was a cousin), had requested a divorce, thus threatening to reveal the family's illegal martial arrangement and jeopardizing its claim for permanent residency. Other pieces of evidence the prosecution submitted included:

- Testimony from school officials and social workers from Quebec's Youth

Protection Agency who recalled conversations with Sahar and Geeti about their "unbearable" home life where they were subjected to verbal and physical abuse from Hamed, pressured to wear a *hijab* and quit school, and ignored by their mother. Sahar expressed suicidal thoughts, and Geeti wanted to be moved to a foster home. No formal intervention took place, as the girls retracted their statements when their parents were present at the meetings with case workers (*The Globe and Mail*, November 24, 2011).

- Police wiretaps secretly placed in the Shafia family car recorded an angered Mohammad Shafia making degrading comments about his daughters—just days after their deaths—regarding their having boyfriends, how their actions brought him hardship and shame, and that "nothing is more dear to me than my honour" (CBC News online, January 25, 2012, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2012/01/25/f-shafia-trial-overview.html).
- Tooba Yahya's statement on police wiretaps claimed that all three defendants were at the lock on the night of June 30. In a subsequent police interview she denied having been at the locks (*The Globe and Mail*, January 27, 2012).
- Headlight fragments from the family's Lexus SUV were found at the crime scene. The Crown proposed that the headlight broke when the SUV driven by Hamed was used to push the Nissan Sentra into the lock.
- Google searches were made by Hamed prior to the deaths about "where to commit murder" along with maps showing regional waterways and the Gatineau waterway (CBC News online, January 25, 2012, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2012/01/25/f-shafia-trial-overview.html).

- An experienced police diver testified that it was unusual that the victims did not try to get out of the vehicle, as the vehicle was submerged in only three to five metres of water, the driver window was rolled down, and the victims were not in seatbelts. It raised the question of whether the victims were unconscious when they were placed in the vehicle (*Toronto Star*, October 25, 2011).
- In response to the police wiretaps, friends and business associates of Mohammad Shafia vouched for his strong character, testifying that he was a “good and honest person” (*Toronto Star*, December 15, 2011). Expert witnesses also testified that people who speak Dari (Afghanistan’s second official language), like Shafia, often “curse about, and not directly to, people, but that they are just expressions that they don’t mean literally” (CBC news online, January 25, 2012).

The Defence’s Position

The defence counsel, led by lawyers Peter Kemp (representing Mohammad Shafia), David Crowe (representing Tooba Yahya) and Patrick McCann (representing Hamed Shafia), maintained that the deaths of the four women were a result of a tragic accident. They claimed that Zainab, who didn’t have a driver’s licence, went out for a late-night drive while the family stayed overnight in a Kingston motel on their return to their home in Montreal after a vacation in Niagara Falls. The defence argued that it remained unclear how and when the victims died and how the accused placed them in the car and then had enough time to return to their motel.

Additional defence rebuttals included:

- The broken headlight on the Lexus SUV was caused when Hamed followed his joyriding sister to the canal and accidentally rear-ended the Nissan Sentra before she drove it into the water. He claimed to have tried to save his sisters but did not report the incident to his parents or the police for fear of reprisals (*National Post* online, January 27, 2012).
- Yahya testified that she was not at the canal on June 30. She claimed she previously lied to police investigators about being at the scene because she “wanted the police to leave her alone” and to protect her son Hamed from police “torture” (CBC News online, January 25, 2012).
- To counter the Crown’s honour killing motive, Shafia testified that “my honour is important to me. But to kill someone, you can’t regain your reputation and honour.” Later, Yahya testified that they were a “liberal family who had emigrated from Afghanistan because “women were in constant danger from the Taliban” (CBC News online, January 25, 2012).
- Kemp further addressed the Crown’s honour-killing motive by stating: “Honour killings are not permitted in Islam. If you comb through the Qur’an, you would not find a single passage that advocates honour killing. But there are plenty of prohibitions against murder” (CBC News online January 27, 2012, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/story/2012/01/27/shafia-trial.html?cmp=rss&utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter).

The Judge and Jury

Once the defence and the Crown delivered their closing arguments, and before the jury withdrew to deliberate or review the evidence and arrive at a verdict, the judge delivered his charge to the jury. Justice Maranger’s 200-page charge instructed the jurors in the Shafia trial on how the law applies to the case, how to consider the evidence, and how to return a verdict of either guilty or not guilty.

He also advised the jurors that:

- They could deliver a verdict of first or second-degree murder against some or all of the accused.
- They must be “satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that the accused killed the four victims and that the killings were planned and deliberate.”
- The accused do not have to prove their account of events; the burden of proof is the responsibility of the Crown.
- They must all agree unanimously on the defendants’ guilt or innocence before giving their verdict (CBC News online, January 27, 2012, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/story/2012/01/27/shafia-trial.html?cmp=rss&utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter).

After 15 hours of jury deliberations,

the jury handed down the verdict of guilty of four counts of first-degree murder to each of the accused. In their final address to the court, the defendants still claimed their innocence. They were each sentenced to life imprisonment with no chance of parole for 25 years.

Maranger’s closing remarks were directed at the newly convicted defendants. “You have each been convicted of the planned and deliberate murder of four members of your family” and the verdict “was clearly supported by the evidence presented at this trial” (*The Globe and Mail*, January 30, 2012).

Defence lawyers plan to launch an appeal, but on what grounds still remained unclear.

Follow-up

1. Do you agree or disagree with the jury’s guilty verdict in the Shafia trial? Was the case sufficiently proven “beyond a reasonable doubt” that the defendants were guilty of first-degree murder? Use evidence from the Crown’s and defence’s positions to support your answer.
2. Working with a partner or in a group of four, divide into two sides: for and against. Prepare and debate the following statement: “Canada’s Criminal Code should include honour killings as a separate criminal offence.” After both sides have been defended, switch sides and begin a second debate.
3. For each of the following statements from the Shafia trial, record a one- to two-line response. You may wish to quietly write a comment that expands on the responses made by your classmates.

Statement 1: “We are not murderers. We were a very sincere and collected family. This crime, we will never do such a crime. I am a mother.” — Tooba Mohammad Yahya’s testimony (*Maclean’s*, January 14, 2012)

Statement 2: “He (Mohammad Shafia) killed his daughters and felt entitled to do so.” — Crown prosecutor Laurie Lacelle (*The Globe and Mail*, January 27, 2012)

Statement 3: “My client, Hamed, is guilty of being stupid and is morally blameworthy because he had followed the girls in the car, accidentally hit it, and witnessed it going in the canal but did not call for help and denied being there.” — Defence lawyer Patrick McCann (*National Post*, January 26, 2012)

Statement 4: “This verdict sends a very clear message about our Canadian values and core principles in a free, democratic society that all Canadians enjoy and even visitors to Canada enjoy.” — Crown prosecutor Gerard Laarhuis (*The Globe and Mail*, January 30, 2012)

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The Community Reacts

Did you know . . .

According to Statistics Canada's 2006 census, there were over 200 ethnic groups and over five million people who identified themselves as visible minorities.

Did you know . . .

In 2007, Citizenship and Immigration Canada recorded that almost one-half of immigrants to Canada came from Asia.

Focus for Reading

Being aware of domestic violence and so-called honour killings is a start, but taking action to support women and families at risk is another matter. As you read this section, identify two challenges facing our communities and two related solutions.

The high-profile Shafia case has not only garnered much local, national, and international attention, but has also brought into focus the cultural and religious traditions of certain ethnic groups in Canada, in particular Muslims. This and other groups within Canadian society have responded to the questions of whether this crime should be viewed as domestic violence or honour killings and how to help community members who are at risk of family-related violence.

The Muslim Community

At the height of the Shafia trial, prominent Muslim organizations, community activists, and imams (clerical leaders) from across Canada joined together to communicate the community's position on so-called honour killings. They stated that "honour killings are wrong; Islam does not condone them and the Qur'an does not sanction the idea of honour killing. Domestic violence and in the extreme, practices such as killing to restore family honour, violate clear and non-negotiable Islamic principles" (*Toronto Star*, December 2, 2011).

For most Muslims in Canada, the topic of honour killings raises concern. Many do not want their culture to be identified and tarnished by the actions of a few and do not want to convey the perception that honour killings are out of control within their community (*Toronto Star*, June 11, 2010). University of Toronto professor Shahrzad Mojan, an expert in honour killings, cautions that when we

talk about honour killings, it is important to ensure that ethnicity, whether Muslim or otherwise, does not become an "easy excuse not to deal with this problem" (*Toronto Star*, May 1, 2010).

Others have responded that honour killings should be viewed as an issue of gender-based, domestic violence and addressed as a Canadian problem—not solely as an Islamic one. Alia Hogben, executive director for the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, echoes the frustration some have that the emphasis of the Shafia trial has been on honour killings, which she believes has detracted from the fact that four women were murdered (*Montreal Gazette* online, January 30, 2012).

What can communities do?

Now that the three-month trial has ended in a guilty verdict, community leaders are looking to move forward from this tragedy and continue to speak out and provide support for those who are at risk or have been affected by domestic violence. Sikander Hashmi, an imam from Kington, Ontario, said that "the jurors and the court have done their job (in the Shafia trial). Our job as community leaders and members of society is that we have to be very clear about our position on domestic violence and such crimes. We need to speak very strongly, and we need to take concrete action" (CBC News online, January 30, 2012).

However, the Muslim community faces many challenges as it confronts

domestic violence within its ranks. Often the women who are subjected to abuse are reluctant to betray their families and traditions in order to seek help. They may also be without support networks such as their own family and friends. Women without children lack advocacy from schools or children's aid societies (*The Globe and Mail*, January 30, 2012).

It is also difficult to change the mindsets and behaviours of those who treat women as inferior. Scarborough, Ontario, imam Yusuf Badat acknowledges these challenges by stating that "there is no honour in any form of violence or any form of killing . . . our job as imams and leaders is to educate and give the proper perspective to our communities" (CBC News online, December 12, 2011).

Despite these challenges, the Muslim community, along with government and legal officials, continues to address the issue of domestic violence through a wide range of initiatives:

- The Family Honour Project, which is partnered with the CeaseFire violence prevention program in Chicago and the University of Western Ontario, aims to use mediation to identify and support Muslim families dealing with inter-generational and gender-based conflicts (*The Globe and Mail*, June 22, 2010).
- The Muslim Family Safety Project in London, Ontario, often has a local Muslim group accompany Children's Aid Society workers into the homes of Muslim families to help them develop harm-reduction strategies (*The Globe and Mail*, January 30, 2012).
- Social Services Network, a not-for-profit organization working with the South Asian community in the Greater Toronto Area, held a conference to raise attention on the issues of family violence and how to encourage victims to seek help (*The Globe and Mail*, June 22, 2010).
- Britain and Sweden's scenario-based methods are used to train police, schools, and social workers on family violence in male-dominated households (*The Globe and Mail*, January 30, 2012).
- Islamic Institute of Toronto's first-ever White Ribbon Campaign encourages men and boys to pledge "never to commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women and girls" (*The Globe and Mail* online, January 30, 2012, www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/opinion/shafia-trial-a-wake-up-call-for-canadian-muslims/article2319148/).
- The Punjabi Community Health Services in Brampton, Ontario, uses clinical skills to understand the cause of conflict and level of threat in the home when counselling families (*The Globe and Mail*, January 30, 2012).
- The federal government is not planning to change the Criminal Code to specifically punish honour killings.
- The Frontier Centre report made 14 recommendations to the federal government after examining the abuse of women and girls in immigrant communities across Canada. The government has also been requested by community workers and groups to address issues of gender inequality and family violence within ethnic communities (CBC News online, December 12, 2011).

Once the spotlight dims on the Shafia trial and its aftermath, the challenge of finding ways to sustain awareness and action against domestic and gender-based violence will remain. This is likely to continue to be a serious issue within Canadian society.

Follow-up

1. On a straight-line continuum write “honour killings” at one end and “domestic violence” at the other. Record along this line where you think the Muslim community would place their perception of the Shafia case. Next, record where *you* think the Shafia case fits along this line. Explain the position of both perspectives—are they similar or different? Why or why not?
2. Rank the list of domestic violence initiatives provided by the Muslim community from “most crucial” to “least crucial.” Defend why your top two selections are the most crucial initiatives to assist the Muslim community.
3. Do you think the prevention of honour killings is the responsibility of specific ethnic or religious groups or the responsibility of all members of Canadian society? Explain.

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Activity: Raising Awareness and Taking Action

It is estimated that between 2002 and 2010, 15 females in Canada were killed in the name of “family honour”(*Toronto Star*, July 15, 2010).

Will cases like the Shafia trial be enough of a wake-up call to provide the necessary intervention and support to families at risk of inter-generational conflict when traditional norms clash with Western values? How can we continue to raise awareness and to act against domestic and gender-based violence in communities across Canada?

Your task is to prepare an awareness campaign focusing on the controversial issue of honour killings. You may choose to complete this task independently or with a small group. When conducting your research, visit www.cbc.ca/news for additional information on this issue.

Your awareness campaign needs to:

- Target a specific audience (e.g., teenage males and females, various religious and/or cultural groups)
- Include eye-catching images, titles, and slogans
- Outline the main concerns and information about honour killings
- Convince the audience why it is important and what actions can be taken against honour killings

Present your awareness campaign in one of the following formats—hard copy or digital—poster, brochure, image collage, video, song or rap, class skit, webpage, or open letter.

Go on a gallery walk to view your classmates’ awareness campaigns.

When finished, write a one-page personal reflection based on the following debriefing questions:

1. As a Canadian, the issue of honour killings made me feel . . .
2. As a male/female, the issue of honour killings made me feel . . .
3. As a member of my community, I pledge to . . .