

BULLETIN

Winnipeg and Surrounding Area Family Violence and Family Law Community of Practice

About the Communities of Practice

A community of practice (CoP) is a “self-organized [...] network of peers with diverse skills and experience in an area of practice or profession held together by the members’ desire to help others by sharing information and the need to advance their own knowledge by learning from others” (Chigwada et al., 2019).

The CoP initiative brings together family violence experts, survivors, family lawyers, researchers, mental health and social service professionals across Canada to improve communication, collaboration and relationship-building among experts from the family violence and family law (FVFL) sectors. The CoP aims to develop and disseminate evidence-based guidance and resources, provide learning opportunities to build the capacity of practitioners, support sustained mobilization of knowledge, and coordination of services to enhance the safety and well-being of all parties in a trauma-informed and empowering manner.

Activities include regular webinars and research briefs, e-bulletins on relevant court decisions and emerging research related to FVFL issues, and regular regional and national meetings to discuss local, national, and global practices. The initiative is funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

There are five CoPs across Canada including:

Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children, Western University
Website: www.learningtoendabuse.ca | Project Leads: Dr. Peter Jaffe and Dr. Katreena Scott

FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children, Simon Fraser University
Website: www.fredacentre.com | Project Lead: Dr. Margaret Jackson

Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research, University of New Brunswick
Website: www.unb.ca/mmfc | Project Leads: Dr. Karla O’Regan and Dr. Catherine Holtmann

Recherches Appliquées et Interdisciplinaires sur les Violences Intimes, Familiales et Structurelles, Université Laval
Website: www.raiv.ulaval.ca | Project Leads : Dr. Dominique Bernier and Dr. Geneviève Lessard

Research and Education for Solutions to Violence and Abuse (RESOLVE), University of Manitoba
Website: www.umanitoba.ca/resolve | Project Lead: Dr. Kendra Nixon

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The Importance of Communities of Practice

There are numerous challenges that survivors face when accessing the family court system to seek protection for themselves and their children, including those related to the shortage of lawyers and professionals trained in trauma-informed approaches and the dynamics of family violence and a lack of collaboration between family lawyers and service providers. Considering these challenges, the CoPs aim to enhance supports to survivors of violence by increasing opportunities for family law practitioners to access training, guidance, and resources to promote trauma-informed practice, and to improve the coordination of services to contribute to the safety and wellbeing of families. In addition, the CoPs seeks to share knowledge and innovative ideas that have been developed globally and nationally but may not be widely known to the experts and practitioners locally. The CoPs encourage dialogue among various actors to improve the experience of survivors with the social and legal services.

The CoPs will bring together family violence experts, survivors, family lawyers, researchers, and mental health and social service professionals across Canada to help achieve the following:

- Foster communication, collaboration and build relationship among experts from the family violence and family law sectors
- Develop and disseminate evidence-based guidance and resources to address issues crossing these areas of concern
- Provide learning opportunities to build capacity of practitioners in the field of violence prevention and family law
- Support sustained mobilization of knowledge in the field.

Research Updates

COVID-19 and Access to Justice for Survivors of Domestic Violence

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed unique challenges to survivors of domestic violence due to social isolation, working from home mandates, increased unemployment, higher rates of substance abuse, mental health concerns, and difficulties accessing support services. New mechanisms of coercive control have emerged within the context of the pandemic and include the following: preventing victims from leaving the home, providing false information about the availability of support services, and threatening to infect survivors and their children with the virus. Service providers have also faced significant challenges during the pandemic. Adjusting to shifting service provision models, navigating technology to facilitate remote service delivery, and implementing policies relating to social distancing and cleaning are just a few of the many challenges encountered by community agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic (Koshan et al., 2021).

Research by Koshan et al. (2021) demonstrates that the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the issues of concern that existed previously around the role of courts in addressing family violence. The data show that the courts in Canada were led by the principle of urgency in the context of family law and family violence. This meant, for example, that coercive and controlling violence was often overlooked, and the emphasis was placed on cases where there was evidence of physical or financial (“tangible”) violence. In addition, courts tended to favour pre-existing parenting orders in cases where parents requested a revision due to concerns related to the distancing requirements needed for the protection of family members from COVID-19. Courts also encouraged settlement and virtual mediation, even though recent data indicate that the virtual processes may not be safe because mediators cannot catch the cues of unbalanced power dynamics over a video call. The criminal law cases that involved domestic violence found courts balancing between the safety of victims and the risk of COVID-19 contraction by the accused while potentially downplaying domestic violence. The Province of Alberta opted to provide Emergency Protection Order (EPO) through telecommunication when a person experiencing family violence was in urgent need of immediate protection. In all other provinces, however, the Restraining/Protection Orders required evidence, which was difficult to obtain due to the pandemic.

Research Updates Continued

Divorce Act (Bill C-78)

The changes to the Divorce Act that came into effect on March 1, 2021, aim to ensure an effective response to the needs of families during divorce. The changes include the following:

- Changes to terminology (for example, the use of “decision-making and parenting time” instead of “custody”) (Department of Justice, 2021a).
- A focus on resolving issues outside of the family court system using “family dispute resolution” mechanisms, such as arbitration, collaborative law, mediation, or negotiation (where there is no family violence or other factors that cause power imbalance) (Department of Justice, 2021a).
- A primacy of a child’s best interest means that the child’s physical, emotional, and psychological safety and wellbeing, as well as the nature of the child’s relationships with their family members, their views and preferences, and the child’s heritage (language, culture, spirituality) are taken into consideration (Department of Justice, 2021a).
- A definition of family violence that emphasizes the importance of the well-being of victims and their children in cases of family violence (Department of Justice, 2021a).
- The Act aims to protect children and other family members from family violence. It recognizes that (1) “family violence can take many forms and can cause significant harm to both victims and witnesses;” (2) child’s exposure to family violence is “family violence and child abuse;” and (3) it recognizes risks to security and well-being to both children and spouses during and after separation (Martinson & Jackson, 2021, p.10).



You can access the following resources for more information:

Department of Justice (2021a, August 6). Changes to family law: Information for families. [Access here.](#)

Department of Justice (2021b, August 6). Changes to family law: Information for professionals. [Access here.](#)

Koshan, Jennifer; Mosher, Janet; Wieggers, Wanda; Ediger, Paula; Hosseini, Zahra; Karacsony, Patricia; & Hoffart, Renée (2021). Executive Summary of COVID-19, the Shadow Pandemic, and Access to Justice for Survivors of Domestic Violence. Family Violence & Family Law Brief (6). Winnipeg, Manitoba: RESOLVE (Research and Education for Solutions to Violence and Abuse). Available online [here](#) and as a [webinar](#).

Martinson, The Honourable Donna; Jackson, Margaret (2021). The 2021 Divorce Act: Using statutory interpretation principles to support substantive equality for women and children in family violence cases. Family Violence & Family Law Brief (5). Vancouver, BC: The FREDa Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children. Available online [here](#).

Winnipeg and Surrounding Area Community of Practice Members

The Winnipeg and Surrounding Area Community of Practice brings together family violence practitioners, academics and researchers, legal professionals, participants with lived experience, and community leaders.

Community of Practice Members include:

Dr. Kendra Nixon, Director, RESOLVE and Associate Professor, Faculty of Social Work. RESOLVE is a tri-prairie, community-based research network that engages in research and education aimed at reducing the incidence and impact of family/gender-based violence, including violence against women and girls, www.umanitoba.ca/resolve/ (Project Lead)

Dr. Renée Hoffart, Research Associate, RESOLVE. RESOLVE is a tri-prairie, community-based research network that engages in research and education aimed at reducing the incidence and impact of family/gender-based violence, including violence against women and girls, www.umanitoba.ca/resolve/ (Project Coordinator)

Dr. Masha Kardashevskaya, Research Associate, RESOLVE. RESOLVE is a tri-prairie, community-based research network that engages in research and education aimed at reducing the incidence and impact of family/gender-based violence, including violence against women and girls, www.umanitoba.ca/resolve/

Kathleen McDonald, Research Assistant, RESOLVE. RESOLVE is a tri-prairie, community-based research network that engages in research and education aimed at reducing the incidence and impact of family/gender-based violence, including violence against women and girls, www.umanitoba.ca/resolve/

Deena Brock, Provincial Coordinator, Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters (MAWS). MAWS is dedicated to providing a unified voice for women, children and all those who are affected by violence and abuse, www.maws.mb.ca

Crystal Brown, Community Justice Development Coordinator, Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO). SCO is an independent political forum to protect, preserve, promote, and enhance First Nations peoples' inherent rights, language, customs, and traditions through the application and implementation of the spirit and intent of the Treaty-making process representing 34 southern First Nation communities in Manitoba, www.scoinc.mb.ca

Paula Ediger, Women's Relationship Counsellor, A Woman's Place, NorWest Co-op. NorWest is a community-based organization that focuses on engaging community in co-operative health and wellness, offering services in the areas of family violence, immigrant and refugee matters, substance abuse during pregnancy, nursing foot care and indigenous issues, www.norwestcoop.ca

Wayne Eisbrenner, Director, Winnipeg Children's Access Agency. WCAA is a non-profit, charitable organization whose mission is to facilitate contact between children and their family members in a safe, neutral and child-focused environment, www.wcaa.ca

Sonia Grmela, Executive Director, ChezRachel. ChezRachel provides safe and accessible services, a secure/protective home, and counselling and legal support, www.chezrachel.ca

Masha Giller, Participant with Lived Experience

Robynne Kazina, Partner & Family Law Lawyer, Taylor McCafrey LLP, www.tmlawyers.com

Leita Kalinowsky, Acting Executive Director, Family Resolution Service, Courts Division, Manitoba Justice. This program provides services concerning family law matters, referrals to culturally and linguistically appropriate specialized services, and support in completing pre-requisites for court, www.gov.mb.ca/familylaw/resolution/family-resolution-service.html

Jennifer Laviolette, Participant with Lived Experience

Matthew Maher, Researcher, Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY). MACY represents the rights and amplifies the voices and opinions of all children, youth, and young adults in Manitoba, www.manitobaadvocate.ca

Ingrid Pflug, Crown Counsel, Family Law Section, Government of Manitoba, <https://www.gov.mb.ca/familylaw/>

Janis Raeburn, Manager, Family Guide Domestic Violence Specialist Program, Victim Services, Government of Manitoba. This program supports victims of crimes, helps people access their rights, and connects people to other agencies and useful resources, as they move through the justice system, www.gov.mb.ca/justice/vs/

Carol Reimer, Community Resource Program Manager, Immigration and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM). IRCOM strives to empower newcomer families to integrate into the wider community through affordable transitional housing, programs, and services, www.ircom.ca

Ashley Stewart, Coordinator, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program, Health Sciences Centre Winnipeg (HSC). The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program is a specialized program that responds to the needs of sexual assault and domestic violence victims, www.hsc.mb.ca

Marla Somersall, Executive Director, Behavioural Health Foundation (BHF). BHF provides long-term, residential programming for adults experiencing a variety of addiction and co-occurring mental health disorders, www.bhf.ca

Lorna Turnbull, Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba, <https://law.robsonhall.com>

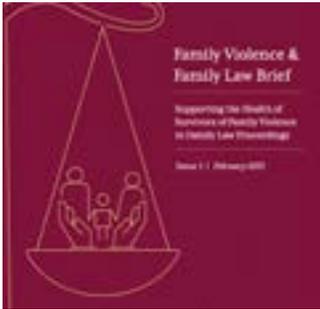
Shane Wepruk, Domestic Violence Intervention Coordinator, Winnipeg Police Service, www.winnipeg.ca/police/

Kimlee Wong, Participant with Lived Experience

Knowledge Mobilization

The CoP knowledge mobilization plan includes regular webinars, research briefs, and e-bulletins on topics related to the work of the CoP groups and emerging topics of interest in the area of family violence and family law. Key topics will be determined in consultation with the regional and national CoP groups.

Research Briefs

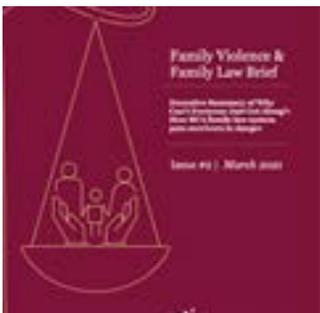


Issue #1: Supporting the Health of Survivors of Family Violence in Family Law Proceedings

Release date: February 2021

Prepared by: The Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children (CREVAWC)

This is an introductory brief that provides an overview of current challenges confronting legal professionals, mental health researchers, and family violence advocates who support survivors navigating the family court system.

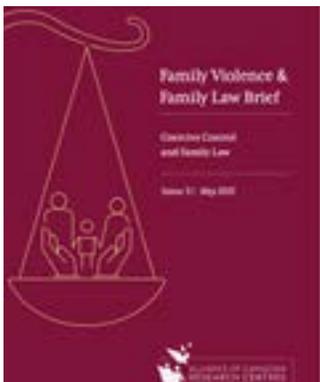


Issue #2: Why Can't Everyone Just Get Along?: How BC's Family Law System Puts Survivors in Danger

Release date: March 2021

Prepared by: The FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children

This brief summarizes research conducted by Rise Women's Legal Centre between 2017 and 2020. Specifically, their work analyzes the impact of the changes to the Family Law Act in 2013 on cases where family violence has been an identified issue.

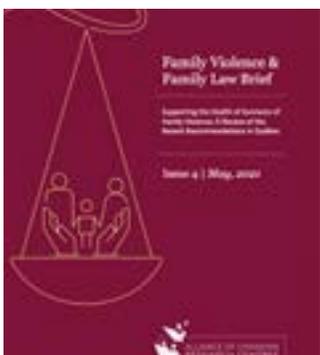


Issue #3: Coercive Control and Family Law

Release date: May 2021

Prepared by: The Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children (CREVAWC)

Coercive control has been a focal point of emerging policies in family and criminal law in Canada. This issue provides a primer on coercive control for legal, social service, and healthcare professionals who are supporting survivors of family violence navigating the family court system. The brief discusses the key concepts related to coercive control including current legislation on the inclusion of coercive control into Canada's Divorce Act and Criminal Code and recommendations and future directions for addressing coercive control in family courts.



Issue #4: A Review of the Recent Recommendations in Quebec

Release date: May 2021

Prepared by: Recherches appliquées, interdisciplinaires sur les violence intimes, familiales et structurelles (RAIV) in partnership with Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)

This brief offers a summary of three reports recently released in Quebec related to family violence. The first report is from the newly formed Domestic Violence Death Review Committee in Quebec, the second is a report from the Expert Committee on support for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, and the third is the Quebec action plan on domestic violence (2018-2023). The report also highlights the effects of family violence on physical and mental health and social functioning of victims.

Research Briefs Continued

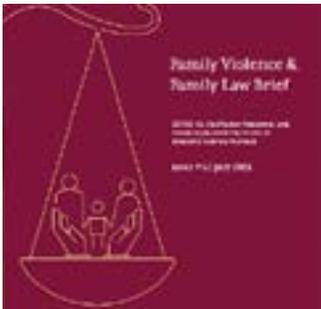


Issue #5: The 2021 Divorce Act: Using Statutory Interpretation Principles to Support Substantive Equality for Women and Children

Release date: June 2021

Prepared by: The FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children

This four-part brief serves as a guide to statutory interpretation of relevant provisions which has four Parts. Part I identifies the principles of statutory interpretation reviewed in *Michel v. Graydon* case and relates them to family violence. Part II considers the scheme and objectives of the Divorce Act. Part III looks at relevant social and historical context information. Part IV considers Canada's international obligations relating to family violence as Parliament is presumed to take them into account.



Issue #6: COVID-19, the Shadow Pandemic, and Access to Justice for Survivors of Domestic Violence

Release date: July 2021

Prepared by: RESOLVE Manitoba

Globally, the COVID-19 pandemic led to dramatic increases in cases of domestic violence giving rise to the new term "shadow pandemic." This brief examines the impact of COVID-19 on experiences of intimate partner violence and examines the ways in which the pandemic has impacted access to justice for survivors.



Issue #7: Trauma-Informed Approaches to Family Violence in Family Law

Release date: September 2021

Prepared by: Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research.

The brief discusses the impact of trauma on survivors. Family violence can cause trauma in those who experience it, including children and youth. The webinar emphasizes the development and delivery of a trauma-informed approach in legal practices, arguing that the model is essential to addressing trauma and preventing re-traumatization.



Issue #8: Engaging Fathers Who Commit Family Violence: Issues and Challenges for Family Courts

Release date: September 2021

Prepared by: Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children

This brief discusses family violence, the possibilities of engaging fathers who commit family violence, risks for victims and their children, and the challenges for family courts. The complex reality of family violence, post-separation violence, and the possibility for positive transformation for abusive men poses a dilemma for service providers and family court professionals. The understanding of these complex dynamics requires a trauma-informed, anti-violence, and child-centred approach to ensure the safety and security of survivors and victims.

Research briefs (in French and English) and webinar recordings can be found on the [Alliance website](https://alliancevaw.ca).

Past Community of Practice Webinars:



Self-Represented Litigants and Family Violence: Making a Difficult Experience Even Worse

Hosted by: Western University Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children

Date: June 15, 2021

Presenters: Julie Macfarlane, The Honourable Mary Jo Nolan, The Honourable Lynda C. Templeton, Malcolm Bennett, and Julie Lee

More than 50% of litigants (up to 80% in urban centres) represent themselves in family courts across Canada mainly due to the inability to afford legal services and greater access to information and a belief in self-help. According to the National Self-Represented Litigants Project (NSLRP) data, 96% of self-represented litigants (SRL) lose their case. An Australian study by Wangmann and colleagues (2020) studied SRLs with a history of family violence, concluding that family violence affects the family court experiences of SRLs. The presenters argue that there are numerous systemic problems (such as gender stereotyping, a lack of trauma-informed approaches, high costs, length of the litigation) that need to be addressed to improve the experience of SRLs with family violence history.



The Pandemic and Family Justice: Unequal Outcomes and Lack of Access to Justice

Hosted by: Western University Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children

Date: April 29, 2021

Presenters: Claire Houston, Rachel Birnbaum and Nicholas Bala

This webinar shares developing knowledge from a research project examining the reduction in access to Ontario's family justice system due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings from a survey of over 100 family justice professionals in Ontario highlight how the pandemic has affected families involved in the system. Certain groups including high conflict families, self-representing litigants, victims of intimate partner violence, children experiencing abuse and neglect, and families involved in the child welfare system have been disproportionately impacted by the reduction in family court access and related services since the onset of the pandemic. Innovative responses by family court and family justice professionals were discussed, along with recommendations for how these practices can be modified or adopted to better serve families involved in the family justice system.



Healing Trauma: Gender, Trauma, and Paths of Healing in Family Law Disputes

Hosted by: Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research

Date: March 31, 2021

Presenters: Jenn Gorham, and Leland Maerz

The webinar defines trauma and provides information on how to work with trauma survivors. The BRIDGES Institute (<https://www.bridgesinstitute.org/>) developed a trauma-informed and restorative justice-oriented approach comprised of a three-phase coordinated response to IPV. Phase 1 aims to stop violence/abuse, create safety and address trauma in the present. Phase 2 aims to prevent relapse into violent relationships while encouraging the recognition of agency and responsibility while reflecting on the past and the present. And, Phase 3 aims to repair harms, restore agency and responsibility and revise identity to build future relationships. The discussion focuses on how family lawyers can work in a trauma-informed manner with family violence victims/survivors to recognize the effects of trauma and minimize re-traumatization while taking into consideration historical and structural trauma.

Past Community of Practice Webinars Continued

The Impact of COVID-19 on Ontario's Court Related Services for Survivors of Family Violence



The Impact of COVID-19 on Ontario's Court Related Services for Survivors of Family Violence

Hosted by: Western University Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children

Date: March 9, 2021

Presenters: Amanda Bruyns, Tim Kelly, Julie Lee, Janet Mosher, and AnnaLise Trudell

This webinar reviews the impact of the pandemic in Ontario on survivors of family violence with a focus on access to specialized services. The presenters discuss the increase in family violence that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, challenges for survivors, and the difficulties associated with accessing support services. In particular, the webinar addresses services that are often required as a part of family court proceedings, such as supervised access, batterer intervention and parenting programs (Partner Assault Response (PAR) and Caring Dads), legal advice, counselling, and housing.



COVID-19, the Shadow Pandemic, and Access to Justice for Survivors of Domestic Violence

Hosted by: RESOLVE Manitoba

Date: March 6, 2021

Presenters: Jennifer Koshan, Janet Mosher, Wanda Wieggers, Paula Ediger, and Zahra Hosseini

The webinar presenters, Jennifer Koshan, Janet Mosher, and Wanda Wieggers share their research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to justice for survivors of domestic violence. The presenters provided a preliminary assessment of the extent to which Canada's responses to the COVID-19 pandemic prioritized the safety of women and children. Paula Ediger and Zahra Hosseini from A Woman's Place, NorWest Co-op Community Health discuss their work supporting survivors during the pandemic.



Why Can't Everyone Just Get Along? How BC's Family Law System Puts Survivors in Danger

Hosted by: The FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children

Date: March 4, 2021

Presenter: Haley Hrymak | Moderator: Margaret Jackson

This webinar focusses on Rise's research regarding the impact of the family court system on domestic violence survivors. The webinar provides several recommendations for how the court system in British Columbia can be improved, starting with mandatory family violence training for lawyers, judges and police, and the creation of a specialized family court designed to address the needs of families.



Bridging the Gap Between the Needs of Survivors of Family Violence and the Realities of Family Court

Hosted by: Western University Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children

Date: December 15, 2021

Presenters: Pamela Cross and Dr. Linda Baker

This webinar addresses the challenges that survivors of family violence encounter when accessing the family court system, barriers survivors face due to the nature of trauma they have suffered and the many demands of the adversarial system from a legal and psychological perspective. The webinar also discusses promising practices and outlines how court-related professionals and the system can become trauma-informed.

Family Modernization Law

Leita Kalinowsky, Misty Bousquet, Signe Hanson and Brittany Kurz

Each year in Manitoba, approximately 3,000 to 5,000 couples divorce. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated stress on households and families, these numbers are expected to be even higher in 2021 and 2022.

For decades, families have been dependent on the courts to resolve their disputes, such as parenting arrangements, child support, spousal support and property division. Through in-depth engagement with families and those working within the system, the court-based process was found to be adversarial, complex, expensive, and slow, often resulting in adverse impacts on the emotional and physical well-being of family members, especially children. Couples and families reported experiencing negative consequences from separation and divorce, both financially and emotionally. Nationally, research has found that in up to 80% of cases, there are instances of situational and domestic violence between former partners.

In 2017, the Manitoba Government committed to modernizing the family law system. The Government tasked an advisory committee to review the family law system and provide recommendations to improve accessibility, wellness, and outcomes for families. Those findings were outlined in [Modernizing Our Family Law System: A Report from Manitoba's Family Law Committee](#). Engagement with Manitobans and service providers helped to inform legislative change and service innovation. Their input, progress, and next steps are outlined in the [Family Law Modernization Action Plan](#), announced in 2020.

A new single-window, digital-first (but not digital-only) Family Resolution Service was launched in June 2020 to consolidate and expand out-of-court resolution services and supports. The Family Resolution Service aims to support healthy transitions and family well-being delivering client-centred services in collaboration with private and community partners to help Manitoba families resolve their disputes in a collaborative, fair, affordable, and timely manner. This service consists of three business areas:

- **Early Resolution Supports:** Family Guides with expertise in domestic violence and safety planning, conflict resolution and mediation, and family law court processes help families resolve their disputes out of court or narrow issues in dispute and prepare them for court, aiming for pre-trial resolution.
- **Child Support Service:** Support Determination Officers make initial child support calculation and recalculation decisions outside of court for most families
- **Maintenance Enforcement Program:** Enforces child and spousal support outlined in Child Support Service decisions, family arbitration awards, separation agreements and/or court orders.

Families access these services and supports through a central intake process called Get Guidance. The Intake Team can provide basic family law information and direction to online resources through the Family Law Manitoba website. When additional supports are needed, they triage requests for service and make appropriate referrals within the Family Resolution Service and to private and community-based service providers. All families that contact the Family Resolution Service are screened for Intimate Partner Violence at intake and throughout the Family Resolution Service and are referred to a Family Guide, Domestic Violence Specialist to address safety concerns.

The Family Resolution Service team works closely with Victim Services and provides a continuum of support to survivors and their families, whether they are navigating family law and/or criminal matters in or out of court.

The Manitoba government and the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) are piloting a new approach to better support families experiencing domestic violence where specialized staff from Manitoba Justice are co-located at WPS headquarters to facilitate a more coordinated response. The pilot allows better integration between officers and victim services workers to collaborate and determine the most appropriate outreach for families who call the police for domestic incidents when no charges are laid. It allows the WPS to provide better responses and help reduce future escalation by providing the caller with additional resources and more collaborative and streamlined intervention. As part of the pilot, one of the co-located victim services workers will also be connected to the new Family Resolution Service. This way, they can provide family law information and resources for families calling the police who have questions or concerns related to separation and divorce, such as custody and access.

New and enhanced initiatives will ensure that victims and families at risk or those who are currently experiencing intimate partner violence get the support they need prior to criminal and family courts. Manitoba's Domestic Violence Support Service helps victims of domestic violence in Manitoba when criminal charges have been laid and assists individuals who receive police services for domestic violence incidents that do not result in charges or arrests. The Domestic Violence Support Service also provides enhanced support to victims whose current or former partners are involved in restorative justice proceedings.

Family Modernization Law Continued

Restorative justice seeks to repair harm, address the circumstances that contributed to the crime, and support victims and perpetrators of violence to self-determine their healing goals. The two restorative justice workers who provide victim-focused one-on-one support are now assigned to all intimate partner violence diversion files in Winnipeg. This is an important shift in an attempt to break the cycle of violence.

In addition to one-on-one support in Winnipeg, group programming will be available, including a new online workshop on healthy relationships. This workshop will support victims whose matters are proceeding through restorative justice and covers topics, such as the impacts of trauma, how to stay safe and self-care.

In April 2021, two provincially funded supervised parenting and exchange programs came under the umbrella of the Family Resolution Service delivering essential, arms-length services. The Winnipeg Children's Access Agency and the Brandon Friendship Centre's Brandon Access/Exchange Service help families who have experienced some level of conflict in their relationships, maintain parenting arrangements by providing supervised visits and exchanges for families.

The Government of Manitoba has committed to implement 'Clare's Law' in Manitoba, ensuring that women can access information about their partner's past history of domestic violence and empowering women to leave potentially abusive situations. Engagement with IPV service providers, policymakers, victim services, crown attorneys, and law enforcement is underway to inform the development of a protocol for the disclosure of this information to women and to ensure the proposed approach meets the objective while respecting the appropriate process and privacy concerns.

All services and supports available through the Family Resolution Service and Victim Services are at no cost to clients. Some costs may be associated with supervised parenting and exchange programs. Manitobans can access the Family Resolution Service by contacting Get Guidance. To reduce the spread of COVID-19, services are primarily delivered virtually, and in-person services are available by appointment only.

This voluntary out-of-court resolution service continues to be tested and evaluated with the intent of adding additional services to support a greater number of Manitoba families.

Brandon Office
Room 339, 340 9th St, Brandon, MB R7A 6C2

Thompson Office
Room 107, 59 Elizabeth Drive, Thompson, MB R8N 1X4

Dauphin Office
Room 112, 27 - 2nd Ave SW, Dauphin, MB R7N 3E5

Winnipeg Office
2nd Floor -379 Broadway, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0T9

Email: GetGuidance@gov.mb.ca | Phone: 204-945-2313 (Winnipeg) | Toll-Free: 1-844-808-2313 | Fax: 204-948-2423

Upcoming Webinars and Activities

National CoP Meeting

Date: February 10, 2022, 3-5pm EST
Guest Speaker: Jill Messing, MSW, PhD, Arizona State University

RSVP to jpoon58@uwo.ca by January 31, 2022

Webinar "The Nexus of Poverty and Domestic Violence in Family Law"

Presenter: Madame Justice Boudreau-Dumas, Chantal Landry & Lindsay Manuel
Date and time: March 16, 2022, 6.30 pm AST

[Registration here](#)

National and Regional Community of Practice Meetings

Each regional CoP meets on a quarterly basis and the national CoP group meets on a biannual basis to share information about emerging issues and promising practices. These meetings present an opportunity to meet with experts and exchange ideas among the participants of the five CoPs.

Next regional CoP meeting: early 2022 | Next national CoP meeting: spring 2022

Resources

Alliance of Canadian Research Centres on Gender-Based Violence

The Alliance of Canadian Research Centres was established after the Montreal Massacre on December 6, 1989. There are five sister centres across Canada (New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia) that research the issue of violence against women and gender-based violence. These centres host and support the work of the CoP groups. The Alliance website (<https://alliancevaw.ca/projects/>) includes information and resources pertaining to the CoP initiative (research briefs, bulletins, and webinars).

Battered Women's Justice Project – SAFeR Approach

The [SAFeR Approach](#) consists of four parts: (S) screening for IPV, (A) assessing the nature and context of IPV, (Fe) focusing on the effects of IPV, and (R) responding to the lives experience of IPV. The approach helps family court practitioners identify, understand, and account for the ways people experience IPV.

Family Court and Beyond

The [website](#) provides a family court survival workbook for women leaving abusive relationships. The workbook provides basic legal information relevant across Canada; some of the information may be Ontario-specific. It is a website launched by Luke's Place, a family law centre for abused women based in Ontario. Despite its hands-on work in the Durham Region of Ontario, it also shares its expertise with service providers across Canada through training, resources, and mentoring. Information can be found at <https://lukesplace.ca>.

Going Public: A Survivor's Journey from Grief to Action

This is a [book](#) written by Dr. Julie Macfarlane, a Distinguished Professor and Professor of Law at the University of Windsor. The book tells the personal story of her experience as a survivor of sexual abuse and the structural challenges survivors face when they speak out.

The Learning Network

This [website](#) is a valuable source of evidence-informed resources for individuals, service providers, and organizations working to end violence against women and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV). The Learning Network provides such resources as backgrounders, briefs, and infographics. They also organize regular webinars that are free and open to the general public. Their webinar schedule is available [here](#).

The National Self-Represented Litigants Project (NSLRP)

The [project](#) promotes dialogue and collaboration between the self-represented litigants (SRLs), lawyers, judges, policymakers, and court service staff. Their research seeks to understand the meaning and the implications of the greater number of SRLs for the justice system in Canada. They also publish resources for SRLs.