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It’s common for an abuser to prevent a victim from learning English or communicating with family or forming any social network, said Dang.

A 25-year-old Chinese woman, who fled her home in Quincy in 2014, said her husband cut off all her contacts with friends and family before the assaults happened.

“He didn’t let me talk to my sisters. He deleted emails and friends’ contacts that I had,” the woman told the Ledger last month as she spoke Mandarin through an interpreter at the Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence (ATASK) in Boston. “Later he smashed my computer.”

The Patriot Ledger is not identifying the woman because she still fears for her safety.

The woman came to the U.S. on a student visa but her husband threatened her that she would be deported if she went to the police or testified against him in a criminal trial after he beat her.

Uncertain or undocumented immigration status is another huge barrier to seeking help, Dang and other advocates said.

“I’m seeing it a lot that their immigration status is ultimately what keeps them in this abusive and violent relationships,” said Dieja Varela, the coordinator for domestic violence advocacy at Family and Community Resources in Brockton.

Victims who are undocumented immigrants fear deportation and losing their children if they report abuse to authorities.

“And most immigrants have mixed (immigration) status within the same household,” said Dang. “They could have (legal) status but they might have someone living there who’s not.”

Cultural barriers put immigrants at risk, too. They are ashamed to disclose the abusive behavior of a family member. And based on their experiences in their home countries, many immigrants don’t trust police.

Anti-immigrant rhetoric in the political landscape only adds to the mistrust of authorities, said Dang.

Brazilian victims of domestic violence are unlikely to feel safe turning to police because so many police in Brazil are corrupt and ineffective, said Dulce Ferreira, the director of domestic violence service at the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers in Dorchester.

Not all immigrants live in communities directly served by a social service agency that speaks their language. The Portuguese alliance has six offices from Lowell down to Somerville and Dorchester but nothing south of Boston. DOVE in Quincy no longer has an advocate who speaks Chinese dialects.

More resources and funding could solve that problem, and Chandler wants DOVE to have the language and cultural capacity to serve Quincy’s sizeable Asian population.

But a critical tool to break down so many barriers is building trust and educating immigrant victims about their rights, said police in Brockton and Quincy and victims’ advocates south of Boston.

Quincy police Det. Lt. Pat Glynn heads up the department’s domestic violence unit and said his focus is on victims’ safety, not their immigration status.

Under federal law, undocumented immigrants who are victims of violent crimes can apply for lawful immigration status through a U-visa.

“We work with the DA’s office to get them a U-visa. We pull every string we can,” said Glynn, whose department fields between 1,000 and 1,200 domestic violence calls a year.

About 15 percent of those calls come from immigrant victims, he estimated. About 30 percent of Quincy’s residents are foreign-born, according to 2014 U.S. Census data.

DOVE and other domestic violence prevention organizations hire advocates to work inside local police departments and advise victims of their rights, choices and possible plans to cut ties with a violent partner and flee to a safe location.

Employed by DOVE, Katheline Leconte is fluent in Haitian Creole and works inside police departments in Randolph, Milton and Holbrook.

To reach the large Haitian communities in Randolph and Milton, Leconte leaves the police stations and goes
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About 15 percent of those calls come from immigrant victims, he estimated. About 30 percent of Quincy’s residents are foreign-born, according to 2014 U.S. Census data.

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“He didn’t let me talk to my sisters. He deleted emails and friends’ contacts that I had,” the woman told the Ledger last month as she spoke Mandarin through an interpreter at the Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence (ATASK) in Boston. “Later he smashed my computer.”

The Patriot Ledger is not identifying the woman because she still fears for her safety.

The woman came to the U.S. on a student visa but her husband threatened her that she would be deported if she went to the police or testified against him in a criminal trial after he beat her.

Uncertain or undocumented immigration status is another huge barrier to seeking help, Dang and other advocates said.

“I’m seeing it a lot that their immigration status is ultimately what keeps them in this abusive and violent relationships,” said Dieja Varela, the coordinator for domestic violence advocacy at Family and Community Resources in Brockton.

Victims who are undocumented immigrants fear deportation and losing their children if they report abuse to authorities.

“And most immigrants have mixed (immigration) status within the same household,” said Dang. “They could have (legal) status but they might have someone living there who’s not.”

Cultural barriers put immigrants at risk, too. They are ashamed to disclose the abusive behavior of a family member. And based on their experiences in their home countries, many immigrants don’t trust police.

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RESOURCES FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Offering a range of free services that include counseling, stabilization and legal assistance, these agencies serve Boston and communities to the south and are equipped to handle certain foreign languages:

ATASK, Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, Boston, 617-338-2355: Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin, Toishanese, Shanghainese), Vietnamese, Nepali, Khmer, Hindi, Laotian, Urdu, Manipuri, Punjabi/Bengali, Thai, Tagalog

DOVE, Domestic Violence Ended, Quincy, 617-471-1234: Haitian Creole

Family and Community Resources, Brockton, 508-583-6498: Cape Verdean Creole, Portuguese, Spanish

Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers, Boston and Somerville, 617-864-7600: Portuguese and Cape Verdean

South Shore Women’s Resource Center, Plymouth, 508-746-2664: Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean and Spanish

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