

BC Family Well-Being Coalition Terms of Reference

Who is [West Coast LEAF](#)?

Through litigation, legal reform, and public legal education, we dismantle gender-based discrimination and move toward gender justice in full collaboration with those most marginalized by overlapping systems of oppression (e.g., colonialism, patriarchy, racism, ableism, white supremacy, and capitalism).

What is the BC Family Well-Being Coalition?

The BC Family Well-being Coalition extends the work of West Coast LEAF's 2021-2023 Communities of Practice project, which brought together impacted people and advocates concerned about BC's family policing system.

With funding from a three-year grant from the Law Foundation of BC, we intend to continue building out spaces for systemic advocacy that challenges the current [family policing](#) landscape in BC and centres family well-being. This advocacy can include:

- skill-building;
- campaigns;
- research;
- and other strategies yet to be determined.

Our intentions are to uplift and amplify the wisdom and expertise of Indigenous leaders, families, Elders, and advocates to support the ongoing work to transform, re-envision, and reclaim the system from what's currently an ongoing colonial intervention system to a system in which all children, families, and communities will thrive.

Values

Equality

We recognize and celebrate differences and strive toward building an equal and just society for all women, Two-Spirit people, trans people of all genders, intersex people, gender non-conforming people, and/or non-binary people, and others including Indigenous peoples.

Justice

In a just society, our legal system will treat everyone equally and with dignity.

Accountability

We are accountable to the communities in which we hold relationships, and especially those most marginalized. We are dedicated to ongoing learning, unlearning, and relearning as part of our accountability commitment.

Decolonization

Decolonizing approaches for working with Indigenous families and communities are grounded in historical understandings of ongoing colonial and structural violence. These approaches work towards dismantling colonial structures and achieving justice, self-determination, and sovereignty for Indigenous people.

Wholism

Wholism means engaging with and acknowledging all aspects and dimensions of a person and family. In some Indigenous Nations and communities, wholism is described through the teachings of the Medicine Wheel, which has four parts: mental, physical, spiritual, and psychological. All four parts must be in balance with one another to achieve wellness.

Trauma-Informed

Four key principles guide Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP): trauma awareness; an emphasis on safety and trustworthiness; opportunities for choice, collaboration, and connection; skill building and being strength-based. It is important to not see trauma through the Western conception as an individual health problem.

Family-Centred

Family-centred practices recognize the importance of working collaboratively with parents and other caregivers (such as grandparents, cousins, non-biological family, chosen family and so on). These practices identify the family as the expert in anything that impacts them. For Indigenous people: Family relationships are understood within networks of reciprocal responsibilities formed between Indigenous peoples and include non-human/animal kin, the land and waters that comprise their territories, and the spirit world which forms their cosmology.

Relationship-Centred

A relationship-centred approach focuses on building genuine, transparent, approachable, and collaborative relationships to support families.

Cultural Safety

Putting cultural safety into practice means recognizing that historical, economic, and social contexts, including power imbalances, shape people's outcomes and experiences with systems like the family policing system. Cultural safety also requires the people who hold positions of power in these systems to actively challenge the power in their roles, including the policies and culture of their institutions and systems.

Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs. An Indigenous harm reduction approach includes access to traditional practices and medicines that seeks to reduce the harms of colonialism.

Self-Determination

Self-determination means the full return of authority over family well-being to Indigenous communities and Nations. We understand that Indigenous peoples are in the best position to make decisions that impact Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities.

We ask all members to sign on to these values to participate in the Coalition.

Principles for Collaboration

- We understand that the resources and capacity of member organizations vary greatly.
- We understand that, beyond the work of the Coalition, member organizations employ a range of strategies: some work closely with government, while others seek to push for policy change from outside of government. We appreciate that our strength comes from this diversity.
- In all cases, we will strive to treat one another with respect. This includes respect for the parameters, mandates, capacities, and resources of member groups.
- Overall, the Coalition will remain non-partisan and constructive.

Membership of the Coalition

The Coalition members include and are not limited to grassroots groups and collectives; people who work in and represent front-line organizations that serve families involved with the family policing system; people who work in the legal system, including those who represent parents, caregivers, directors, and Nations; allied researchers; Indigenous Nations; and allied advocacy organizations.

Responsibility of Members and Their Organizations

- Regularly attend the monthly Coalition meeting, review the necessary documents before and after meetings, and respond to emails between meetings as needed;
- Participate in working groups when possible;
- Refrain from representing Coalition to the media or speaking on behalf of the Coalition in an official capacity, unless asked to do so;
- Make clear as soon as possible any situation that is, could become, or may be perceived as a conflict of interest;
- Keep confidential, anything the Coalition agrees must be kept confidential.

Responsibility of West Coast LEAF

- Coordinate meeting logistics for the Coalition and Working Groups;
- Recruit and orientate new members;
- Send agendas, minutes and email reminders;
- Follow up on action items that arise from meetings;

- Coordinate the project budget.

Decision-Making

Decisions will be taken by consensus. When consensus is not immediately reached, West Coast LEAF will provide additional information and options to help with decision-making.

Where consensus cannot be reached, the Coalition will try to prioritize the expertise and needs of participants with lived experience of the family policing system.

Meetings

Meetings are held monthly on the third Thursday of the month from 10:00am-12:00pm.

Meetings are held virtually over Zoom with access for people to call in.

No Coalition meeting is held during August or December.

Duration

The Coalition will develop timelines for specific tasks as needed. The project is funded until August 2026.

