



West Coast LEAF

Safety Together

Addressing gender-based violence and
the family policing system

MARCH 2026



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Land acknowledgement

Safety together: addressing gender-based violence and the family policing system project was developed on the traditional, unceded homelands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlilwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh) Nations, and the traditional, unceded homelands of the Syilx Okanagan Nation. With gratitude, we also acknowledge the homelands of many other Nations across so-called BC and Canada where community experts live and work.

With enormous gratitude, we acknowledge the Research Advisors and Community Experts who generously shared their insights to guide this project:

Research Advisors

Alysha McFadden; Amy Zhou; Cheyenne Stonechild, Muscowpetung First Nation, Saskatchewan; Blue Thunderbird Women, Sandy Bay First Nation; Huuyatlh (Tabatha Frank), Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations, Ahousaht First Nations and Muchalaht First Nations; Lorelei Williams, Skatin Nation and Sts'ailes; Louise B; Rachel S; Sandra Pronteau, Cree-Metis; Swallow Z.

Community Experts

A.N.; Brylee; C. K., Saulteaux Band; Jay; Johana; Kori, Long Plain First Nation; ksqst, Westbank First Nation; Langley; Niiohontéhsha, Six Nations of the Grand River; Reem; Reina; Salma; Samar; Sofia; Tami; Tammy; Tanisha, Pasqua First Nation; Tessie, Pasqua First Nation; Vanessa; W.A.; and many, many anonymous contributors.

Project Team

Alana Prochuk, Andrea Bryson, Bety Tesfay, Caitlin Anderson, Humera Jabir, Iman Baobeid, Kate Feeney, Kate Murray, Shannon Daub, Sharnelle Jenkins-Thompson and Victoria Chen

Design

Anita Sekharan

This project has been funded through Women and Gender Equality Canada's Women's Program and the Law Foundation of BC.



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada



**Children and their
families deserve to
be *safe together*.**

Table of Contents

Methodology and Guiding Frameworks	6
Executive Summary	10
Key Terms	12
Introduction	13
The gender-based violence epidemic	13
Parenting in contexts of gendered violence	14
A Shared History and the Overlapping Harms	17
Structural conditions of violence and risk	19
Carceral myths and cycles of harm	19
Calls to action: Community-rooted care and self-determination	23
State Welfare Systems as Violence	28
Systemic discrimination	28
Control versus support	30
Under-funded and overburdened services	30
Calls to action: Resource community-based services	31
Mandatory Reporting	37
Fear of family policing isolates survivors	37
Weaponizing family policing reports as a tactic of abuse	38
Co-opting efforts to help	40
A web of surveillance	40
Calls to action: Move towards supporting over reporting	41

Family policing investigations and interventions	43
Coercive power	43
Placing responsibility on survivor-parents	44
Failure to engage with partners who use violence	44
Opposing readings of “best interests”	47
Pressure and control without support	47
Uncertainty and disempowerment	48
Escalating risk	49
Calls to action: Advocacy to minimize harms and maximize support	50
Intersecting Legal Systems	52
Legal system discrimination	52
Harms from legal processes	53
Family policing and family law: dangerous contradictions	53
Criminalization of Survivors	55
Calls to action: Implement multi-system advocacy supports and transformative alternatives to existing legal systems	56
Government Custody of Children and Separation from Family	59
Barriers to connection	59
Harms of separation	60
Gender-based violence in government custody	62
Long-term gender-based violence impacts	62
Calls to action: Support well-being and connection to minimize harms of separation	63
Transformative Calls for Change	66
Support community-rooted care and honour self-determination	68
Resource community-based services	68
Move towards supporting over reporting	69
Minimize family policing harms and maximize support	69
Implement multi-system advocacy supports and transformative alternatives to existing legal systems	69
Support well-being and connection to minimize harms of separation	70
Glossary	71
Endnotes	74

Methodology and Guiding Frameworks

Safety Together: Addressing gender-based violence and the family policing system is a community-driven research project developed through the BC Family Well-Being Coalition (FWBC).

Hosted by West Coast LEAF, the FWBC is a space of shared advocacy that uplifts and amplifies the wisdom and expertise of Indigenous leaders, families, Elders, and advocates. The FWBC seeks to transform the current conditions of family policing – sometimes known as “child welfare” or “child protection” – towards a system that supports child and family well-being.

The following research questions guided the *Safety Together* project:

1. What risks and harms stem from the intersections of gender-based violence and family policing? What are key systemic sites of these interactions, and their impacts?
2. According to impacted families, communities, and advocates, what services, supports and systemic changes could prevent or reduce the risks and harms caused by the intersections of gender-based violence and family policing?
3. How can BC create a system of meaningful supports that ensures the safety, equality, well-being, and self-determination of impacted families and communities?

The insights in this report reflect the lived and living expertise of community members who have navigated the intersection of gender-based violence and family policing in BC. Throughout this report, we refer to them interchangeably as “community experts” or “experts” (rather than research participants”). The project has also been guided by a steering committee of research advisors with personal and professional experience of this intersection. We thank community experts and research advisors for sharing their invaluable knowledge.

This project foregrounds the perspectives of Indigenous, racialized, migrant, and disabled women and **people marginalized based on gender**.

PEOPLE MARGINALIZED BASED ON GENDER

We use the phrase “people who are marginalized based on gender” to refer to all people who face gender discrimination, not only women. This includes Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans people of all genders (not only women), queer, intersex, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people.

The research methods used in this project include:

- Reviews of community-based and academic literature
- Research circles and dialogues with community experts, co-hosted with three partner organizations with participants joining from across so-called BC

- Individual interviews with four community experts in BC and Ontario
- An engagement session with youth in BC who have experience in government custody (foster care)

All quotes are used with permission. This project was approved by the Community Research Ethics Office (CREO).

We are grateful to the organizations who worked with us to co-host a series of dialogues with community experts:

Knowledging All Nations, Building Unity (KANDU)

is a peer-led organization that saves lives and supports wellbeing through compassionate, culturally safe, spiritually-inclined, and relationship-based health supports for vulnerable people of all nations in the Okanagan region.

Mothers Matter Canada (MMC) is a national consortium of organizations that facilitates peer-based mother-to-mother connections, to support socially isolated and low economic status mothers and their families.

RainCity Housing and Support Society provides housing and support programs based on inclusive, compassionate, and reciprocal relationships with over 2000 people across BC’s Lower Mainland, and the Sunshine Coast.

We also thank the **BC Federation of Youth in Care Networks (BC Fed)** for supporting a youth-specific consultation session to bring youth wisdom into the project. BC Fed is a youth-driven, peer-based organization that supports “young people in and from government care to make connections, build their skills, explore their interests, and have their voices heard.”

OUR GOAL:
Identify the changes needed to BC's laws, policies, programs and services to ensure the safety, equality and well-being of families

METHODOLOGY

- Steering Committee + Interviews**
guidance + participation by community members and advocates
- Community Partnerships and Dialogues**
Co-hosted dialogues with 3 community org's in B.C.
- Coalition Building for ACTION**

FREE PRIOR INFORMED AND ONGDING CONSENT

Michelle Buchholz | **CASSYEX** CONSULTING

This project is anchored in decolonial, anti-racist, and anti-carceral frameworks.

Together with the insights of research advisors and community experts, these frameworks have led us to prioritize calls for change that:

- Recognize historical context
- Honour the sovereignty and worldviews of Indigenous peoples
- Centre Indigenous values of relationality and reject the severing of relationships
- Challenge the assumption that policing and punishment increase safety, and act accordingly to:
 - » Reduce the scale of policing
 - » Avoid partnering with carceral (policing and punishment-based) institutions, and
 - » Shift resources away from carceral institutions
- Reflect a “radical disbelief” in punishment as creating any enduring positive outcomes for people.
- Centre life-affirming solutions that celebrate and honour life.
- Direct resources to community-based solutions that respect self-determination¹

CARCERAL is the approach and process that relies on the state to control and punish people in the name of safety. This includes maintaining prisons and police, and extends to the idea that we must rely on the government for safety, including for the safety of children and youth. In reality, carceral approaches create more ongoing violence.



Our Ethics

SUPPORTING safety and well-being
for families impacted by
Gender-Based Violence
& **Family Policing**



Michelle Buchholz | **CASSYEX**
CONSULTING

Executive Summary

This report identifies six systemic sites in which gender-based violence (GBV) and family policing (i.e., “child welfare”) intersect in ways that increase risks and create harmful impacts for survivors, families, and children.



1

The shared history and overlapping harms of GBV and family policing

2

Service provision as administrative violence

3

Mandatory reporting

4

Family policing investigations and interventions

5

Intersecting legal systems

6

Government custody of children and separation from family

MANDATORY REPORTING (also known as the duty to report) is the universal legal “duty to report” suspected child abuse/neglect to the Ministry of Children and Family (MCFD). Mandatory and permissive reporting laws often lead to misreporting, which results in over-reporting, due to vague and subjective definitions like neglect, reporter fear, implicit bias, and a “when in doubt, report” culture.

At these sites of intersection, legal and social ideas (such as the “best interests of the child” and the assessment of survivors as “unable or unwilling” to cooperate with family policing systems)² are interpreted and applied in ways that harm survivor-parents, children, and families. BC’s current policing and family policing responses to gendered family violence are driven by **saviourism** and carceral mindsets of individual blame, control, isolation, and punishment.³ The ineffectiveness and harms of these systems, along with calls for reform, have been documented in systemic reviews over many years.⁴

SAVIORISM is the idea that assumes some people need someone to save them and that without intervention and guidance they will not survive. In the context of GBV, it can look like people dictating to survivors what they need to do for their own safety.

Building on the insights of research advisors and community experts, this project highlights transformative changes that could direct resources away from harmful systems of policing and towards wholistic, relational well-being aligned with families’ **self-determination**. Action is needed on many levels: by individual advocates, supporters, and professionals; by collectives and organizations; by communities and Nations; and by policy-makers and institutional decision-makers. This report invites these groups to join the many community organizations, Nations, and advocates who are already engaged in transformative advocacy and support work to shift from family policing to family well-being.

SELF-DETERMINATION is both an individual and collective process and goal. It is the ability to make important decisions about one’s life. For Indigenous nations, it includes the ability to make collective decisions about governance, including nation membership, laws (including child and family well-being), economics, etc. without interference from the state.

Key Terms

Throughout this publication we define critical terms and include them in a glossary at the end of this report. However, there are two terms that are important to define before proceeding.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence (GBV) is “violence that is inflicted upon a person or persons due to their gender identity, gender expression, or perceived gender.”⁵ It impacts women and all people impacted by gender-based discrimination, including Two-Spirit, non-binary and queer people, and trans people of all genders. GBV can include physical and/or sexual assault, threats of violence, verbal and/or emotional abuse, intimidation and other forms of coercion and control.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a predominant form of GBV. IPV is the “abuse of power by one partner in a dating, common-law, married, or otherwise intimate relationship. This abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, financial, social, cultural, or a combination of some or all of these.”⁶

The majority of community experts who participated in this project had encountered IPV either as survivors or as supporters to survivors. In this publication, we use both GBV and IPV, as survivors had encountered the family policing system due to both types of violence and they felt the wider umbrella of GBV encapsulates a more fulsome understanding of what they had endured in their lives and their wider community.

We also acknowledge there are variety of terms to refer to people who are subjected to abuse, and people who are engaging in abuse or violence. We recognize that language is constantly changing, and that language is important because it shapes the way we understand complex issues. In conversation with community experts who contributed to this project, we use the term “survivor,” along with person-first language, to avoid simplistic and dehumanizing understandings associated with common narratives about “victims” and “perpetrators.”⁷ With that in mind, we also refer to those who carry out gender-based violence as people who use or engage in violence or abuse.

FAMILY POLICING

West Coast LEAF has been working and learning in the area known as “child welfare” or “child protection” for several years. In this work, we have been privileged to learn from families, Nations, and advocates in BC and beyond, who have extensive lived expertise in navigating this system. A key learning from these community experts is that a more honest term for these systems is “family policing” – a term rooted in movements led by poor and Black families in the US.⁸

Predominant narratives about “child protection” or “child welfare” imagine the system as beneficial and necessary to keep children safe. But as we describe throughout this report, the family policing system is actually very poor at keeping children safe. At its core, the family policing system has a narrow focus on assessing whether to remove a child from their home—and thus a focus on scrutinizing parents and families or caregivers as “risks” to their children.

The family policing system maintains power and control over the lives of families and children—most often Indigenous families and children—through surveillance (ex. mandatory reporting laws), regulation (ex. coercive “voluntary agreements”), and punishment (ex. removal of children from their family). Families who are struggling under the weight of systemic injustices like racism and poverty need supports, such as adequate housing, livable income and disability rates, and mental health services. Instead of recognizing these injustices as the systemic barriers they are, the system sees family struggles as individual failings. In contexts of GBV, family policing systems often apply their policing lens to the parent (usually a mother) who is herself experiencing violence. The system’s punishments include arguably the greatest power that can be asserted by a state: severing the bonds between a child and their family, caregiver(s), and community.⁹

Introduction

Intersections of family policing and gender-based violence

The gender-based violence epidemic

Intimate partner violence is a widespread form of gender-based violence. O'Connor et al., stress that “nearly 90% of identified adult victims [survivors of IPV] in Canadian child welfare cases are women.”¹⁰ Perez-Darby offers a community-based framework for understanding intimate partner violence as a “pattern of power and control... to turn a subject into an object,” noting that objectification and dehumanization are “the core harm of domestic violence [or] intimate partner violence.”¹¹

Gender-based violence is increasingly being recognized as an epidemic.¹² Dr. Kim Stanton’s recent systemic review of BC’s legal responses to gender-based violence notes that nearly half (48%) of women over the age of 15 in BC have experienced intimate partner violence. This number is even higher for Indigenous women (64%), people who identify as 2SLGBTQ (72%), women with disabilities (62%), women living in rural areas (54%), women with a household income of less than \$20,000 (55%), and young women, aged

15-24 (66%). Stanton writes that across Canada, “Indigenous women and girls, Black and racialized women, immigrant and refugee women, 2SLGBTQI+ people, women with disabilities, and women living in northern, rural, and remote communities are disproportionately subjected to violence.”¹³

Many of us are used to hearing statistics about how particular communities experience an increased risk of violence. But as we describe throughout this report, these groups should not be framed as inherently “at-risk.” In the face of ongoing structural (colonial, capitalist, white supremacist, heteropatriarchal, and ableist) violence, these same communities have been at the forefront of collective safety and resistance efforts.¹⁴



Parenting in contexts of gendered violence

Gender-based violence is an increasingly common basis for families' involvement with the family policing system. This predominantly occurs due to IPV, however, community experts shared experiences where other forms of GBV brought them into contact with family policing, for example experiencing violence while participating in sex work or being stalked and harassed by a person living in their building. Most community experts who participated in this project focused on the connections between IPV and family policing.

Between 2008 and 2019 across Canada, family policing investigations focused on "exposure to intimate partner involvement" increased by almost 39%.¹⁵ The term "exposure to" reflects increasing recognition that children experience negative behavioural, cognitive, social, and emotional impacts from violence even if they are not present when it occurs.¹⁶

Through this project, we spoke with a range of community experts who expressed deep concern about the impacts of children's exposure to violence. But in contrast to predominant assumptions that removing children from their families is the best way to help children, experts stressed that the family policing system increases harms from gender-based violence (GBV) while failing to keep survivors and their children safe. As we describe throughout this report, fear of family policing prevents families from seeking help.



The family policing system does not prevent or decrease violence, and it does not offer survivors and children viable options to limit contact with a person causing harm. Further, academic research details how separation from a protective parent worsens the harmful impacts of exposure to intimate partner violence for children:

“Fracturing that relationship can leave children confused and scared and may even lead them to blame themselves for the loss of their parents. Removal from parents is always traumatic, but for children who have been exposed to violence, the effect is compounded if they are removed from the one person who can help them to restore their sense of order.”¹⁷

Community experts described the incredible challenges marginalized parents faced as they navigated relationships with their children—often in conditions of poverty and precarity—while also experiencing abuse. Research details how the parent-child relationship is often negatively impacted by abuse, especially when abusive partners undermine this relationship as a means of control. People experiencing abuse may be hyper-vigilant, or physically and emotionally drained in ways that impact their emotional availability and strategies for managing their children's behaviour. Being targeted by an abusive partner and constantly fearing for their children's safety can cause survivors to doubt their parenting capacities and experience anxiety, depression, or problematic substance use.¹⁸

However, community experts emphasized the many ways survivors continue to nurture and care for their children despite the abuse they experience. Two large-scale Canadian studies echoed this observation about the strength of survivors' parenting, finding that IPV did not impact mothers' behaviour management or positive interactions with their children.¹⁹

“

MCFD will tell them: ‘you need to have housing to keep your children safe,’ but that’s so unavailable. Poverty and housing are just realities, and if women don’t have [supports for those], it’s going to be really hard for them to keep their children safe... So it’s really a system that doesn’t connect the dots at all.”

— COMMUNITY EXPERT

As a protective measure, survivors may ensure their children are not left alone with the person using violence, send children to a safe place if violence begins, or reassure children they are not to blame for the violence. Many opt to remain in abusive relationships “as a strategy to protect themselves and their children from further violence and harm.”²⁰ While some survivors contact police or seek protective legal orders, others keep abuse private to avoid harmful interactions with authorities such as the police, immigration, or family policing systems.

A common myth is that survivors can choose to end violence simply by leaving an abusive relationship. Yet, staying in situations of abuse can sometimes be safer than trying to leave. It is well known that survivor-parents and their children often face violence and **coercive control** even after they leave a partner using abuse. In fact, the risk of violence increases post-separation,²¹ a reality that is highlighted in the **Ministry of Children and Family Development’s (MCFD)** own Best Practices regarding gender-based violence.²²

COERCIVE CONTROL is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation, and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten a victim. This controlling behaviour is designed to make a person dependent on the person who is harming them by isolating them from support, exploiting them, depriving them of independence, and regulating their everyday behavior.

THE MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT is the government department that is given power through the *Child, Family and Community Services Act* (CFCSA). This agency employs family policing workers (Ministry workers) to investigate and maintain oversight of children, youth, and families. This government department also funds many family support services within BC.

Leaving an abusive relationship can also put families in danger from poverty and a lack of safe, affordable housing. BC’s Basic Income Panel notes that over half of people experiencing violence in Canada also experience financial abuse, indicating both financial dependency and a serious lack of financial resources. The Panel stressed that BC’s income assistance program “does not provide sufficient income to a person who has fled with nothing.”²³

Writing about the multiple forms of colonial and gendered violence experienced by Indigenous women living in poverty in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, Martin and Walia highlight how women “often have to make the impossible decision between staying in an abusive relationship, or becoming homeless and having their children apprehended.”²⁴ A child’s secure connection with their protective parent is crucial for reducing the effects of exposure to violence²⁵, and separation from that parent is devastating. Community experts emphasized the urgent need for services to address violence instead of removing children from their families. Children and their families deserve to be *safe together*.

A Shared History and the Overlapping Harms

Institutions and the media often portray gender-based violence (GBV) as an interpersonal or family issue caused by abusive individuals and behaviors. But as survivors and advocates have described for decades, GBV flows from state violence that has harmed families and communities for generations.

Community experts in our project disputed the mainstream belief that the policing, family policing, and criminal legal systems create safety or protection. Instead, they viewed these systems as a cause of the same harms they claim to address. As one of our community partners put it at our first meeting: “Family policing *is* gender-based violence.”

Indigenous community experts linked their experiences of gender-based violence to the “through line” of colonial state violence that their families and communities had experienced—and resisted—for generations. Forced separation from family, culture, and community has been integral to colonial violence. This violence can be traced through the European-led transatlantic slave trade and separation of Black families to sell children; mandatory residential schools for Indigenous children, now officially recognized as a system of “cultural genocide;” the Sixties Scoop; disproportionate detention and incarceration; of Black and Indigenous people and forced separation and detention of migrant families at borders, or separation through deportation.²⁶

STATE VIOLENCE refers to violence that is perpetrated by the government, its systems, or its employees or actors. State violence includes violence by law enforcement, prisons, immigration policies, and economic systems.

Colonial violence has also included the brutal imposition of a patriarchal gender binary; devaluation of women, girls, and Two-Spirit people; and attempts to erase culturally distinct understandings of gender.²⁷ However, from the beginning, Two-Spirit people and Indigenous women “resisted the patriarchy because it threatened to undermine their socio-economic autonomy and because it threatened the socio-cultural cohesion of their communities.”²⁸

GBV and family policing have a shared lineage in systems of colonialism and **racial capitalism**. Both are historical, persistent techniques of control that uphold these power structures.

RACIAL CAPITALISM refers to the process that used racial categories to normalize and naturalize labour roles and access to resources. The most prominent example of this was the Atlantic Slave Trade. Today, racial capitalism operates on a racial division and hierarchy to pit workers and their communities against each other and normalize structural inequalities like lack of resources on reserves, underpaying migrant workers, and blaming migrants for rising housing costs.

“

Immigrant and refugee families and children are experiencing systemic gaps and harms that have similarities with the harms experienced by Indigenous families and children.

Families are struggling to the point that children are removed; information and supports could have helped, but by then it's too late (to prevent the removal).”

— COMMUNITY EXPERT

Structural conditions of violence and risk

Structural violence includes the state's denial of political and economic equality to those most impacted by GBV. For example, under the *Indian Act's* provisions to strip Indigenous women of status, approximately two million Indigenous women have been displaced from their lands and communities.²⁹ This colonial policy, among others, has resulted in Indigenous people, families, and Nations disproportionately experiencing deep poverty.³⁰ Community experts in our project also described increased exposure to violence due to the state's failure to ensure access to safe, adequate, and affordable housing—even though the human right to housing is recognized in international and Canadian law.³¹ The Canadian state also creates vulnerability to abuse through its immigration system, which forces many migrants into economic and legal dependence on family members or other sponsors.

STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE refers to the physical and psychological harm that result from exploitative and unjust social, political, and economic systems.

These and other government policies, alongside inadequate investment in community- and care-based services, have undermined survivors' autonomy; alienated them from sources of support; placed them in precarious situations that increase gendered harms and violence; and denied them options to keep themselves and their families safe.

GBV in turn directly increases the risk of family policing because the state defines a child's exposure to intimate partner violence as requiring system intervention.³² Family violence also indirectly increases exposure to family policing by increasing the risk of financial and housing precarity, which the family policing system often frames as "neglect."³³ GBV is "a major pathway to homelessness,"³⁴ leading to increased risk of violence in shared or precarious living situations—including shelters, encampments, and public spaces in which children may not be allowed or safe.³⁵ Further, GBV can result in health, mental health,

or substance use issues, which may be flagged as child safety concerns.³⁶

The same conditions that put people at risk of gender violence also put them at risk of family policing. Poverty and other disparities in social determinants of health (including inadequate housing, food insecurity, and health concerns) are significant determinants of both GBV and of involvement in family policing.³⁷

Carceral myths and cycles of harm

Victims, saviours, and perpetrators

Throughout our project, community experts named how GBV—and especially policing responses to violence—are often framed through myths about *victims; saviours; and perpetrators, criminals or predators.*

The myth of the white saviour can be traced back to the narrative that residential schools were "rescuing" Indigenous children and Indigenous people more broadly. Similarly, the racism of the Sixties Scoop was justified by the idea that removing Indigenous children from reserve communities would "save" them from poverty³⁸—in other words, from the poor housing, inadequate services, and lack of access to traditional sources of food and wellness that resulted from colonization.

Experts shared how the other recurring myth of victim and perpetrator shapes systemic carceral responses to violence. Specifically, they described how carceral systems rely on these binary gendered categories, such as "perfect victim" and "dehumanized perpetrator," alongside pervasive victim-blaming.

Rather than addressing root causes, mainstream responses to GBV suggest that women and other people marginalized by their gender should protect themselves through onerous requirements like learning self-defence, staying sober, dressing conservatively, and learning to avoid dangerous men. As a result of this victim-blaming cultural mindset, survivors of GBV often doubt or minimize their experiences of violence, experience shame due to self-blame, and face stigmatization or isolation by others.³⁹



Institutional responses to gender-based violence drive cycles of harm

In our project, community experts named how carceral mythologies legitimize criminal legal responses to gender-based violence that fail to create safety and instead result in multiple forms of re-victimization, including victim-blaming.⁴⁰ Survivors must repeatedly tell their stories to police, lawyers, and judges who scrutinize their credibility and actions.

Criminal legal systems are riddled with gendered myths and stereotypes, including that survivors lie about violence to be vindictive, or that violence is not serious unless it is physical.⁴¹ Criminal legal processes are not centered on the needs of survivors but treat survivors as witnesses to the abuse they experienced. Survivors' insights about what could stop the violence are not heard. Some survivors find that legal processes are more traumatic than the abuse itself.⁴²

In contrast to Indigenous values of relationality or collective anti-violence organizing led by racialized women, mainstream institutional approaches equate justice with control, isolation, and punishment.⁴³ The criminal legal system expects survivors to achieve "safety" through escape, hiding, and police protection from perpetrators.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the system punishes those it chooses to find guilty through incarceration. Many survivors find it difficult or impossible to seek

help because they fear criminalization of their partner and related impacts like loss of income or immigration status.⁴⁵ In survey research, trans and non-binary survivors disproportionately feared their **own** arrest.⁴⁶

ANTI-VIOLENCE programs, policies, and campaigns are aimed at combating and reducing various forms of violence in society, including physical, emotional, and structural violence, and supporting survivors.

In our project, some experts had called police to protect themselves. Others described how police involvement would escalate violence without increasing safety. Many mistrusted police, in part because police themselves commonly enacted violence against their communities: as one expert put it, "It's mostly the men that deal with the violence from the police and the girls deal with sexual abuse and harassment from the police."

Instead of incarceration and punishment, many survivors want the person who abused them to be held accountable, to acknowledge wrongdoing, and to end their harmful behaviours. While each experience of violence is unique, survivors often want:

- Safety and care
- Support to process their experiences
- The chance to share their story and the impacts of the abuse
- A say in healing processes and justice outcomes
- Affirmation of their knowledge that the abuse was wrong
- Opportunities to address the root causes of gender-based violence
- The chance to be heard in a forum that focuses on the wrongfulness of the abuse and rejects victim-blaming⁴⁷

“

So we actually have systems, especially the criminal law system, ... just heaping harm on top of harm. My brothers did not become more gentle people following periods of incarceration, they were more harmed every time they came out. And their potential to cause harm to others was so much greater.”

— COMMUNITY EXPERT

In contrast, the criminal legal system can block both individual and societal accountability for violence. Criminal processes incentivize people to deny wrongdoing instead of exploring their responsibility for harm. Courts commonly issue not-guilty verdicts, undermining survivors' experiences and increasing societal acceptance of myths about GBV including IPV. By focusing on the actions of individuals, the criminal legal system also masks the social context that normalizes GBV.⁴⁸

Rather than enable accountability or healing, criminalization and incarceration increase the likelihood of future violence. Prisons are sites of pervasive violence, and they often neglect underlying issues like substance use and mental health issues.⁴⁹ They are also sites of dehumanization and discrimination; the criminal legal system disproportionately charges, convicts, and imprisons Indigenous and racialized people.⁵⁰ The cyclical links between victimization, criminalization, and incarceration are well-documented.⁵¹ One expert shared:

“So, we actually have systems, especially the criminal law system, ... just heaping harm on top of harm. My brothers did not become more gentle people following periods of incarceration; they were more harmed every time they came out. And their potential to cause harm to others was so much greater.”

Experts stressed that these carceral approaches to violence are not only ineffective but also responsible for continued harm.

An expert described how, in the absence of physically and culturally safe, accessible, and non-punitive options for separation from those who have harmed them, it is hard to address cycles of abuse and family policing:

“[...] You have situations of [the person who is abusing] going back to the home, and then the children will be removed because the intimate partner in the home is deemed not able to look after the children or keep them safe from the abusive intimate partner. So, there are huge problems with the systems that we've given people, and limited options we've given people to actually have any kind of safety for themselves, that aren't about restricting, [and] punishing.”

Instead of criminalization, experts wanted to see meaningful, well-funded supports for the whole family—to foster learning, healing, accountability, reparation, and restoration of relationships to self, others, and communities.



CALLS TO ACTION

1

Community-rooted care and self-determination

Based on an awareness of GBV and IPV as rooted in legacies of state violence, community experts called for ways of understanding and responding that are fundamentally different from BC's current systems.

People who are experiencing abuse commonly reach out to their community—friends, family members, or neighbours—rather than contacting social services or police.⁵² Community experts stressed that everyone can play a role in preventing and responding to GBV by being attuned to signs of risk, creating safe opportunities for sharing, and learning how to provide effective support.

Support transformative learning for all

One of the strongest themes in our research was the need for transformative conversations and educational practices. Experts called for approaches to intimate partner violence that grasp complexities and reject false binaries and carceral mindsets. To counter the stigma, silence, and isolation tied to “victim” and “perpetrator” categories, which can continue cycles of violence, experts highlighted the need for nuanced conversations about harm in families and relationships. They stressed that intimate partner violence is usually a learned response: people who have themselves been violated and subjected to traumatic losses of safety and control often carry it out.

Experts also stressed that people using abuse need to be held accountable, and that violent actions should not be ignored or excused. They were unequivocal that GBV is an unacceptable, devastating, and sometimes a lethal strategy of domination and control. With that foundation, many experts conveyed that all people are “worthy of repair... care, and support.” Experts acknowledged how hard it can be to respond to abuse without excusing or minimizing it *and* without treating the person who caused harm as disposable: “This is a tough thing to talk about because it can be framed as not victim-centered... It's a difficult balance.”

PERSON WHO CAUSED HARM is a term used to resist stereotypes, binaries, or minimize the wholeness of a person. Terms such as accused and offender are legal expressions rooted in colonial law.

Experts called for community-based conversations where people are supported to understand and name the harms they have experienced and/or caused—including in relationships with people they love. They described how harm creates unique impacts and needs for each person. To end gender-based violence, these harms need to be addressed through processes of healing, learning, and change.

Community experts also called for education about:

- Healthy relationships with self and others
- Communicating needs and boundaries
- Rights and consent
- Recognizing abuse (including physical, sexual, economic, verbal, emotional, and coercive controlling abuse)

They pointed out that violence is normalized in media and sometimes in religion, which makes it especially important to offer learning opportunities to help people recognize and name abuse.

Build collective responsibility

Community experts called for communal strategies for preventing harm. These strategies resonate with decolonial approaches that respond to social issues by strengthening relationships between people, land, and all forms of life.⁵³ Mussell draws on the work of Anishinaabe-Métis legal scholar Aimée Craft to describe how, from this perspective, “the goal of justice is not personal rehabilitation but reconnecting relationships.”⁵⁴

Community experts stressed the importance of understanding violence as a collective issue that

“

There's value in hearing people's stories, and the power in that, for folks to not feel alone and be sitting in that blame or shame space, thinking about what is happening in their family. That leads to isolation, and folks often get stuck there. [They] don't know that this is actually a really common thing that people experience.”

— COMMUNITY EXPERT

requires a collective response. Communities can come together to challenge the normalization of intimate partner violence and change conditions that lead to abuse.⁵⁵ Experts called for trust-based community connections that allow family members to feel safe talking openly and receiving non-judgemental support: “One key first step is talking about it, naming it. But before that you have to foster a relationship, and that takes time.”

Strong community networks also give friends, neighbours, and family the chance to notice and address needs early and prevent issues from escalating. As we describe later in this report, these insights reflect why it is crucial that families’ access to supports and well-being is not tied to systems that view them through a lens of deficit and “risk” to be managed. One expert shared:

“In some ways I’m tired of relying on systemic action. I’m more interested in: How are we – as individuals, as organizations, as coalitions – how are we going to support the communities we come from, or we claim to support, in more meaningful ways?”

Experts also described inspiring practices that community members could use to intervene in situations of risk or abuse, including:

- Nurturing connection with survivors and families to decrease the isolation, shame, and stigma that results from and enables abuse.
- Listening non-judgmentally, making observations, and asking reflective questions to help a person recognize and name the abuse they are experiencing.
- Helping to identify risks and map out resources and options that could increase safety (safety planning).
- Helping survivors gain power over their situation by strengthening their relationships and gathering resources they can draw on.
- Offering help such as material resources, childcare, transportation, accompaniment, or help finding housing.
- Having calm, honest conversations with people using abuse to share concerns and offer resources for change – provided this does not put a survivor at risk.⁵⁶





Community experts saw transformative potential in processes that center the needs of those who have experienced harm, while also enabling accountability, reparation, and healing by those who have caused harm. Experts described situations where, based on the wishes of the person experiencing abuse, they created a circle of support and accountability to prevent further violence in the relationship. By having open conversations and maintaining relationships with people using abuse, supporters could hold them accountable for harms and help them learn to change:

“If you’re harmed, it necessarily creates needs for you. Those might be needs for safety, needs for belonging, needs for internal or external repair, and that can look so many different ways for people. And if those needs aren’t met, the chances of ongoing harm (internal or external) are very high.”

In one project dialogue, community experts described how traditional practices of Matriarchs coming together in granny circles reflected problem-solving

and accountability. Importantly, experts stressed that the goal of communal support is not to keep partners together; they emphasized that healing and recovering one’s sense of self often requires safe distance.

Self-determination as safety

Research dialogues and interviews reflected skepticism of saviourism and persistent calls to prioritize self-determination. As Perez-Darby emphasizes:

“The antidote to objectification is agency (self-determination) ... People experiencing a pattern of power, control, and exploitation need self-determination and safety... the order is important... Self-determination is a necessary pre-condition for safety. Safety can only exist as a product of being in charge of oneself. Safety is not something we can give someone.”⁵⁷

UNPACKING INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN FAMILY POLICING & GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

INFO collected in a Literature Review

REPORTING

GENDER-BASED violence drives reports to the policing system

FEAR OF REPORTS isolates survivors and weaponizes the system as a TACTIC OF ABUSE

MANDATED REPORTING Co-opts Co-opts Wellbeing

Using A BLAME oriented Approach

FAMILY POLICING INVESTIGATIONS

SURVIVORS OFTEN MOTHERS, PROTECT their CHILDREN BUT FACE STRUCTURAL HARMS LIKE POVERTY, PRECARIOUS STATUS, LACK OF HOUSING

The SYSTEM uses STEREOTYPES of "GOOD MOTHERS" to Shift Blame to Survivor Mothers, Framing them as RISKS to their Children

The SYSTEM Treats Fathers as "Invisible" or "Irredeemable" to AVOID Engaging with them & WORKING to REPAIR HARM

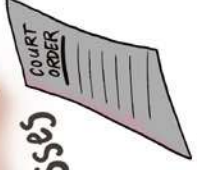
SUPPORT is LIMITED, INAPPROPRIATE, OR COERCED, with PATERNALISTIC SURVEILLANCE

LEGAL SYSTEMS and COURT PROCESSES



Legal Processes

EG, FAMILY, CRIMINAL, IMMIGRATION Can create CONFLICTS & GAPS increasing VULNERABILITY & HARM



Criminalized SURVIVORS FACE Devastating IMPACTS from the FAMILY POLICING System

GOVERNMENT CUSTODY



CHILDREN & YOUTH of ten face GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN GOVERNMENT CUSTODY

THE "FOSTER CARE" SYSTEM increases RISKS of STRUCTURAL & INTERPERSONAL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN Adulthood

SYSTEMIC PATTERNS OF SURVEILLANCE BLAME, THREATS, & PUNISHMENT MIRROR COERCIVE CONTROLLING ABUSE



Michelle Buchholz | **CASSIDY** CONSULTING

State Welfare Systems as Violence

Service provision is a second site of intersection between gender-based violence and family policing. We understand this intersection through the lens of administrative violence – the idea that administrative decision-making enforces violence.⁵⁸

The news media's focus on "visibly egregious" forms of violence can hide what Jacobs et al. refer to as "everyday practices" of state violence: "rationalized mechanisms carried out by the institutions of social welfare [that] can further perpetuate everyday practices of surveillance, categorization, and decisions over benefits versus exclusions."⁵⁹

ADMINISTRATIVE VIOLENCE "draws attention to the ways in which systems that organize our lives in seemingly ordinary ways [...] produce and distribute life chances based on violent forms of categorization." Often these categorizations are presented as normal and neutral, and mask how they uphold colonial, racist, ableist etc. frameworks. The state presents these ways of organizing life as neutral and ordinary, helping them entrench harm into daily life.

Administrative violence is at work when government services and benefits burden vulnerable individuals and families to correct harms and fill gaps caused by structural conditions. Community experts described BC's existing benefits and community-based and anti-

violence services as mere crumbs from systems and governments with enormous resources.

Lee describes how benefit programs "foist the burden of seeking relief" on already marginalized people, while masking the reality "that relief is temporary, limited, and hard to get."⁶⁰ In other words, the conditions of poverty, precarity, and risk families face are created by systems and government policy choices. At the same time, the few supports and services that exist are desperately needed, leaving families with no choice but to engage in onerous and sometimes harmful processes to access scarce resources. For example, advocates described how limitations on length of stay in many transition houses mean many women will not access them, "for the fear that after reaching the stay limit, they would have to return to the abusive environment with a potential escalation of violence." Transition houses could be a place of safety and transformation but the precarity built into them creates the potential for further risk.

Systemic discrimination

Administrative violence also includes the unjust allocation of supports: who can experience safety and who is made vulnerable.⁶¹ In our project, community experts described how the design of supports and benefits reflects systemic assessments of worthiness along familiar lines of gender, race, Indigeneity, class, and disability.

Despite official "neutrality," policy-making and the administration of supports and services are "sites of production and implementation of racism, xenophobia, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, and ableism."⁶²

“

[Gaps] come with a huge price, because we've seen women just falling through the cracks, and us having to say 'this is what the system is,' and that's really hard to do.”

— COMMUNITY EXPERT

Community experts described how many services were administered in ways that made them inaccessible and/or unsafe for communities most in need of support. One expert stated: “It’s hard to recommend programs and services, because the people who need them do not feel like they belong in those spaces. They do not feel connected, or like they understand them.”

Community experts described restrictive access criteria as a major barrier for families experiencing violence. For example, they identified gaps in programs and supports for teenage children and a lack of supports for Indigenous people living off reserve.

Language barriers and a lack of cultural relevance and safety were also key concerns. While translation services might be available, the private and complex nature of gender-based violence means that a lack of cultural context or “a small language misinterpretation” could lead to significant problems and even harm. Experts also explained that many services are not trauma-informed or culturally safe for Indigenous people, migrants, people experiencing trauma, those using substances, and others who did not meet gendered, class, and racialized expectations of the “perfect” clients.

Furthermore, experts shared that services are often piecemeal, involving multiple agencies and processes. This makes them inaccessible to those who most lack time, energy, supports, and capacity, including survivors of gender-based violence. Multiple and lengthy intake processes create barriers, causing people to “get frustrated and give up before they receive any help.”:

“You’re just at the stage of processing something violent. It’s going to take some time to process... and then to take up a referral. It’s a lot harder than people think: if you have three kids at home, and you have to continue on... then safety planning for yourself and your kids... Taking up a referral is actually really hard”

Control versus support

Finally, the lens of administrative violence also highlights how the funding and delivery of benefits and services reflect systemic priorities of control, blame, and punishment rather than providing supports that enable safety. Many supports and benefits are “intertwined—politically, legally, and administratively—with the enforcement programs most responsible for egregious harms,”⁶³ including the harms caused by policing and family policing systems. In particular, many experts in our project described a lack of programs and supports for men who use violence that are not connected to punitive systems and approaches.

Experts named an urgent need for safe housing, including increased access to transition housing. At the same time, they questioned the normalized and paternalistic expectation that survivors’ safety should require fleeing their homes, which disrupts their lives and could isolate them from their support networks. Many experts also described a lack of mental health resources for survivors and children who are not designated as “victims of a crime.”⁶⁴

Experts highlighted dramatic differences in funding between community-based and police-based services: “the programs needed to support the women get the least amount of funding, but these larger systems get the funding.” Stanton’s review of BC’s legal systems similarly identified how community-based anti-violence support services are highly effective and are identified by survivors as their most desired form of support. However, the feminist organizations that provide these services are the least well-funded sector within BC’s current anti-violence system.⁶⁵

Under-funded and overburdened services

Community experts described how organizations that push back on administrative violence and carcerality face underfunding, resulting in high caseloads and worker overwhelm and burnout. For example, experts described parents reaching out for help and no one returning their calls. Difficult working conditions,



low pay, and turnover mean many workers lack time, capacity, and experience to provide effective support. One expert stated: “There’s no way to support our clients because of the rigid policies, the lack of mental health supports, the lack of hours, the lack of pay, and the limitations of what we’re allowed to do.” Experts described how overburdened services led people in need of help to give up and experience further isolation and risk:

“People are stuck in lines or on long waitlists, and don’t get help. This makes people feel there is no hope.”

Across a variety of community-based sectors, experts described the constant turmoil and instability posed by cycles of piecemeal and temporary funding. In many cases, organizations developed and delivered highly effective programs, only to have program funding suddenly cut. One expert described how, to maintain their family-centered service model, “we have done gymnastics to get the funding we need.” Community experts also shared how government policies on service access are “not implemented uniformly, or consistently, or across the province.” Even where good policies existed, there was a “lack of monitoring, and checks, and balances” leading to gaps in quality, responsibility, and support. One described how this “comes with a huge price, because we’ve seen women just falling through the cracks.”

CALLS TO ACTION

2

Resource community-based services

Community experts were clear that ending violence starts with family and community well-being. They repeatedly emphasized that any society serious about ensuring children’s safety would ensure all families and communities have the supports they need to thrive. Experts called for community-based and relational supports that address emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental wellness. They also specified that resources and supports should be designed, led, and delivered by communities and Nations who best understand their communities’ needs.

Voicing frustration with decades of reports and recommendations to reform criminal legal and family policing systems, one expert noted: “we’re spending so much on a system that’s broken, that we keep trying to fix, instead of just providing resources and support from the beginning.” These calls for deep system transformation differ from common calls to invest in government-wide collaboration and information-sharing across systems (for example, policing, legal, and anti-violence systems).

Community experts repeatedly stressed the need to fund community-led and community-delivered supports that are unconnected to systems of surveillance and punishment—including the family policing system. As we describe throughout this report, police and crime-based approaches were understood as unsafe, reactive, costly, ineffective, and commonly harmful—with disproportionate impacts for people who are poor, Indigenous, Black, racialized, migrant, and/or who have disabilities. These concerns are increasingly widespread,⁶⁶ and there are noted conflicts and discrimination arising from the intermingling of family support and family policing within a single ministry.⁶⁷

“

People need to be part of relationships that matter to them, [...] they need someone to believe in them and to know them personally and to feel all the things that we want to feel as humans: seen, heard, understood; that someone can hold the harm they're holding inside, with them, and effectively help them transform the conditions of their lives.”

— COMMUNITY EXPERT

Resource upstream, wholistic supports for family well-being

Community experts called for a variety of supports that address material needs that, when unmet, place people at risk of GBV, especially intimate partner violence. Experts highlighted risks associated with economic and housing insecurity, and precarious forms of immigration and labour status which produce vulnerability and isolation. As Perez-Darby notes: “People who abuse their partners... rely on systems of oppression and social inequities to maintain their control over their partner.”⁶⁸ Meaningful community-based services also featured trauma- and violence-informed practices and an attention to accessibility.

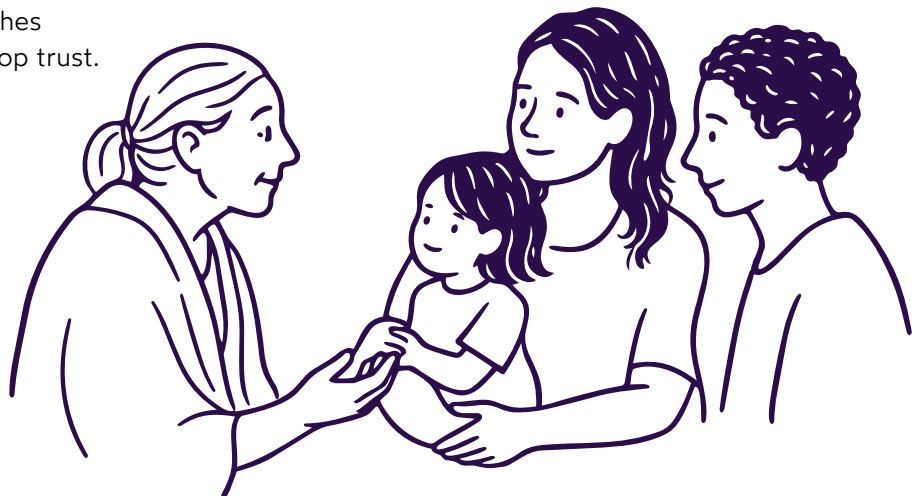
One community expert described how “supporting folks experiencing violence often comes back to basics”, especially support with independent housing, transportation, and communication: “If someone doesn’t have a phone, our programs will just go and buy them a phone. That’s a part of building safe relationships – so if they need to call someone, they can.” Experts commonly highlighted the importance of material supports to provide options for safe separation, including “housing for men so it’s not always women having to leave.”

They described how supporting children means supporting families – by centering the unique needs of each family and wrapping around them in ways that create “circles of support.” One community expert noted: “We see ourselves either being that circle of support, or identifying for folks, who can be that circle of support. We work to strengthen families and identify gaps that someone’s experiencing – from when we first meet them.” These approaches required creating time and space to develop trust.

Community experts commonly described practices of “meeting folks where they’re at” and offering concrete everyday help, like rides to appointments or services. They described how family-centered models require flexibility to respond to each family’s unique and changing needs.

Community experts emphasized that cultural context is vital for helping relationships, including shared languages and dialects. They stressed the importance of a culturally safe approach that respects for family values, culture, and beliefs, noting that vulnerable migrant women should not have to educate service-providers about their cultures and needs. They described how connection to community and culture strength, relational support, and healing. Experts highlighted the value of programs that connect people with cultural practices, such as big house gatherings, ceremony, language, and beading.

Many experts also described the importance of peer- and group-based models that offer safe spaces for parents to gather, reduce isolation, and share information. These groups offered key spaces for reciprocity, empowerment, connection, emotional support and early identification of concerns: “In my experience, people experiencing violence will reach out and share with people who they can relate to as peers, people who see them and treat them like a human being.” Experts valued kin-based support models that involve extended families, networks, and neighbours in care and support planning.



Increase access to inclusive community-based anti-violence services for those who experience harm and those who have harmed

Across our project, community experts repeatedly described immense unmet needs for crisis and long-term anti-violence-related supports. As one expert stressed: “we’ve seen that need grow.” Experts called for information about violence and anti-violence services to be clear and easily accessible. Many valued crisis lines that offer quick and anonymous access to information without concerns about being reported to the family policing or criminal legal systems.

Experts emphasized how migrant survivors, especially those with precarious status, may have significant and legitimate fears about interacting with state agencies, including policing, family policing, or immigration systems. These concerns could be enormous barriers to accessing anti-violence services. Research in this area suggests that anti-violence services should explicitly inform people if they collaborate or share information with state agencies, and if so, how.⁶⁹ Experts described how they actively vetted and built networks with other service-providers who could offer inclusive and safe supports to marginalized clients.

Accessible, safe, and inclusive services are especially important for survivors who already face marginalization, precarity, surveillance, and/or criminalization – for instance:

- Immigrants who face language barriers or have precarious status
- Those who have been involved in criminal legal and/or coercive mental health systems
- Survivors who do sex work or other criminalized work
- People in tight-knit communities where the person who harmed is well-known and/or holds power
- 2SLGBTQ+ survivors who fear repercussions from being “outed” to family members and friends.⁷⁰

Experts stressed the need for service providers to recognize the enormous toll of violence and complexity

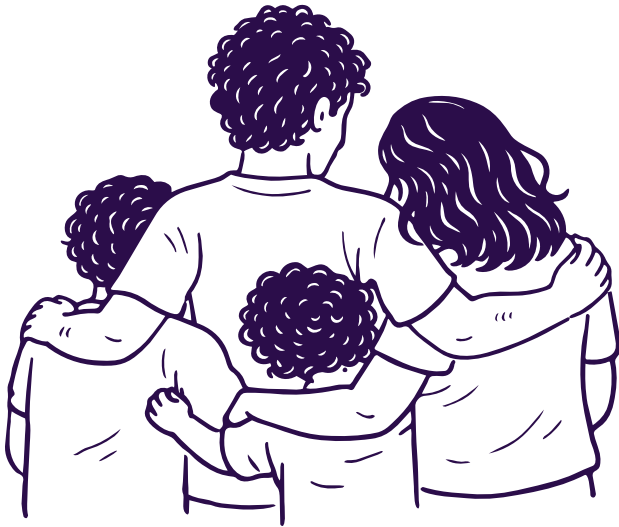
of coping and survival strategies that could lead to emotional dysregulation, mental health issues, and substance use.

“I don’t think we should be offering services or supports with the expectation that people can follow through all the time. Survivors, or people who are disenfranchised, may not show up to meetings; they may not answer their emails; or their phone calls. They may be inconsistent.... All these things are perceived character defects, but this [reflects their reality]... There’s this idea that you have to show up as your absolute best, or you cannot be supported.”

Community experts called for supports that recognize that abuse may involve extended family members. People may be unable to leave abusive situations if they are caregiving for an extended family member, including members causing them harm. They also called for kin-based supports that recognize how GBV impacts all family members, including parents, children and youth, aunts, uncles, grandparents, chosen families, and entire communities.

A key theme throughout the project was a significant absence—and great need—for programs for men and all people who use violence: “the system typically neglects men, but there needs to be more engagement with men in preventing and ending GBV.” Experts called for programs for men and for boys that focused on healthy masculinity, parenting, cultural connections, and a range of health, mental health, and substance use supports. They also called for “space for men to learn to parent and repair relationships.” Experts highlighted the need for supports for young men and boys. “There is a silence culture among boys, and that’s patriarchy. And when we are silenced, we don’t learn and don’t process our emotions.”

Many experts called for counselling and supports to assist both partners in healing, ending cycles of violence, upholding accountability, and developing healthy relationships so that their family could stay together.



“Once harm is identified it’s one of the most beautiful prevention opportunities out there, because you have an individual whom, if you can intervene with supports, if you can help heal the kind of harm they’re holding that leads them to cause that kind of harm to somebody else, you’re preventing all the future harm that might emanate from them, and then emanate from whomever they harmed.”

Experts described how survivors’ agency is strengthened when supporters help them recognize the harms they have experienced. Survivors are then better equipped to name their boundaries and needs for accountability and repair. What’s more, the people named as causing harm gain opportunities for awareness, accountability, healing, reparation, and change.

Prioritize self-determination

Community experts consistently emphasized that effective supports honour self-determination. They observed that recognizing survivors’ agency can be an important corrective to paternalistic systems. The model of “informed choice” emerged as a key wise practice for support that respects self-determination. Informed choice discussions assist people in exploring their options and the pathways and results that might flow from those choices.

INFORMED CHOICE is a process where someone has all the information that they need to weigh the risks and benefits of a decision, that they can have all their questions answered, and that they are allowed to make the decision for themselves, free from pressure or threat.

Experts described how physical distance from a person who used abuse could be necessary for healing and re-connecting to one’s sense of agency and choice. Many experts were also clear that separation did not have to be the first or only option, and that safety planning could support survivors in assessing their options.

“

People’s minds can change, to “I actually don’t want to leave this person, I want to stay.” So then the conversation shifts towards: what does that look like for you? What needs to be in place for that to be safe?”

— COMMUNITY EXPERT

Mandatory Reporting

BC laws that require reporting of child safety concerns are another site of intersection between family policing and GBV.

Section 14 of BC's *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)* creates a population-wide **duty to report** for anyone who has "reason to believe that a child, including an Indigenous child, needs protection".⁷¹ Failure to comply with the **duty to report** is an offence that is punishable with a fine and/or imprisonment.⁷²

MANDATORY REPORTING (also known as the duty to report) is the universal legal "duty to report" suspected child abuse/neglect to the Ministry of Children and Family (MCFD). Mandatory and permissive reporting laws often lead to misreporting, which results in over-reporting, due to vague and subjective definitions like neglect, reporter fear, implicit bias, and a "when in doubt, report" culture.

Section 13 of *CFCSA* states that circumstances indicating a need for protection include exposure to violence, that is: "living in a situation where there is domestic violence by or towards a person with whom the child resides".⁷³ Mandatory reporting laws were not originally designed to address gender-based violence,^{xcii} and this inclusion has created staggering numbers of reports and increased pressure on service providers.⁷⁴ MacDougall et al. note that the involvement of MCFD in cases of intimate partner violence is "often-automatic."⁷⁵ Similarly, in Ontario, child exposure to IPV is now the largest category of

"substantiated" maltreatment investigations.⁷⁶ Between 2008 and 2019 across Canada, investigations about IPV exposure were six times more likely to result in family policing interventions compared with investigations about all other types of concerns.⁷⁷ Some studies suggest IPV exposure is linked to higher rates of temporary or permanent child removal.⁷⁸

In both Canada and the US, recent increases in reporting based on exposure to intimate partner violence reflect a decades-long trend: overly broad and vague definitions of abuse and neglect have led to more unfounded, inappropriate reports. In both the US and Canada, IPV-related reports disproportionately target marginalized families – especially families who are poor, Black, and Indigenous.⁷⁹ US studies show mandatory reporting also fails "to uncover actual cases of abuse and neglect."⁸⁰ In other words, families are increasingly investigated not for child mistreatment but rather for hardships that could be better addressed by offering supports.⁸¹ Trivedi argues that mandated reporting laws are neither appropriate nor effective in addressing exposure to intimate partner violence, and should not apply where this is the only concern.⁸²

Fear of family policing isolates survivors

Community experts repeatedly stressed how fear of being reported to the family policing system drives survivors away from the very supports they most need. This barrier has been well-documented, including in a recent major review of BC's legal systems.⁸³ BC's Basic Income Panel has also highlighted how fear of being targeted by family policing limits access to income assistance and other crucial supports, including childcare.⁸⁴



Michelle Buchholz | CASSHEX CONSULTING

In a BC survey conducted by BWSS, 36% of Indigenous women and 30% of racialized survivors cited fear of being reported to authorities (including family policing and other systems such as immigration enforcement) as the reason they did not contact anti-violence services after experiencing gender-based violence.⁸⁵ Similarly, a US survey found 35% of IPV survivors did not ask at least one person for help because they feared being reported to authorities – especially criminal legal and family policing systems.⁸⁶ Research with healthcare professionals also suggests that some health providers may intentionally avoid questions about violence because they wish to avoid the duty to report.⁸⁷ Our findings reflects how, even when survivors reach out for help, mandatory reporting laws in fact, limit access to support relating to violence as the risk of child removal is too high for survivors to gamble with.

“There was violence in my family of origin; this would have warranted intervention. But ... as a child, the knowledge that seeking institutional help would have resulted in separation from my siblings, kept me in that situation.”

These barriers to help are greater for survivors who face discrimination based on race, gender, and/or sexual orientation because these groups face harsher judgements of their parenting.⁸⁸ The US survey of survivors found that racialized, trans, and gender-non-conforming survivors were far more likely to be warned about mandatory reporting compared with white and cis-gendered women survivors.⁸⁹

Weaponizing family policing reports as a tactic of abuse

Community experts raised concerns about malicious and anonymous reports to the family policing system. People abusing their intimate partners commonly threaten to make a family policing report to control and isolate them⁹⁰ or make it harder for them to access help.⁹¹

“

That dichotomy between intervening and not intervening – sets it up as if you’re one or the other, and if you intervene then it has to look a certain way. Or, if you’re arguing against family policing, then you’re somehow anti-interventionist [against providing help.]”

— COMMUNITY EXPERT

These threats are often part of a broader pattern where people who abuse maintain power and control by targeting the mother-child relationship, including undermining and criticizing survivor's parenting abilities, blaming them for children's behaviours, and enlisting children to report on their mother's activities.⁹² As community experts noted, anonymous reporting especially enables this kind of abuse because it re-victimizes parents, "subjecting them to investigations, and potentially, child apprehension, without the reports being tracked."⁹³

Co-opting efforts to help

Community experts shared how the universal mandatory duty to report approach promotes the belief that making a family policing report is the only option to help children in cases of GBV. Many professionals and community members do not have the information or capacity to connect families with the supports they need to end GBV. This is because of a lack of education about violence, a lack of well-resourced referral processes, and a massive underfunding of community-based and anti-violence services. With no other supported avenues for assisting families, 'helping' is falsely equated with making a family policing report.⁹⁴ Meanwhile, failures to involve policing systems are often framed as ignoring harms to children and doing nothing to help by mainstream institutions.

Community experts were concerned that many people make family policing reports based on the false belief that they are providing a family with help and access to supports. The literature on mandatory reporting also reflects these "well-intentioned" motives.⁹⁵ In BC, the family policing system is often seen as part of a system of wrap-around services and supports to which families should have more access.⁹⁶ But in our project, experts stressed that because family policing processes are not transparent or widely understood, many people underestimate the harms of reports.

As we noted in the introduction, reports to family policing agencies are rooted in policing logics of investigation to substantiate an alleged offence. They are designed to "investigate and determine if the child is a candidate for foster care, rather than refer the

family directly to services."⁹⁷ In other words, family policing investigations are oriented towards assessing families as *risks* – not to assessing families' needs, let alone their strengths.⁹⁸ This framework cues mandated reporters to report adverse family environments or experiences while ignoring the structural conditions that led to these experiences.⁹⁹

A web of surveillance

Through mandated reporting, a broad range of potential helpers instead become part of the family policing system's "web of surveillance."¹⁰⁰ They are folded into the broader policing of families that is integral to the ongoing histories of colonial and racist state violence.¹⁰¹ In other words, the duty to report makes everyone a "deputy" for the state.¹⁰²

WEB OF SURVEILLANCE is a framework to understand how the family policing system has created a network of actors who judge and control how families adhere to standards of "child safety" and "protection." These network of actors are framed as neutral and normal, and mask how colonialism, racism, ableism etc. inform these standards.

Surveillance and enforcement of these norms happen through mandatory reporting laws that turn people who could be a support for families into the eyes and ears of the state. The surveillance continues in how families are investigated and assessed by family policing workers and how their relationship with their children is controlled and dictated by the workers, including after children are removed from their families.

More broadly, the family policing system's nearsighted focus on identifying and assessing families as "risks" directs attention away from structural injustices by framing them as individual failings and deficits. For Bresch, the current heightened policing reflects logics of neoliberal capitalism wherein "individuals and families who make claims on state supports... [are] a

risk to be managed, surveilled, and controlled”.¹⁰³ The “risk” lens promoted by mandated reporting continues longstanding patterns of administrative violence that monitor mothering through social services provision. Judgements about parenting abilities are loaded with classist and racist stereotypes used to distinguish between acceptable and deficient mothering, and between the “deserving” and “undeserving” poor.¹⁰⁴

In BC and elsewhere, the racist framing and targeting of ‘dangerous’ mothers has occurred through ‘birth alerts’ where expectant parents were flagged for child removal without their knowledge or consent. In 2018, almost 60% of parents impacted by birth alerts in BC were Indigenous.¹⁰⁵ Despite a 2019 policy change by MCFD that recognized birth alerts as harmful and officially ended their use in BC, practices similar to birth alerts, most often framed as complying with a duty to report, have continued.¹⁰⁶ Community experts shared harrowing stories of newborns being removed soon after birthing parents left the hospital, often within a day or two of returning home.

Mandatory reporting leads service providers to “forego opportunities to identify supports for a family directly, abdicating the responsibility to help the family to an adversarial, parental fault-based... [system] that is unlikely to provide much assistance.”¹⁰⁷ In our project, community experts who worked in service organizations described how mandatory reporting limited their efforts to cultivate a safe relationship where survivors could disclose abuse and have frank conversations about safety planning, options, and supports.

As we detail in the next section, family policing reports rarely result in timely, appropriate, or effective help for families impacted by violence. Instead, such reports greatly damage trust in helping professionals and institutions—including those in health, education, settlement, mental health, and anti-violence sectors. As a result, supportive and/or therapeutic relationships unravel, as do opportunities for support.¹⁰⁸

CALLS TO ACTION

3

Move towards supporting over reporting

In our project, many community-based advocates and service providers shared concerns about their legislated role as deputized agents of the family policing system. Community experts shared thoughtful approaches to supporting families while avoiding family policing involvement or reducing harms from family policing reports.

Uphold a commitment and practice to support and not report

Community experts underscored that parents experiencing GBV should be offered their choice of supports as a starting point: “The way we structure ourselves, it allows for that kind of comprehensive care to happen.” Experts described assisting survivors with practical steps like safety planning, finding safe housing, filling out forms, and travelling to appointments. As one expert put it, “you don’t need to trigger that [family policing] pathway if the appropriate resources are offered and taken up, and there are safety plans in place.”

Community experts highlighted that, prior to safety planning or risk assessment, it was crucial to communicate with survivors about how the information gathered would be used, whether it would be shared, and with whom. Experts also mentioned the need to be clear with themselves and with survivors about what supports they could or could not offer.

In cases where parents chose to make a report, or a report was necessary, experts stressed the need for transparency and self-determination: “never calling without the person present, without their consent, without them being in a place to fully understand.” Strategies around reporting included having multiple conversations ahead of time, supporting parents to set parenting goals, and developing a support plan to meet those goals.

Community experts also described how, through informed choice, parents may “want or need to engage [family policing] agencies for the support they provide.” One expert highlighted how negotiating with these systems for access to grocery cards or other material supports could be a powerful act of self-determination by clients. Community experts described various strategies for mitigating harms, including using strength-based framing and limiting unnecessary details when communicating with the family policing system.

In contrast to approaches rooted in saviourism or policing the behaviour of people experiencing violence, these strategies focus on expanding the options available to people so they can make safe choices. Experts described prioritizing trust and supporting survivors’ decision-making capacities. These approaches also reflect a wholistic understanding of violence flowing from harmful conditions that impact *whole families* – not just children.

Build helpers’ capacities to support

Community experts also called for widespread awareness-raising, education, and critical reflection about the structural violence caused by family policing. They also called for resources and education that build broader capacities to ‘support’ versus ‘report.’ This skill-development needs to occur across a wide range of service sectors—especially health, education, and housing. Such efforts could greatly help “narrow the door”¹⁰⁹ of family policing systems, and instead directly connect families to the supports they need.

Experts stressed the need for resourcing, policy, and operational changes to enable service providers to sustain long-term helping relationships. These relationships are crucial for understanding families’ unique needs, and assisting people to access the supports they need at different stages of coping and healing. Experts shared that many mandated reporters are working without enough time, information, and training to effectively offer wrap-around supports. They called for centralized information on community-based supports and dedicated workers for resource navigation, advocacy, and “see[ing] folks through” the difficult process of referrals.

“Our role is putting in place what’s needed for their situations – to prevent interactions with harmful systems or minimize the harms of interactions if they occur. This could be through safety planning, or putting people in touch with crisis lines, and connecting them to gender-based violence organizations if needed. My goal is to know a bit about each of the various kinds of supports, options, legal issues and systems – including family policing systems – so I can help them understand their options and choices... We see it as our responsibility to educate ourselves... so we can do all of this work ourselves from a preventative and harm reduction approach, instead of just making a [family policing] report.”

Advocate to end mandatory reporting

According to community experts and the published research we consulted for this project, mandatory reporting laws are ineffective and worsen the harms of GBV in many ways. Mandatory reporting drains resources that could be devoted to meaningful supports based on the self-determination of families. The federal government invests \$44 million annually in fighting gender-based violence, including victim support and encouraging faster legal responses.¹¹⁰ The goal of these programs is typically to get survivors to talk with trusted professionals and to leave abusive relationships. Mandatory reporting laws undermine this investment and effort. Experts in our project called for an end to the universal duty to report—particularly in cases where the main concern is exposure to GBV.

Family Policing Investigations

Family policing investigations and subsequent “protection responses” (i.e., state interventions in a parent-child relationship aimed at “protecting” a child) are a very significant site of intersection with gender-based violence.

Once a report has been made, families are subject to multi-stage investigation processes where they experience surveillance and monitoring of their behaviors, relationships, and home life. If an investigation leads MCFD to believe that a child requires its protection, it has a range of possible protection responses, from negotiating a voluntary agreement with the parents to removing the child from the parents’ legal custody.

In this site of intersection, we are discussing protection responses when a child continues to live with their parent(s) or kinship caregiver(s) (that is, they have not been removed and placed into foster care.) This situation can occur through both “voluntary” agreements and interim or temporary court orders. Both a voluntary agreement and a court order can impose terms and conditions on a parent or caregiver that are deemed necessary for a child’s safety.

In BC, the process of investigation, policing, and surveillance may last days or weeks, but it often continues for months and years through various ‘protection’ responses. Community experts repeatedly shared that the family policing system subjects families to intense scrutiny and pressure without offering supports that could increase a survivor’s

options or enable meaningful safety for themselves and their families.

Coercive power

In BC, the investigative responses to a family policing report are laid out in MCFD’s *Child Protection Response Policies – Chapter 3*.¹¹¹ If the screening process indicates that a report is under MCFD’s jurisdiction and requires an investigation, the system responds through one of two paths. The Family Development Response (“FDR”) path is used in most cases and is framed as a collaborative and transparent “assessment” process. The Child Protection Investigation (“CPI”) path is used in less than 10% of cases and can go ahead without the “cooperation” of the parents.¹¹²

Ministry workers use the FDR path when there are no allegations of severe physical abuse or neglect, and they deem parents as “able and willing” to participate in a collaborative process. The CPI path, on the other hand in contrast, is used when there are allegations of severe physical abuse or neglect, or the parents are deemed unable or unwilling to collaborate.¹¹³

To investigate child safety concerns, both the FDR and CPI paths enable workers to:

- have private discussions with children
- request medical examinations of children and/or medical records of both children and parents
- gather information from third party contacts (including by talking to service providers and obtaining documents from them)
- conduct home visits to inspect a family’s living situation.

While the FDR assessment process is not called an “investigation” in MCFD’s policies, we argue that both types of responses are, in essence, investigative—especially because this is how they are experienced by families. In both the FDR and CPI paths, families become the focus of scrutiny and information-gathering to substantiate or dismiss allegations of mistreatment and determine responsibility or blame. While the FDR assessment is voluntary and collaborative on paper, the relationship between Ministry workers and parents reflects a massive power imbalance in practice. Further, MCFD can switch from the FDR to the CPI path at any point, including when a parent does not agree to an investigation step or request.¹¹⁴

The threat of child removal

Importantly, any time after receiving a family policing report, a Ministry worker can legally enter a parent’s home to remove a child from the parent’s custody without a court order. They also have legal authority to involve police in the child’s removal.¹¹⁵ The removal of a child triggers a court process in which the provincial court has the power to review and supervise the removal and “protection” responses.¹¹⁶ It can take weeks or months for a judge to thoroughly review the case, decide whether the state’s actions were warranted, and make a court order about the child’s care. Prior to this substantive legal review, parents have limited ability to challenge what has happened to them. Their best option is often to try to negotiate an agreement with the Ministry worker about how to keep their child safe while living at home.¹¹⁷

“Voluntary agreements”

“Voluntary agreements” are negotiated between MCFD and parents or caregivers. They occur through various “collaborative” processes and can be made any time after a Ministry worker contacts a family about protection concerns (regardless of whether a court process has also begun). There are many types of agreements, including:

- short-term Safety Plans (that are intended to “protect” a child during an investigation process)
- longer-term Family Plans

- Extended Family Program Agreements
- Voluntary Care Agreements
- Special Needs Agreements.

Any of these agreements can contain conditions that parents or caregivers are required to meet to address MCFD’s safety concerns.¹¹⁸

If a “voluntary agreement” cannot be negotiated, or if the family does not adhere to the agreement, Ministry workers can, at any point, remove children and place them in a different living situation (whether with extended family or in government custody). They can also apply for court orders to impose conditions on the parents while the child remains at home, including restrictions on one parent’s access to the child.¹¹⁹ In this way, agreements framed as “voluntary” or “collaborative” can reasonably be understood through a lens of coerced consent.¹²⁰

Placing responsibility on survivor-parents

At their core, family policing investigations are about determining whether and how to intervene in a parent-child relationship to protect a child. This foundational legal power shapes how gender-based violence is viewed within this system. Invoking the legal power to separate families (whether through actual or threatened removal of a child) requires evidence, not only that safety concerns are present, but that parents are responsible for this neglect or abuse.¹²¹ In other words, legitimizing family policing interventions requires “a perpetrator who can be held responsible for a substantiated allegation.”¹²² It is this investigatory focus on individual responsibility, or fault, that drives intensive scrutiny of parenting behaviours and household conditions. It frames them as parental deficits rather than as resulting from poverty or other structural factors.¹²³

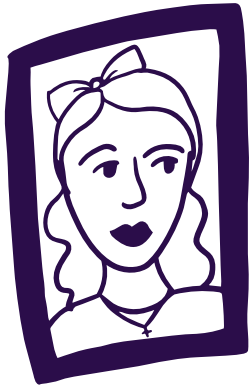
The family policing system’s blame-oriented lens commonly expects survivors to manage the violence through “predicting, managing, and fleeing” GBV.¹²⁴ⁱ Community experts described how they were made responsible for enforcing legal agreements or orders limiting contact with their partner who used

“

Women are struggling because they're taking care of everyone else (their kids, elders) and potentially experiencing violence – and also being scrutinized and blamed for their parenting.”

— COMMUNITY EXPERT

SURVIVORS OFTEN MOTHERS, PROTECT their CHILDREN BUT FACE STRUCTURAL HARMS LIKE POVERTY, PRECARIOUS STATUS, LACK OF HOUSING



The SYSTEM uses STEREOTYPES of "GOOD MOTHERS" to Shift Blame to Survivor Mothers, Framing them as RISKS to their Children

The SYSTEM Treats Fathers as "INVISIBLE" OR "IRREDEEMABLE" to AVOID Engaging with them & WORKING to REPAIR HARM



Michelle Buchholz | CASSYEX CONSULTING

abuse. In other words, they became tasked with avoiding victimhood. Strict requirements within these agreements might cause stress, as even incidental contact with the partner could result in harsh consequences.

In our project, community experts shared how family policing investigations involved the requirement to be "perfect" according to white, classist, and ableist normative standards. They described how family policing assessments and case notes reflect bias and stigma. Experts often encountered Ministry workers who were perceived as not sharing their cultural and class background or having lived experience of the challenges faced by families. This lack of diversity and cultural safety in BC's family policing system has been documented in recent major reviews.¹²⁵

CULTURAL SAFETY is a practice for those in positions of power (including frontline staff), to recognize the historical, economic, and social contexts, coupled with structural and interpersonal power imbalances, that shape people's outcomes and experiences with systems like family policing. For Indigenous peoples, this means naming and recognizing the past and present role of colonialism.

The requirement for "good mothers" to be protective means that survivors are commonly held responsible for the relational and structural violence they experience.¹²⁶ For example, family policing assessments decontextualize substance use and/or mental health issues; these are scrutinized as individual failings, instead of understood as linked to chronic trauma in situations of abuse.¹²⁷

Experts named how parental capacity assessments used in family policing and family law systems assume Eurocentric family norms. They also shared that Ministry workers often lack the cultural sensitivity required to effectively support survivors and migrant families. As a result, vulnerable and isolated migrant survivors who face language barriers and lack knowledge of Canadian laws are left without support to "figure it out" and "fit the system."

Youth experts in our project shared how family policing’s adversarial lens meant they also felt scrutinized during investigations. Even in situations where they disclosed abuse and wanted help, systemic responses often left them feeling blamed and discredited – not only by their parents or siblings, but also by the social worker conducting the investigation. Rather than feeling validated, youth felt unheard and disbelieved about the harms they had experienced, and were sometimes even accused of lying.

Failure to engage with partners who use violence

Meanwhile, the family policing system often fails to engage the partner or parent (usually a father) who is using violence. The phenomenon of “ghost fathers”¹²⁸ reflects dominant, dehumanizing views of “perpetrators” as irredeemable and undeserving of support to change. Even when a partner’s violence is clearly identified as the main protection concern, family policing responses typically do not seek to hold this partner accountable or support them to end abuse. Often, they are simply deemed unreachable.¹²⁹ As one community expert shared: “the emphasis is always on the mom being responsible for the safety of herself and her children, and ... the abuser or perpetrator is not held accountable for it.”

GHOST FATHERS is a term to describe how the family policing system does not acknowledge or engage with the presence of fathers in the lives of mothers and children, even when they are present to some capacity.

Research shows how the family policing system often regards survivors of intimate partner violence as negligent or lacking in parenting capacity at best, and as “quasi-perpetrators” at worst.¹³⁰ In our project, community experts were intensely aware of being watched with suspicion as parents. One expert shared how, at the start of an interview, a Ministry worker “came in as though I had done something wrong and I was being forced into some sort of consequences.” Experts frequently shared that they experienced

a lack of empathy, respect, and validation of their experiences. One expert described how emotionally devastating it felt to be regarded as a “danger” to their children.

Opposing readings of “best interests”

These dynamics of scrutiny can also be linked to the family policing system’s narrow interpretation of the *best interest of the child* principle, including the definition of the best interests of an Indigenous child under the federal *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families* (the *Federal Act*). This legal principle is a foundational element of BC’s family policing laws under the *CFCSA* and the *Federal Act*. Despite the *Federal Act*’s emphasis on protecting an Indigenous child’s family, community, and cultural connections,¹³¹ the best interests of the child principle continues to be interpreted in ways that detract from a child’s right to their important relationships, to continuity of care, and to their cultural identity and heritage.¹³²

In situations of violence, survivors are often held responsible for the structural and relational violence that they and their children experience. For example, when survivors cannot find suitable housing and do not immediately leave a violent situation, they may be judged as failing to protect their child’s safety interests. This narrow interpretation pits the interests of parents and children against each other, deprioritize survivors’ safety, increase harms to both survivors and children,¹³³ and frames intimate partner violence as though it only harms children.^{clix}

Furthermore, the family policing system takes a one-sided view of risk to children. It focuses extensively on the possibility that families may harm their children while disregarding the many known harms of surveilling and separating families.¹³⁴ The system’s interpretation of the best interests of the child principle also tends to ignore the shared interest and recognized rights of families and children to remain together *and* be safe from both structural and interpersonal gender-based violence.

Pressure and control without support

Experts repeatedly stressed that involvement of family policing systems did not result in appropriate help to address gender-based violence and keep their children and families safe. Multiple experts described situations where they reached out to the family policing system for help and/or disclosed abuse but did not receive any support and in some instances did not feel that they were taken seriously.¹³⁵ This pattern of non-support is also well-documented in the publications we reviewed.¹³⁶

“A lot of the programs from MCFD are absolutely useless and prevented me from doing things that I should have been doing.”

Experts’ experiences highlight how families experiencing gender-based violence are frequently shunted towards a system that is not designed to address it. Like other carceral systems, family policing systems are not social welfare systems; they are not meant to deliver services that can prevent or end violence. Community experts pointed out that ‘child protection services’ are not actually *services*: they are a monitored set of onerous and limiting requirements on parents and families (such as those set out in safety plans, negotiated agreements, or court orders).

In the experience of community experts, these requirements treat families as risks to be controlled rather than increasing their options for safety. Experts also described these requirements as unhelpful: for example, having to keep taking the same parenting class or join waitlists for over-full services.¹³⁷ Research in this area shows that family policing requirements like parenting programs “have little empirical evidence for effectiveness and are rarely attuned to the unique needs of IPV survivors.”¹³⁸ In our project, experts shared that they were not offered financial supports to offset the costs of these required programs or assist with needs like childcare, transportation, counselling, or system navigation. They described how some required programs could also increase surveillance and scrutiny, especially if these were funded through MCFD. When community experts requested assistance, they were sometimes given extremely



limited supports that treated them in a controlling way based on gendered and classed stereotypes that “this is a woman who will exploit the system.”

In contrast, many of the violence-related programs that experts named as important (e.g., PEACE programs, Stopping the Violence counselling, or Roots of Safety service planning) can be accessed through community organizations. These effective, purpose-built anti-violence programs are massively underfunded and not available through the family policing system.

Uncertainty and disempowerment

Community experts also described how the family policing system’s difficult requirements created significant unpredictability and disempowerment. They described feeling “blindsided” by inconsistencies, changing messages, errors, and lack of transparency. Child protection concerns were not always clear or explained, and decisions seemed subjective or arbitrary.¹³⁹ These experiences are also reflected in Edwards et al.’s account of family policing investigations where parents are expected to suddenly:

- Bear psychological costs of powerlessness.
- Comply with requirements at the expense of time and money for other priorities.
- Learn about complex family policing laws and processes.¹⁴⁰

Many experts shared experiences of ever-changing goalposts and conditions. One expert stated, “There are constantly hoops to jump through and even when parents fulfill these requirements, it’s never enough. Parents are set up for failure.” The changing, never-ending requirements are often related to high turnover rates among Ministry workers. Multiple experts described situations where they made significant progress towards addressing protection concerns, only to be assigned a new worker and having to “start all over again... in that cycle of discrimination, scrutiny, and judgement.” Experts observed that workers often lacked capacity to effectively engage with parents experiencing trauma, hold space for neurodiversity, and/or disabilities.

NEURODIVERSITY is the idea that all brains are diverse in how they work – no two brains or nervous systems are the same.

Experts were acutely aware of the immense power that family policing systems held over their lives. They described having to appease and be polite to workers, even in situations where they felt mistreated and disrespected.

“Some folks we work with... they just got out of an abusive situation with their child’s father, and now they have to deal with family policing. And do you know what they say? They’d rather have been in a physically abusive relationship than have to deal with the family policing system. Because in that [intimate partner violence] situation, they can yell, scream, maybe hit back, maybe set boundaries... but they can’t do any of that [in relation to the family policing system].”

Escalating risk

Family policing responses are not only unsupportive and ineffective, but they can also increase safety risks in contexts of violence. Community experts shared how family policing systems could escalate relationship tensions while failing to provide relevant supports. This dynamic is well-documented.¹⁴¹ Family policing systems commonly lack the policies, training, and tools required for workers to accurately assess risk and respond in ways that ensure the safety of survivors and their children.¹⁴² Research in this area shows that the family policing system often dismisses reports of violence, resulting in families being repeatedly reported or re-“referred” to family policing agencies without being connected to anti-violence-related supports.¹⁴³

Despite the well-known risks of leaving abuse, a survivor’s capacity to protect their children is often judged by their willingness to separate from their partner.¹⁴⁴ In our research, many community experts said the family policing system expected separation and treated it as the only solution to violence, despite the lack of financial support and affordable housing for survivors. One expert had seen situations where “social workers say the child can’t have contact with the father, yet the mom’s unable to sustain herself financially.” Experts described a “push to split up families” rather than “supporting fathers” to end violence.

Research shows that family policing system involvement has frequently failed to prevent deaths of women and children in contexts of intimate-partner violence. The system’s risk assessment process did not lead to services or supports to enable women and their children to safely limit their contact with the men who subsequently killed them.¹⁴⁵

As a community partner stated, “family policing *is* gender-based violence.” The system creates abusive conditions of control, surveillance, limits on behaviours and associations, criticism, misplaced blame, and disempowerment amidst the constant, unpredictable

threat of child removal. In other words, family policing mirrors the coercive dynamics of IPV.¹⁴⁶ One expert noted that many people experiencing violence become “a victim of the system and of [their] partner.”

CALLS TO ACTION

4

Advocacy to minimize harms and maximize support

In situations where families are facing family policing investigations and interventions, meaningful supports include:

- Accompaniment to meetings and appointments
- System navigation
- Advocacy
- Rights-based and accountability strategies

Community experts described advocates’ main goal as mediating the massive power imbalance between families and family policing agencies: “We’re often doing a lot of backpedaling to try to minimize harms associated [with] these agencies.”

The role of advocates

Disputing the assumption that making a family policing report ends a helper’s responsibility to families, community experts stressed the need for significant advocacy and support for families throughout family policing encounters: “We don’t leave people hanging. Just because the family policing pathway has been triggered, that doesn’t mean we stop advocating for them to meet their goals.” Experts accompanied parents at family policing appointments, advocated for parents’ rights and interests, and documented information. The presence of an advocate could be a crucial corrective to the system’s gaps, inconsistencies, and shifting expectations of parents. Having a witness during interactions with workers helped parents feel more supported and decreased potential for discriminatory treatment.

“If child protection is actively going on, we always work in twos. We go to meetings together. One person is taking notes, and one person is actively witnessing and being present with the person. That way we have two eyes and ears on the workers, on the system, at all times, so we can then debrief with the client: “Did you understand everything? This is what we understood.”

Often [workers] are very inconsistent: the language they use, the deadlines (e.g., court dates) change all the time. What you’re going to court for. It’s pretty precarious and inhumane. Just our physical presence there, in twos, changes the tone of the meeting. When someone doesn’t have support – ... or not believed to have support – the workers take a different stance and approach.”

Some community experts used case reviews, a process to bring cross-sector supports together around one table to develop plans to help parents meet their goals in the face of onerous family policing requirements. This could include practices like:

- Documenting parents’ efforts and strengths helps challenge the family policing system’s discriminatory and deficit-focused assessments.
- Assisting with system navigation, explanation of processes, and administrative tasks like keeping track of emails.

One expert described how, because of disability, literacy, cultural, or linguistic barriers, vulnerable clients often “need support understanding what MCFD has given them.”

Experts described how advocacy often entailed pushing back on overreaching, unrealistic, and inappropriate requirements or “hoops” imposed on families. Advocates instead pushed for the system to provide the supports that parents felt they needed,

often material resources—such as cost coverage, childcare, transportation, or compensation for time off work—to support parents to complete the onerous steps required by the system.

Rights-based and accountability approaches

Community-based advocates and helping professionals are doing enormous amounts of labour to mitigate harms for families at the hands of a coercive and often opaque system. Community experts identified systemic gaps and failures marked by continuously “reinventing the wheel” to fix an un-fixable system. Their work is often un-resourced, unpaid, and off the side of their desk. Experts in our project repeatedly called for families to have access to paid community-based peer advocates and Elders who could support them through family policing interactions. As one expert stated: “There needs to be ongoing support; you can’t just drop them and imagine other systems are supporting them. We’ve had to do a lot of advocacy on our end, to get [survivors] connected to what they need.” Community experts also called for “know your rights” resources that could enable families, supporters, and communities to push back against overreaches by family policing systems.

“It’s pretty much a full-time job when someone’s interacting with [family policing] services, so we need to prioritize that person’s care over folks that aren’t interacting with those systems. We know we’re going to have to make space for emails, court, travel. We also attend, if folks want, their supervised or unsupervised access visits – when they’re going to... see their kids before an agreement is made ... We offer to go ... because they’re often being judged on their parenting there, and there’s a lot of unspoken surveillance that’s happening. So if we’re present there, we find that’s really supportive and preventative.”



Community experts also called for more oversight of family policing systems to prevent widespread inconsistencies, shifting expectations, and discrimination. Family policing systems need to be held accountable to their own policies. This call is also echoed in the BC Representative for Children and Youth’s recent systemic review of BC’s family policing system.¹⁴⁷ Community experts called for systemic accountability mechanisms: “Who do we hold responsible to ensure that: policy is in place, that it’s updated, [and] revised? That it’s developed with feedback from everybody; it’s implemented in a timely way, and it’s monitored and reassessed?”

Intersecting Legal Systems

A further site of intersection between gender-based violence and family policing can occur when families are required to interact with multiple administrative and legal systems.

Experts described how pressures, gaps, and contradictions stemming from these multiple systems can increase vulnerability and risk of harm.

In situations of intimate partner violence, the activation of policing or family policing systems often leads to the involvement of other systems—including criminal legal, immigration, and family law. In a recent submission to Canada’s Department of Justice, West Coast LEAF and Rise Women’s Legal Centre describe how multiple systems can intersect to create increasing complexity:

“A survivor who has had their children apprehended by the state would not have the ability to move forward in their family law claims as they are no longer the caregivers for the children. A parent who is under a deportation order could potentially lose their ability to see and care for their Canadian-born children again. A survivor facing criminal charges would have difficulties obtaining safety and protective orders for themselves and their children in the family law system.”¹⁴⁸

Through processes of “mutual deference,” actors in different systems (like hospitals, family policing, or family law) each assume that another system is more qualified to assess risk. As a result, these actors often uncritically accept assessments from other systems because they are perceived to reflect an expert opinion.¹⁴⁹

“We need to have a model that understands the whole picture – that we are still working in the context of inequalities.”

Legal system discrimination

Legal systems are designed for and by people with privilege.¹⁵⁰ Community experts named how these systems often do not grasp the weaponization of socio-economic, cultural, and interpersonal power even though this is crucial for understanding the dynamics of abuse.¹⁵¹

In BC and elsewhere, the legal system is not immune to pervasive myths and stereotypes about intimate-partner violence that harm survivors and place them at increased risk.¹⁵² During one child protection hearing in BC, for example, a judge characterized the abusive relationship endured by a survivor as her “lifestyle choice.”¹⁵³

In the context of multiple systems, these systemic forms of bias and discrimination can follow a family “across time and space.” Assessments of survivors as ‘bad mothers’ or as ‘unable or unwilling’ to collaborate with family policing requirements become part of a written record that can influence decisions in multiple courts.¹⁵⁴

Harms from legal processes

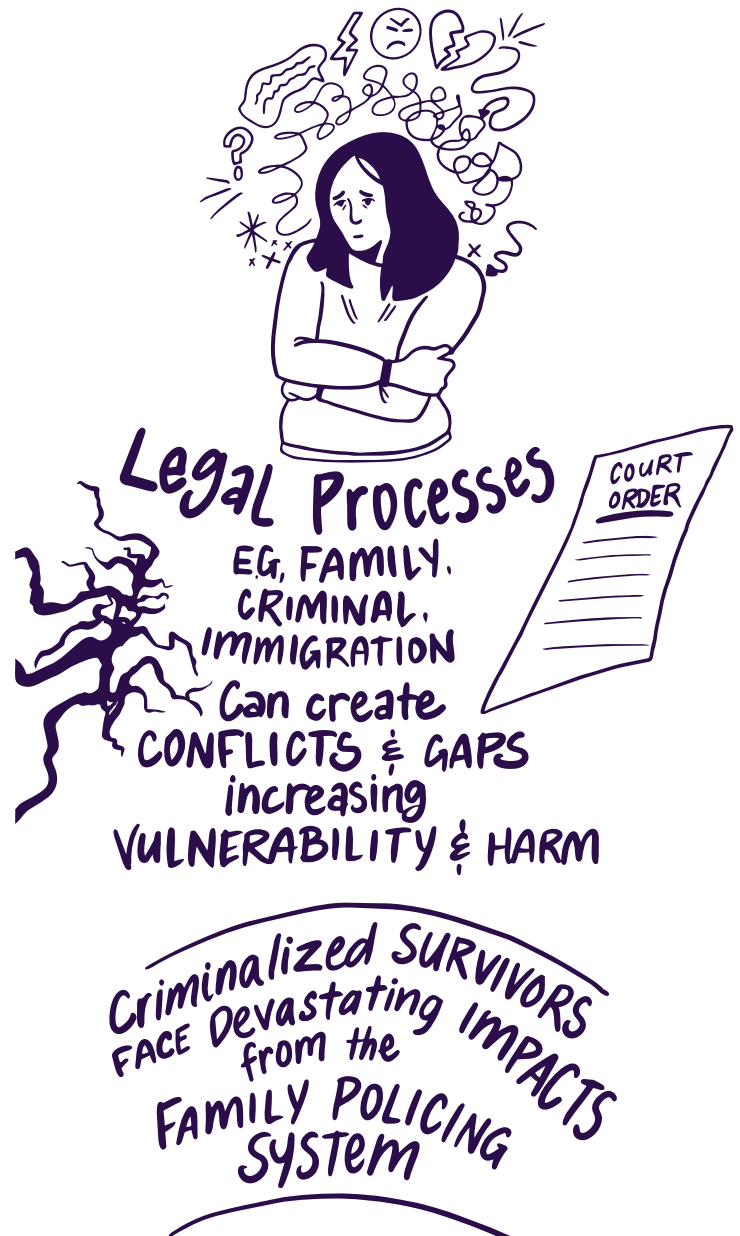
Legal processes are inherently stressful.¹⁵⁵ Community experts described how marginalized survivors are often left unsupported to navigate multiple legal processes where they have limited control. As they deal with these legal systems, many survivors are simultaneously processing trauma and having to make new arrangements for day-to-day needs such as housing, income, transportation, and childcare. Experts described how the requirement to engage with even one legal system—let alone multiple systems—can exacerbate emotional and psychological harms, leading to disabling conditions.

The interplay between family policing, family law, immigration, and criminal legal systems is also ripe for weaponization by a partner who uses abuse. West Coast LEAF and Rise Women's Legal Centre note: "we have seen situations where the perpetrator of violence has utilized all four of these legal systems against one client."¹⁵⁶ The use of court systems as a tactic of abuse can be particularly devastating for survivors who experience multiple forms of oppression.¹⁵⁷

Legal systems can be traumatizing not only for adult survivors of GBV but also for their children. For example, the research we reviewed suggests that engagement with adversarial family law processes can increase harms to children and result in significant trauma."¹⁵⁸

Family policing and family law: dangerous contradictions

Community experts highlighted contradictions and risks at the intersection of family policing and family law systems. They shared situations when, to avoid removal of their child, they were required to seek family law protection orders or custody and access arrangements to prevent or limit their spouse's access to a child. The family policing system often demands these family law measures even though they are a known risk factor for the escalation of intimate partner violence.¹⁵⁹



Michelle Buchholz | CASSYEX CONSULTING

“

Our clients deal with this a lot: the process they're being pulled through as survivors of violence and family policing, it's so dysregulating, their nervous systems are dysregulated, they can't read, their cognitive functioning deteriorates in some ways. They are physically becoming disabled as a result of these things.”

— COMMUNITY EXPERT

Experts shared that Ministry workers are consistently unwilling to document their concerns about GBV for survivors' use in court. This leaves survivors of violence vulnerable to myth-based accusations that they are lying about abuse to gain custody of the children and "alienate" the other parent. In these cases, marginalized survivors who may face poverty, trauma, language barriers, and other forms of marginalization "are left to defend themselves," as one expert explained.

Ministry concerns about violence are used to compel actions from survivors but not to validate survivors' experiences or support legal outcomes that could contribute to child and parent safety. In one case, a community expert who feared retaliatory abuse from their partner asked their Ministry worker to seek the protection order instead. This request was denied on the basis that it was the parent who was responsible for being "protective."

Further, in family law proceedings it is common for a parent who has used abuse to be granted parenting time with the children.¹⁶⁰ A BC study found that family law courts sometimes did not issue protection orders even when they recognized IPV. Instead, court decisions tended towards the assumption that "shared parental responsibility and even shared parenting time were appropriate [...] even where abuse was present."¹⁶¹ Similarly, in some cases, criminal courts have made protection or no-contact orders against an abusive father while the family court granted him parenting time with the children.¹⁶²

These legal intersections can trap survivors between family law orders that give the partner who abused them shared custody, and family policing requirements to protect their children from their ex-

partner's violence.¹⁶³ Research in this area suggests that survivors' fear of losing custody and/or being unable to supervise their abuser's interactions with their children may cause a delay in leaving abusive relationships.¹⁶⁴

Criminalization of Survivors

Adversarial legal systems rely on standards of evidence that are ill-equipped to grasp private, often subtle, patterns of violence.¹⁶⁵ These systems often limit their focus to specific episodes of physical violence.¹⁶⁶ Legal systems also fail to properly consider socio-economic, cultural, and interpersonal power, and the exploitation of power imbalances as a tactic of abuse.¹⁶⁷

Ignoring long-term, structural, and gendered patterns of power and control can lead to minimizing violence as a "dysfunctional relationship" or as "mutual violence" where both parties hold equal responsibility for harm. Legal systems often criminalize survivors who are misidentified as aggressors.¹⁶⁸ Survivors who are Indigenous, racialized, Two-Spirit, trans, nonbinary, or queer "are at greatest risk of being targeted by the criminal system as aggressors."¹⁶⁹ When survivors are criminalized—or punished by other coercive systems like immigration or mental health detention—they face an increased likelihood of being separated from their children through family policing.¹⁷⁰



CALLS TO ACTION

5

Implement multi-system advocacy supports and transformative alternatives to existing legal systems

Community experts called for multi-system navigation and advocacy supports to reduce harms for survivors engaged with legal systems. However, many experts also emphasized that the harmful dynamics of blame, coercion, and punishment are inherent to colonial legal models. Based on this understanding, experts called for transformative changes away from adversarial models and towards Indigenous and transformative models of justice.

Reducing harm through multi-system navigation and advocacy supports

To mitigate the pressures, gaps, and contradictions stemming from multiple legal systems, community experts once again emphasized the need for family-centered and wrap-around models of support. They called for concrete supports such as:

- Childcare
- Translation services
- Multi-system information and navigation support provided by knowledgeable advocates, peers, and Elders.

The latter two calls could be integrated with Stanton's recommendation that "the Ministry of Attorney General and the BC courts work together (in consultation with anti-violence experts and practitioners) to create a Court Coordinator role to gather and manage information across different legal processes."¹⁷¹

As experts in our project shared, knowledgeable supporters can empower survivors' self-determination through informed choices. Experts called for information and help to be accessible on an urgent

basis and delivered in a wholistic and integrated way, "so I don't have to go to 10 different websites to find the information I need."

In addition to coordination and navigation support, experts called for more legal advocacy services. This call is aligned with recommendations to expand family law legal aid funding.¹⁷² The issues raised throughout this project demonstrate that legal support and advocacy should be expanded for family policing matters as well. Family policing lawyers and legal advocates in West Coast LEAF's network have also called for more legal education, tools, and strategies for advocates who work with families.¹⁷³

Implement systemic changes to address discrimination, gaps, and contradictions

Experts also called for systemic advocacy to address discrimination, gaps, and conflicts within and between systems related to family well-being and gender-based violence. If systems impose requirements on parents experiencing violence, those systems should provide the resources needed to access required services. Experts called for clear, family-centered policies to prevent the system from subjecting families to impossible conditions, along with real accountability mechanisms. This call is aligned with Stanton's recent systemic review, which called for a clear accountability structure for systems and initiatives related to gender-based violence.¹⁷⁴

As Stanton's review has underscored, actors across all systems (including police, Ministry workers, prosecutors, defense lawyers, judges, and others) also need significant training in areas including trauma- and violence-informed practice, cultural safety, and stereotypes about GBV.¹⁷⁵ In our project, community experts called for mandatory training coupled with accountability mechanisms to firmly reject the prevalent discriminatory assumptions.

“

We interrupt cycles of harm by helping people identify the way they've been harmed, and what needs resulted for them, and what kinds of things could meet those needs. When I think about prevention or response work, I'm thinking about: what is your unique experience of harm up until this point?

How did that intersect with the kind of harm that's emanating from you, internally or externally ... and how do we understand what needs led you to that, such that we can meaningfully interrupt that harm.”

— COMMUNITY EXPERT

Enable meaningful access to Indigenous, transformative and restorative justice options

Experts called for BC's government to resource communities and Nations to revitalize and deliver Indigenous, transformative, and/or restorative justice models. They called for alternatives to harmful legal systems and processes, which are based on paternalistic, carceral, and eurocentric models of justice as punishment.¹⁷⁶ Experts highlighted the colonial foundations of BC's legal systems and instead called for renewed efforts to uplift the "old laws," such as those centering Indigenous matriarchs (aunties, si'lu [Hul'q'umi'num word for grandparent],¹⁷⁷ and kokums) who could guide traditional practices of relational accountability, healing, and repair.

Calls for Indigenous, transformative, and restorative approaches are also increasing in recent research related to gender-based violence.¹⁷⁸ Boutilier and Wells describe how transformative and restorative modes of justice improve outcomes and reduce future harms for both for survivors and for those who used violence.¹⁷⁹ In her recent systemic review, Stanton also documents how relationship-based approaches to accountability are effective in reducing subsequent instances of gender-based harm.¹⁸⁰ It is also well documented that survivors want alternatives to the criminal legal system.¹⁸¹ When people are given options, they routinely choose alternative, non-adversarial modes of justice.

Experts explained that community-based transformative approaches could disrupt the paternalistic, carceral mindset that dehumanizes "perpetrators" and disempowers "victims" in order to uphold the system as the "protector." Experts described how transformative processes could center people who experienced violence, supported by their chosen network, as experts in defining the harms they experienced and in naming what they need for healing, accountability, and repair.

INDIGENOUS JUSTICE refers to the process of each Indigenous Nation restoring and implementing their laws, legal practices, and protocols to oversee how to address conflict and harm for their Nation members, whether they are a survivor or the one who caused harm.

TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE (TJ) is a "political framework and approach for responding to violence, harm, and abuse. At its most basic, it seeks to respond to violence without creating more violence," understand the structural conditions that allowed the violence to occur, "and/or engaging in harm reduction to lessen the violence."

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE is a process focused on "restoring or repairing relationships after someone has caused harm or a rupture in the relationship. It emphasizes the importance of individual people and their direct community connections receiving support and working toward healing after harm. This may be described as making a person whole after they have been harmed."

Further, experts called for transformative and restorative processes to be built in ways that address the complexities of violence and of unique people and lives – including by accounting for neurodiversity and intergenerational trauma. They described how transformative processes could address cycles of harm in wholistic, responsive, and preventative ways by supporting people who used violence to heal from past harm and learn to meet their needs without engaging in abuse.

Government Custody of Children and Separation from Family

A final site of intersecting harm identified in our project occurs in situations where a child has been removed under the *CFCSA* and is in the interim, temporary, or continuing custody of MCFD—including through a voluntary agreement.

In these arrangements, parents and family members or kinship caregivers can have significantly limited access to their child. Removal of children to government custody escalates risk of gendered violence for both parents and children.

Barriers to connection

Community experts who experienced the removal of their child to government custody faced enormous barriers in maintaining relationships with their children. Section 55 of the *CFCSA* presumes that a child's custodial parent has the right to see and spend time with them ("access rights") while they are in the government's interim or temporary custody (i.e., where the goal is to return the child to their parents' custody). However, once the child has been permanently removed from their parents' custody, the parents no longer have "access rights" under the *CFCSA*. Ongoing access will only be provided to parents under Section 56 of the *CFCSA*, if it is deemed to be in the child's best interests.¹⁸²

GOVERNMENT CUSTODY refers to when a child(ren) is removed from the care of their family by the family policing system and placed with someone else.

Meaningful access and connection are "essential to preserving a child's important relationships" following removal from their home. This is true regardless of whether they will be returned to their families or become permanently separated.¹⁸³ For Indigenous children, the ability to maintain family and other important relationships is also intertwined with protecting their Indigenous identities and community and cultural connections.¹⁸⁴ However, despite the family policing system's recognition of access and cultural rights, parents and caregivers "continue to confront legal, cultural and practical barriers" to maintaining meaningful connections to children in government custody.¹⁸⁵ These barriers especially impact poor, Indigenous and racialized families, and parents or children with disabilities.¹⁸⁶

Community experts with experience of child removal described extremely limited access to their children. For example, one expert had been permitted to visit her children for only fifteen minutes a month. She described the pain of missing her child's birthday and not being able to spend holiday time together. In some cases, access is restricted because the system does not provide enough funding for approved visiting spaces and paid workers to supervise family visits. Experts also described having their visits "cut off" as a punishment when they expressed frustration or questioned family policing decisions; this latter experience is also documented in earlier research.¹⁸⁷

Experts described inconsistent expectations, worker turnover, shifting timelines, and unreasonable requirements as systemic barriers to reunification with children. They also highlighted discrimination as a major factor in the system's assessment of parents: "especially when they're on welfare, and if they're Indigenous—because of discrimination—it's so hard to



CHILDREN & YOUTH
often face
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
IN GOVERNMENT CUSTODY

THE "FOSTER CARE" SYSTEM
increases RISKS of
STRUCTURAL & INTERPERSONAL
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
IN ADULTHOOD

Michelle Buchholz | **CASSYEX**
CONSULTING

get their children back." One expert described how a mental health diagnosis from years prior was cited as the reason that a young relative would not be released from government custody into her care. It was common for parents to experience years of onerous conditions and monitoring of their lives before their children were returned.

Experts also expressed concern that parents who could not make fast changes or demonstrate enough improvement in their situation could quickly face permanent separation: "MCFD gives parents a very short time to get their shit together. They move quickly towards adopting children out, and this pushes parents over the edge."

Harms of separation

As one expert described, forced separation from a child is often a parent's "worst fear." Experts described how a child's removal was associated with deep loneliness, hopelessness, fear, and sadness. "In these situations," stated one expert, "drug use often escalates due to depression."

These insights are also borne out in a growing body of research that documents the harms to parents when a child is removed. Mothers who had a child removed through family policing face significant mental health impacts; these impacts are even more pronounced than those for mothers who experienced the death of a child.¹⁸⁸ Following a child's removal, mothers who used substances experienced unbearable trauma and persistent symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder alongside other mental health conditions. These mothers coped with the pain of family separation through increased drug use, which coincided with increased exposure to structural and interpersonal violence, including housing instability, IPV, and survival sex work.¹⁸⁹ Removal of children to government custody is also linked to significantly higher rates of premature death of these children.¹⁹⁰

Research suggests that the traumatic effects of child removal are made worse by stigma, as mothers impacted by the family policing system are often blamed for the injustices they face, on top of numerous

“

One of the first questions I ask workers is: “Do you have children?” They often say no. And I think: “So, you don’t know what it’s like to be a parent. You have no idea what it’s like to lose a part of your heart that’s now walking in someone else’s care...”

— COMMUNITY EXPERT

other structural harms. Mothers who experienced child removal described how their trauma and distress were not validated by health and social service providers. Their stigmatizing loss also reduced their overall sense of agency and well-being, including in employment and relationships.¹⁹¹

Child removal can also undermine a family's economic security. In our project, community experts described a lack of material support from the family policing system following a child's removal, despite the heavy demands the system places on parents' time and resources. Often, child removal means a loss of much needed income supports in the form of family benefits, leading to worsened financial precarity and sometimes a loss of housing. One expert shared they were "now homeless because of the family policing system."

As we described earlier in this report, separation from parents causes trauma to children—particularly children who have been exposed to violence.¹⁹² Community experts who participated in this project, including youth experts, described frightening situations where children did not know where they were being taken when the system removed them from their families. Youth experts described being uninformed and confused; one wondered if they were being kidnapped. Youth and other community experts also highlighted the harms to children caused by disconnection from their parents, siblings, extended family, and cultural communities. Some youth described how tensions and distrust in family relationships due to family policing investigations persisted long after they had returned home from custody. Experts also highlighted how children could also lose connection to their Indigenous identity when they lost connections with parents.

“They think they’re helping the family but they’re creating more harm, and it takes a long time for children and parents to recover from what they’re put through by MCFD.”

Gender-based violence in government custody

Youth and community experts also raised concerns about the harms experienced by children and youth while in government custody. Children and youth in custody—particularly Indigenous girls—face disproportionate gender-based abuse and violence in the very settings where they are supposed to be protected.¹⁹³ MacDougall et al. cite devastating statistics from a 2016 review by BC's Representative for Children and Youth:

“... sexualized violence is the most common type of critical injury involving children and youth in provincial care. Disturbingly, the review also found that 61 percent of youth who reported sexualized violence while in the system, often by their foster parents, were Indigenous girls. Female victims ... who were age 12 or younger at the time of the incidents were four times more likely to be Indigenous than non-Indigenous, while female victims between the ages of 13 and 18 were twice as likely to be Indigenous.”¹⁹⁴

In our project, multiple youth experts described experiencing abuse while in custody. When they disclosed these experiences to Ministry workers or caregivers, they said they were not believed and nothing was done.

Long-term gender-based violence impacts

Removal to government custody through family policing also increases risks of structural and interpersonal gender-based violence in adulthood. Community experts commonly described how their own experiences as youth in government custody had left them without the resources, knowledge, and support networks they needed to ensure safety and well-being for themselves and their children. In other words, the family policing system was a direct and key

cause of the same problems it was claiming to address. One expert stated: “The only thing guaranteed for youth in care is poverty.”

Literature in both Canada and the US makes clear being in government custody as a child is associated with a higher likelihood of experiencing multiple forms of violence and harm, including IPV as an adult.¹⁹⁵ In Canada, this impact is especially present for Indigenous women. Citing analysis from Statistics Canada, MacDougall et al. stress how “Indigenous women are more likely to experience physical or sexual assault in their lifetime if they were in government care as children” – with “81 percent of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women in Canada who had been in the child welfare system [having] been physically or sexually assaulted in their life.”¹⁹⁶

As one expert stated, “we don’t speak enough about how family policing is impacting our societies: if you go into any prison, any jail... significant numbers ... of incarcerated folks [experienced] family policing.” In 2024, BC’s Representative of Children and Youth summarized the many harms linked to government custody:

“Children who grow up in the protective care system are more likely than their non-care peers to struggle at school, not graduate from high school, be unemployed or under-employed, live in poverty, be in conflict with the law, struggle with mental health or substance use concerns, or be sexually assaulted or trafficked.”¹⁹⁷

Martin and Walia’s research with Indigenous women in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside also reflects myriad ways that women’s experiences in government custody and the associated disconnections drove them into poverty, homelessness, and victimization as adults. Youth from government custody make up most homeless youth across Canada. Tragically, “young people in or leaving MCFD care die at five times the rate of the general population of young people in BC.” Indigenous youth account for a third of these deaths.¹⁹⁸

CALLS TO ACTION

Support well-being and connection to minimize harms of separation

Across our project, community experts stressed that situations of family separation should be met with a renewed collective commitment to family well-being by continuing to wrap all members of the family in support. To support parents and youths through experiences of isolation, instability, and disempowerment, experts called for accompaniment and creative advocacy to promote self-determination, connection, and healing.

6

Support the well-being of parents, children, and families—even during separation

Following a child’s removal, experts in our project who were family supporters offered resources and options in line with parents’ choices and assisted parents to meet their parenting goals (which often included having their child returned home). They continued to use wrap-around approaches and draw on family-centred networks of support to address day-to-day needs relating to income, housing, employment, disability supports, healthcare, counselling, substance use, cultural connections, and spiritual wellness. They described the importance of accompaniment, advocacy, and system navigation to document parents’ strengths, mitigate systemic power imbalances, and push back on inappropriate requirements imposed by the family policing system.

Experts who were parents described how peer-led support groups were crucial in decreasing their sense of stigma and isolation. These groups provided a space where they could exchange advocacy strategies and safely share feelings of pain and frustration.

Support the well-being of children and youth

Community experts also emphasized the vital need to support youth in government custody. Youth experts described how experiences of government custody

were often characterized by isolation and instability, including frequent moves. Turnover in Ministry and agency staff meant they also experienced a revolving door of Ministry workers and caregivers—many of whom were also overburdened and persistently unavailable. To address their experiences of isolation and disempowerment, youth called for access to consistent adults in their lives who could act as mentors, supporters, and advocates. They wanted long-term supporters who could:

- help them access appropriate health, mental health, and well-being supports
- aid them in learning life skills
- help them to set boundaries
- advocate for their needs and rights

Experts who supported survivors as advocates pushed for siblings or close peers to stay together across multiple placements; this could offer valuable relational support and protection against harm in custody settings. They also pushed for youths' access to the resources and supports they needed to thrive as young adults. In some cases, this involved working with youth to secure resources and negotiate independent living arrangements at the earliest possible point of eligibility. Well-supported community-based independent living arrangements could offer forms of long-term stability and safety that were not realized in custody.



Support family members to connect and heal

Community experts highlighted the crucial value of maintaining connections between children and youth and their families, communities, and cultures—despite periods of separation. They consistently described access to and reconnection with cultural traditions as key to healing, support, and growth.

Experts stressed the importance of supporting parents to stay involved in their children's lives. Advocates and service providers described their creative ways of acting as bridges to support family connections. In cases where access visits were limited because of insufficient staffing or physical space, one organization got permission for visits to occur in their own facility. This enabled parents and children to connect in a convenient and trusted local space. In another case, an organization worked to maintain their role as a child's healthcare provider even after the child had been removed to custody. This enabled the child's birth family to remain involved in the child's care and to feel assured their child's health needs would be met by a trusted professional.

Youth experts in our study also called for family reunification and healing supports. They called for long-term family counselling and well-being supports—irrespective of whether youth returned home after being in custody. Together with their families, youth wanted to name, address, and resolve the significant relational harms and mistrust that occurred because of harm and violence within the family, and because of the family policing system.

“

We meet people where they're at, and work to support their goals. That could be getting their kids back in their care before their new baby arrives, [or] it's getting more access to see their kids... And we're able to see some of these families reunited. It's really special. It can take 5+ years for this to happen.”

— COMMUNITY EXPERT

Transformative Calls for Change

We've undertaken this project at a time of significant attention to GBV, IPV, child safety, and corresponding systemic responses.

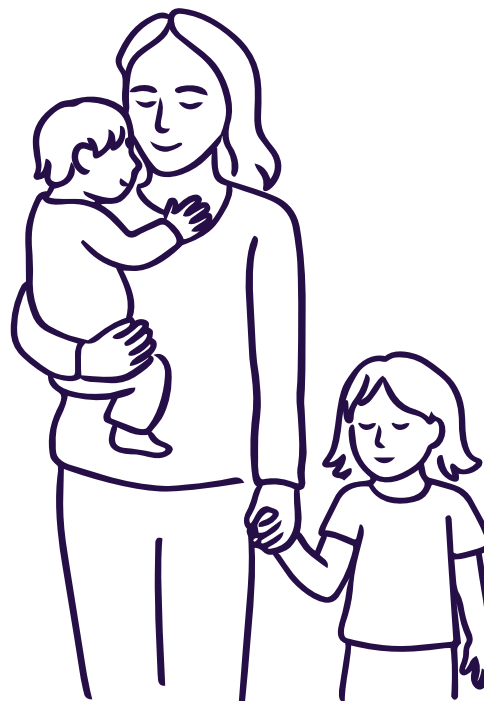
Recent systemic reviews have analyzed the harms and gaps in these systems, offered important recommendations, and highlighted long-standing systemic failures. However, these insights are not new: decades of reports have issued recommendations that have largely not been implemented.

This project has taken a different approach. Based on the insights of community experts, it invites a broadening of focus to critically question the foundations of entire systems. From this vantage point, it is difficult to miss how contemporary policing and family policing responses to gender-based violence were never meant to respond to violence in a way that supports families as a whole. They are not only ineffective but are also crucial drivers of harm.

Reports often focus on systemic reform to reduce barriers to reporting through education or awareness-raising, or to build trust between communities and these systems. Instead, we have heard from community experts that people do not want to engage with these systems at all. As experts emphasized, existing responses to violence continue colonial practices of family separation and uphold systems of power that are not only patriarchal but also deeply classist, racist, heteronormative, and ableist.

Throughout this project, community experts have called for bold shifts—away from *family policing* and towards *family well-being*. At each site of intersection between family policing and gender-based violence, they named transformative changes that could redirect our collective resources towards community-based, wholistic supports that families choose for themselves and that are unattached to systems of surveillance and punishment.

Experts' calls for change are powerful invitations for all of us who identify as "changemakers" or "helpers"—whether we are family members, neighbours, educators, service providers, advocates, community leaders, policy-makers, or legislators—to push for system transformation today.



“

That system shouldn't exist. Do I think there are children who are being hurt, and harmed? Yes. There needs to be something to help these kids. But in the current system: you take these kids and you make them worse off... The problems are created institutionally and systemically, which allow this to happen in the first place.”

— COMMUNITY EXPERT

1

Support community-rooted care and honour self-determination

Friends, neighbours, educators, collectives, community leaders, and organizations can:

Support transformative learning for all

- Normalize conversations about power and harm in families and relationships.
- Teach and learn about cycles of harm to break them.
- Reject simplistic categories of “victim” and “perpetrator.”

Build collective responsibility

- Create collective approaches to support and respond to gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence in our communities.
- Share skills and resources so that communities, families, and peers feel equipped to support their relationships, including with survivors and people that cause harm, and can support in holding institutions that create more violence and harm accountable.

Build skills and knowledge to support survivors of GBV’s self-determination

- Learn, practice and implement the skills to support survivors determining what safety looks like to them and support them to make that a reality.

2

Resource community-based services

Funders, governments, legislators, and agencies can:

Resource upstream, wholistic supports for family well-being

- Address basic needs so that all families can thrive.
- Fund wholistic, family-centered, culturally safe and trauma- and violence-informed models.
- Fund relational, peer-based models, and connections to community, land, and culture.

Increase access to inclusive community-based anti-violence services for those who have experienced harm and those who have harmed

- Fund accessible anti-violence services that meet the needs of marginalized survivors.
- Fund non-carceral anti-violence and healing supports beyond the gendered victim/perpetrator binary and engage people who have caused harm.

Service providers and advocates can:

Prioritize self-determination

- Service providers can support survivors in who are accessing supports by implementing informed choice models and helping survivors make informed choices.

3

Move towards supporting over reporting

Friends, neighbours, educators, collectives, community leaders, organizations, advocates and service providers can:

Uphold a commitment and practice to support and not report

- Connect survivors and families with their chosen supports.
- Support through informed choice, goal-setting, and accompaniment to minimize harms and maximize access to benefits.

Build helpers' capacities to support

- Develop resources and skill development opportunities to build helpers' capacities to support.

Service providers, advocates, governments, legislators, funders, and agencies can:

Advocate to end mandatory reporting

- Lobby for legislation to be revised and repeal mandatory reporting laws, in BC this includes Section 13 and 14 of the *CFCSA*.

4

Minimize family policing harms and maximize support

Friends, neighbours, educators, collectives, community leaders, organizations, service providers and advocates can:

Take an advocate stance during investigations.

- Accompany families to witness interactions and push for accountability during investigations.
- Provide ongoing support to meet parenting goals.
- Advocate to minimize harms and “hoops,” and maximize supports.

Governments, legislators, funders, and agencies can:

Strengthen rights-based and accountability approaches

- Ensure all families have access to well-paid and trained advocates.
- Improve transparency, oversight, and rights-based mechanisms to hold systems accountable.

5

Implement multi-system advocacy supports and transformative alternatives to existing legal systems

Governments, legislators, funders and agencies can:

Implement multi-system navigation and advocacy supports.

- Fund childcare, translation and system navigators who work across systems.

Implement systemic changes to address discrimination, gaps, and contradictions.

- Review and revise laws that impact families and ensure consistency to be family-centred across all jurisdictions.
- Ensure all actors in the legal systems (criminal, family, child protection) are trained in cultural safety, trauma-and violence-informed practice and on the impact of stereotypes around GBV.

Enable meaningful access to Indigenous, transformative and restorative justice options.

- Provide adequate and stable funding to justice alternatives to address the harms of GBV.

6

Support well-being and connection to minimize harms of separation

Friends, neighbours, educators, collectives, community leaders, organizations, service providers and advocates can:

Support the well-being of parents, children, and families – even during separation.

- Support parents' goals and well-being before, during and after removal of children.
- Support the well-being children and youth before, during and after removal into government custody.
- Advocate with children, youth, parents, extended family and community to ensure their rights to access to maintain a relationship are upheld.
- Support family members to connect and heal when separated and if reunification occurs.

Governments, legislators, funders and agencies can:

Ensure resources are available for families to maintain their relationships.

- Provide adequate and sustainable funding to support community to facilitate ongoing connections.

Implement advocacy supports if access is being denied or negatively impacted.

- Ensure there are timely mechanisms to address concerns around maintaining access and connection for families.

At each site of intersecting harm, community organizations, Nations, and advocates are already re-envisioning and restoring family safety and well-being through transformative practices of advocacy and support. Their actions reflect creativity, commitment, and integrity despite the precarity and turmoil caused by insufficient resources. Their practices are rooted in a holistic grasp of violence as flowing from harmful conditions that impact whole families—not just children. Taken together, these wise practices offer a powerful re-envisioning of child and family safety that can be mobilized to end the colonial harms of family separation.

GLOSSARY

Administrative violence

Administrative violence “draws attention to the ways in which systems that organize our lives in seemingly ordinary ways – determining what ID we carry, what government records exist about us, how roads or schools or garbage pick-up are organized – produce and distribute life chances based on violent forms of categorization. [...] [E]xperts invent and deploy categories that manage and sort people, substances, buildings, curricula, human capacities etc.”¹⁹⁹ Often these categorizations are presented as normal and neutral, and mask how they uphold colonial, racist, ableist etc. frameworks. The state presents these ways of organizing life as neutral and ordinary, helping them entrench harm into daily life.

Anti-violence supports

Programs, policies, and campaigns aimed at combating and reducing various forms of violence in society, including physical, emotional, and structural violence, and supporting survivors.²⁰⁰

British Columbia (BC)

This report uses “BC” to refer to the Government of British Columbia and the lands that are colonially known as the Province of British Columbia.

Carceral

Carceral is the approach and process that relies on the state to control and punish people in the name of safety. This includes maintaining prisons and police, and extends to the idea that we must rely on the government for safety, including for the safety of children and youth. In reality, carceral approaches create more ongoing violence.²⁰¹

Coercive control

Coercive control is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation, and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten a victim. This controlling behaviour is designed to make a person dependent on the person who is harming them by isolating them from support, exploiting them, depriving them of independence, and regulating their everyday behavior.²⁰²

Cultural safety

Cultural safety is a practice for those in positions of power (including frontline staff), to recognize the historical, economic, and social contexts, coupled with structural and interpersonal power imbalances, that shape people’s outcomes and experiences with systems like family policing. For Indigenous peoples, this means naming and recognizing the past and present role of colonialism.²⁰³

Family policing

Often known as child welfare or child protection, the family policing system narrowly focuses on assessing whether to remove a child from their home. Thus, the system focuses on scrutinizing parents or caregivers and families as “risks” to their children.

The family policing system maintains power and control over the lives of families and children—most often Indigenous families and children—through surveillance, regulation, and punishment.

Family policing investigations

Family policing investigations refer to the process that occurs after a family is reported to the government. Families are subject to multi-stage investigation processes where they experience surveillance and monitoring of their behaviors, relationships, and home life. If an investigation confirms the existence of perceived child safety concerns, there are a range of possible protection responses. These range from negotiating a voluntary agreement with the parents to removing the child from the parents’ legal custody through the court.

Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is “violence that is inflicted upon a person or persons due to their gender identity, gender expression, or perceived gender.”²⁰⁴ It impacts women and all people impacted by gender-based discrimination, including Two-Spirit, non-binary and queer people, and trans people of all genders. It can include sexual violence, assault, rape, stalking, etc.

Ghost fathers

Ghost fathers is a term to describe how the family policing system does not acknowledge or engage with the presence of fathers in the lives of mothers and children, even when they are present to some capacity. Research has demonstrated that family policing workers will often see fathers as irrelevant or a risk to the child and/or mother and then make little effort to engage or contact fathers.²⁰⁵

Government custody

Government custody refers to when a child(ren) is removed from the care of their family by the family policing system and placed with someone else. This can include kinship care arrangements when family policing workers are monitoring and controlling these placements. For example, a grandma may step up to be a kinship carer but may then be required to sever the relationship with her adult child to be allowed to care for her grandchildren.

“Foster care” is part of government custody when children are placed with strangers or in more institutional settings like group homes. Risk is much higher for children in “foster care.” The process of government custody can occur before the formal court process of terminating parental rights and occur under “voluntary arrangements.”

There is movement to move away from the term “in care” as it implies children were not being cared for by their family and instead it is up to the government to provide care. This conflicts with research findings about people’s experiences in government custody.²⁰⁶

Indigenous justice

Indigenous justice refers to the process of each Indigenous Nation restoring and implementing their laws, legal practices, and protocols to oversee how to address conflict and harm for their Nation members, whether they are a survivor or the one who caused harm.²⁰⁷

Informed choice

Informed choice is a process where someone has all the information that they need to weigh the risks and benefits of a decision, that they can have all their

questions answered, and that they are allowed to make the decision for themselves, free from pressure or threat.²⁰⁸

Intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a predominant form of GBV and is reflective of what most community experts encountered either as survivors or as supporters to survivors. IPV is the “abuse of power by one partner in a dating, common-law, married, or otherwise intimate relationship. This abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, financial, social, cultural, or a combination of some or all of these.”²⁰⁹

Mandatory reporting

Mandatory reporting (also known as the duty to report) is the universal legal “duty to report” suspected child abuse/neglect to the Ministry of Children and Family (MCFD). Mandatory and permissive reporting laws often lead to misreporting, which results in over-reporting, due to vague and subjective definitions like neglect, reporter fear, implicit bias, and a “when in doubt, report” culture.²¹⁰

Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)

The Ministry of Children and Family Development is the government department that is given power through the *Child, Family and Community Services Act (CFCSA)*. This agency employs family policing workers (Ministry workers) to investigate and maintain oversight of children, youth, and families. This government department also funds many family support services within BC.

MCFD also has significant oversight and discretion over delegated Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies (ICFSA). Delegated ICFSAs retain some independence from MCFD, such as hiring their own employees. Other ICFSAs have total jurisdiction if they are overseen by an Indigenous Nation that has reached a coordination agreement with BC.

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity is the idea that all brains are diverse in how they work – no two brains or nervous systems are the same.²¹¹

People who are marginalized based on gender

We use the phrase “people who are marginalized based on gender” to refer to all people who face gender discrimination, not only women. This includes Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans people of all genders (not only women), queer, intersex, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people.

Person who caused harm

Person who caused harm is a term used to resist stereotypes, binaries, or minimize the wholeness of a person. Terms such as accused and offender are legal expressions rooted in colonial law.

Racial capitalism

Racial capitalism refers to the process that used racial categories to normalize and naturalize labour roles and access to resources. The most prominent example of this was the Atlantic Slave Trade. Today, racial capitalism operates on a racial division and hierarchy to pit workers and their communities against each other and normalize structural inequalities like lack of resources on reserves, underpaying migrant workers, and blaming migrants for rising housing costs.²¹²

Restorative justice

Restorative justice is a process focused on “restoring or repairing relationships after someone has caused harm or a rupture in the relationship. It emphasizes the importance of individual people and their direct community connections receiving support and working toward healing after harm. This may be described as making a person whole after they have been harmed.”²¹³

Saviourism

Saviourism is the idea that assumes some people need someone to save them and that without intervention and guidance they will not survive. It is predominantly expressed through white saviourism, a colonial idea that assumes Black, Indigenous and racialized people, need white people to save them.²¹⁴ In the context of GBV, it can look like people dictating to survivors what they need to do for their own safety.

Self-determination

Self-determination is both an individual and collective process and goal. It is the ability to make important decisions about one’s life. For Indigenous nations,

it includes the ability to make collective decisions about governance, including nation membership, laws (including child and family well-being), economics, etc. without interference from the state.²¹⁵

State violence

State violence refers to violence that is perpetrated by the government, its systems, or its employees or actors. State violence includes violence by law enforcement, prisons, immigration policies, and economic systems.²¹⁶

Structural violence

Structural violence refers to the physical and psychological harm that result from exploitative and unjust social, political, and economic systems.²¹⁷

Transformative justice

Transformative Justice (TJ) is a “political framework and approach for responding to violence, harm, and abuse. At its most basic, it seeks to respond to violence without creating more violence,” understand the structural conditions that allowed the violence to occur, “and/or engaging in harm reduction to lessen the violence.”²¹⁸

Web of surveillance

Web of surveillance is a framework to understand how the family policing system has created a network of actors who judge and control how families adhere to standards of “child safety” and “protection.” These network of actors are framed as neutral and normal, and mask how colonialism, racism, ableism etc. inform these standards. For example, this can include a practice like co-sleeping with an infant or children of different sexes sharing a bedroom, all of which can lead to a report to the family policing system.

Surveillance and enforcement of these norms happen through mandatory reporting laws that turn people who could be a support for families into the eyes and ears of the state. The surveillance continues in how families are investigated and assessed by family policing workers and how their relationship with their children is controlled and dictated by the workers, including after children are removed from their families.²¹⁹

ENDNOTES

METHODOLOGY

- 1 Mussell, L. (2023). Decolonizing Research on the Carceral in Canadian Political Science. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 56(3), 571–595; Wallis, K.E., Allababidi, T., Sarmin, F., Wozniak, S., Worsley, D., Duncan, A., Heard-Garris, N., Montoya-Williams, D. (2024). Identifying Consensus on Best Practices for Conducting Anti-Racist Research: A Modified Delphi Study. Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab; Xwi7xwa Library. (2021). Critical Indigenous Research Toolkit.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 Ministry of Children and Family Development. (2025). Child Protection Response Policies – Chapter 3. Government of British Columbia.
- 3 Jacobs, L.A., Kim, M.E., Whitfield, D.L., Gartner, R.E., Panichelli, M., Kattari, S.K., Downey, M.M., Stuart McQueen, S. & Mountz, S.E. (2021) Defund the Police: Moving Towards an Anti-Carceral Social Work. *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, 32(1), 37-62; Mussell, L. (2023). Decolonizing Research on the Carceral in Canadian Political Science. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 56(3), 571–595.
- 4 BC Representative for Children and Youth. (2024). Don't Look Away. How one boy's story has the power to shift a system of care for children and youth; Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. BC Ministry of the Attorney General.

KEY TERMS

- 5 MacDougall, A.M., Walia, H., & Wise, M. Colour of Violence. Race, Gender & Anti-Violence Services. BWSS. P. 4
- 6 Luke's Place. (2024). What is intimate partner violence?. Ontario, Canada.
- 7 See e.g., Perez-Darby, S. (2023.) People Who Cause Harm. Accountable Communities Consortium.
- 8 Roberts, D. (2021). How I became Family Policing Abolitionist. *Columbia Journal of Race and Law*, 11(3), 455-469. Other US-based advocates use the term 'family regulation' system.
- 9 Jacobs, L.A., Kim, M.E., Whitfield, D.L., Gartner, R.E., Panichelli, M., Kattari, S.K., Downey, M.M., Stuart McQueen, S. & Mountz, S.E. (2021) Defund the Police: Moving Towards an Anti-Carceral Social Work. *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, 32(1), 37-62.

INTRODUCTION

- 10 O'Connor, C., Alaggia, R., & Nixon, K.L. (2024). "Something's got to give": A Qualitative Exploration of Policies and Practices by Child Welfare Services in Cases of Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence in Ontario, Canada. *Journal of Family Violence*. P. 2.
- 11 Perez-Darby, S. (2024). Non-Carceral Responses to Intimate Partner Abuse. Accountable Communities Consortium. Pp. 3-4.
- 12 Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. BC Ministry of the Attorney General. P. 56.
- 13 Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. BC Ministry of the Attorney General. P. 30.

- 14 INCITE! (2001/2008). Statement on Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex; Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women. (2021). Indigenous Gender-based Analysis Plus (IGBA+) Toolkit. Government of British Columbia.
- 15 Black, T., Fallon, B., Joh-Carnella, N., Houston, E., & Livingston, E. (2025). Children's exposure to intimate partner violence as a form of child maltreatment in Canada: Analysis of the Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect (CIS). *Children and Youth Services Review*, 175.
- 16 O'Connor, C., Alaggia, R., & Nixon, K.L. (2024). "Something's got to give": A Qualitative Exploration of Policies and Practices by Child Welfare Services in Cases of Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence in Ontario, Canada. *Journal of Family Violence*.
- 17 Trivedi, S. (2023). Mandating Support for Survivors. *Virginia Journal of Social Policy & the Law*, 30(1), 85-98. P. 92.
- 18 Tabibi, J., Lalonde, D., & Scott, K. (2023). Mothering in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: Realities and Resilience. *Learning Network Brief (42)*. Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children.
- 19 Cited in Tabibi, J., Lalonde, D., & Scott, K. (2023). Mothering in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: Realities and Resilience. *Learning Network Brief (42)*. Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children.
- 20 Tabibi, J., Lalonde, D., & Scott, K. (2023). Mothering in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: Realities and Resilience. *Learning Network Brief (42)*. Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children. P. 4.
- 21 Tabibi, J., Lalonde, D., & Scott, K. (2023). Mothering in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: Realities and Resilience. *Learning Network Brief (42)*. Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children.

- 22 Ministry of Children and Family Development. (2023). Policy: Best Practice Approaches. Child Protection and Violence Against Women. Government of British Columbia. See Appendix 4, P. 57.
- 23 Green, D., Kesselman, J., & Tedds, L. (2020). Covering All the Basics: Reforms for a More Just Society. Final Report of the British Columbia Expert Panel on Basic Income. P. 468.
- 24 Martin, C.M., & Walia, H. (2022). Red Women Rising: Indigenous Women Survivors in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Downtown Eastside Women's Centre. P. 20.
- 25 Trivedi, S. (2023). Mandating Support for Survivors. *Virginia Journal of Social Policy & the Law*, 30(1), 85-98.
- A SHARED LINEAGE**
- 26 Goodman L. A., & Fauci, J. E. (2020). The Long Shadow of Family Separation: A Structural and Historical Introduction to Mandated Reporting in the Domestic Violence Context. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35(3), 217–223.
- 27 Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women. (2021). Indigenous Gender-based Analysis Plus (IGBA+) Toolkit. Government of British Columbia, citing Hunt (2015).
- 28 Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women. (2021). Indigenous Gender-based Analysis Plus (IGBA+) Toolkit. Government of British Columbia. P. 11, citing Winona Stevens
- 29 Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women. (2021). Indigenous Gender-based Analysis Plus (IGBA+) Toolkit. Government of British Columbia.
- 30 Kessler, A. & Quinless, J. (2022). Income Supports and Indigenous Peoples in BC: An Analysis of Gaps and Barriers.
- 31 National Housing Strategy Act, S.C. 2019, c. 29, s. 313; WNHNN Human Rights Task Force. (2022). The Crisis Ends with Us. Submission to the Federal Housing Advocate on behalf of the Women's National Housing and Homelessness Network.
- 32 Child, Family and Community Service Act, RSBC 1996, c. 46, s.13(1). (1996). BC Laws.
- 33 Keeping Families Together, West Coast LEAF, Parents Advocating Collectively for Kin, RainCity Housing and Support Society, Atira Women's Resource Society, Feminists Deliver, Rosner, F., Dhillon, M.H.K., and Carwana, M. (2022). Joint Submissions in response to MCFD's Child, Family and Community Service Legislative Reform. P. 11.
- 34 National Advisory Council on Poverty. (2021). Understanding Systems: The 2021 Report of the National Advisory Council on Poverty. P. 60. Government of Canada.
- 35 Battered Women's Support Services. (2022). Women are not acceptable casualties in the response to housing crisis.
- 36 West Coast LEAF. (2019). Pathways in a Forest. Indigenous Guidance on Prevention-based Child Welfare.
- 37 C Representative for Children and Youth. (2024). Don't Look Away. How one boy's story has the power to shift a system of care for children and youth; West Coast LEAF (2019). Pathways in a Forest. Indigenous Guidance on Prevention-based Child Welfare; Goodman L. A., & Fauci, J. E. (2020). The Long Shadow of Family Separation: A Structural and Historical Introduction to Mandated Reporting in the Domestic Violence Context. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35(3), 217–223; Harvey, B., Gupta-Kagan, J., & Church, C. (2021). Reimagining Schools' Role Outside the Family Regulation System. *Columbia Journal of Race and Law*, 11(3), 575–610.
- 38 Cited in McKenzie, H., Varcoe, C., Browne, A.J., Day, L. (2016). Disrupting the Continuities Among Residential Schools, the Sixties Scoop, and Child Welfare: An Analysis of Colonial and Neocolonial Discourses. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 7(2). P. 6.
- 39 Boutilier, S. & Wells, L. (2018). The Case for Reparative and Transformative Justice Approaches to Sexual Violence in Canada: A proposal to pilot and test new approaches. The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence. P. 12, p. 11; see also Grant, I., Mosoff, J., Boyd, S., & Lindy, R. (2017). Intersecting Challenges: Mothers and Child Protection Law in BC. Allard Research Commons Faculty Publications.
- 40 Grant, I., Mosoff, J., Boyd, S., & Lindy, R. (2017). Intersecting Challenges: Mothers and Child Protection Law in BC. Allard Research Commons Faculty Publications; Koshan, J. (2023). Challenging Myths and Stereotypes in Domestic Violence Cases. *Canadian Journal of Family Law*, 35(1), 33-81; Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. BC Ministry of the Attorney General.
- 41 Boutilier, S. & Wells, L. (2018). The Case for Reparative and Transformative Justice Approaches to Sexual Violence in Canada: A proposal to pilot and test new approaches. The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence.
- 42 INCITE! (2001/2008). Statement on Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex; Mussell, L. (2023). Decolonizing Research on the Carceral in Canadian Political Science. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 56(3), 571–595.
- 43 INCITE! (2001/2008). Statement on Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex; Mussell, L. (2023). Decolonizing Research on the Carceral in Canadian Political Science. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 56(3), 571–595.
- 44 Lippy, C., Jumarali, S.N., Nnawulezi, N.A., Williams, E.P., & Burk, C. (2020). The Impact of Mandatory Reporting Laws on Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: Intersectionality, Help-Seeking and the Need for Change. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35, 255–267; MacDougall, A.M., Walia, H., & Wise, M. (2022). Colour of Violence. Race, Gender & Anti-Violence Services. BWSS; Rise Magazine (2022). New Rise Series: The Intersection of Family Policing and Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence: Introduction.

- 45 Lippy, C., Jumarali, S.N., Nnawulezi, N.A., Williams, E.P., & Burk, C. (2020). The Impact of Mandatory Reporting Laws on Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: Intersectionality, Help-Seeking and the Need for Change. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35, 255–267; MacDougall, A.M., Walia, H., & Wise, M. (2022). Colour of Violence. Race, Gender & Anti-Violence Services. BWSS; Rise Magazine (2022). New Rise Series: The Intersection of Family Policing and Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence: Introduction.
- 46 Lippy, C., Jumarali, S.N., Nnawulezi, N.A., Williams, E.P., & Burk, C. (2020). The Impact of Mandatory Reporting Laws on Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: Intersectionality, Help-Seeking and the Need for Change. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35, 255–267.
- 47 Boutilier, S. & Wells, L. (2018). The Case for Reparative and Transformative Justice Approaches to Sexual Violence in Canada: A proposal to pilot and test new approaches. The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence.
- 48 Boutilier, S. & Wells, L. (2018). The Case for Reparative and Transformative Justice Approaches to Sexual Violence in Canada: A proposal to pilot and test new approaches. The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence; INCITE! (2001/2008). Statement on Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex; Jacobs, L.A., Kim, M.E., Whitfield, D.L., Gartner, R.E., Panichelli, M., Kattari, S.K., Downey, M.M., Stuart McQueen, S. & Mountz, S.E. (2021) Defund the Police: Moving Towards an Anti-Carceral Social Work. *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, 32(1), 37-62
- 49 Lippy, C., Jumarali, S.N., Nnawulezi, N.A., Williams, E.P., & Burk, C. (2020). The Impact of Mandatory Reporting Laws on Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: Intersectionality, Help-Seeking and the Need for Change. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35, 255–267; MacDougall, A.M., Walia, H., & Wise, M. (2022). Colour of Violence. Race, Gender & Anti-Violence Services. BWSS; Rise Magazine (2022). New Rise Series: The Intersection of Family Policing and Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence: Introduction.
- 50 Boutilier, S. & Wells, L. (2018). The Case for Reparative and Transformative Justice Approaches to Sexual Violence in Canada: A proposal to pilot and test new approaches. The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence; Mussell, L. (2023). Decolonizing Research on the Carceral in Canadian Political Science. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 56(3), 571–595.
- 51 Boutilier, S. & Wells, L. (2018). The Case for Reparative and Transformative Justice Approaches to Sexual Violence in Canada: A proposal to pilot and test new approaches. The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence; Nikolova, K., Fallon, B., Black, T., Passanha, N., & Isaac, K. (2021). Responding to intimate partner violence (IPV) in Ontario, Canada: A closer look at police involvement. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 128.
- 52 MacDougall, A.M., Walia, H., & Wise, M. (2022). Colour of Violence. Race, Gender & Anti-Violence Services. BWSS; Perez-Darby, S. (2024). Non-Carceral Responses to Intimate Partner Abuse. *Accountable Communities Consortium*.
- 53 Mussell, L. (2023). Decolonizing Research on the Carceral in Canadian Political Science. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 56(3), 571–595, citing Rougier (2021).
- 54 ^{kv} Mussell, L. (2023). Decolonizing Research on the Carceral in Canadian Political Science. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 56(3), 571–595. P. 584, citing Craft (2016).
- 55 Perez-Darby, S. (2024). Non-Carceral Responses to Intimate Partner Abuse. *Accountable Communities Consortium*; Shim, H. (2022). Safety Planning and Intimate Partner Violence. A Toolkit for Survivors and Supporters. *Survived and Punished*.
- 56 Shim, H. (2022). Safety Planning and Intimate Partner Violence. A Toolkit for Survivors and Supporters. *Survived and Punished*; Western Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women & Children. (n.d.). Neighbours, Friends and Families: How to Help Someone Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).
- 57 Perez-Darby, S. (2024). Non-Carceral Responses to Intimate Partner Abuse. *Accountable Communities Consortium*. Pp. 5-7.

STATE WELFARE AS VIOLENCE

- 58 Benjamin (1921). Cited in Tyner, J.A. (2014). Dead labor, landscapes, and mass graves: Administrative violence during the Cambodian genocide. *Geoforum*, 52, 70-77.
- 59 Jacobs, L.A., Kim, M.E., Whitfield, D.L., Gartner, R.E., Panichelli, M., Kattari, S.K., Downey, M.M., Stuart McQueen, S. & Mountz, S.E. (2021) Defund the Police: Moving Towards an Anti-Carceral Social Work. *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, 32(1), 37-62. P. 40.
- 60 Lee, S. (2024). Administrative Violence in Immigration Law. *Arizona Law Review*, 66(3), 739-784. P. 739.
- 61 Spade, D. (2015). Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law. *Duke University Press*.
- 62 Spade, D. (2015). Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law. *Duke University Press*. P. 73.
- 63 Lee, S. (2024). Administrative Violence in Immigration Law. *Arizona Law Review*, 66(3), 739-784. P. 739.
- 64 This prioritization of crime-based counselling services is also occurring within a broader mental health landscape marked by a lack of voluntary mental health options and increasing investment in coercive mental health systems (see the work of Health Justice BC for more information).
- 65 Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. *BC Ministry of the Attorney General*.

- 66 Black, T., Fallon, B., Joh-Carnella, N., Houston, E., & Livingston, E. (2025). Children's exposure to intimate partner violence as a form of child maltreatment in Canada: Analysis of the Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect (CIS). *Children and Youth Services Review*, 175; O'Connor, C., Alaggia, R., & Nixon, K.L. (2024). "Something's got to give": A Qualitative Exploration of Policies and Practices by Child Welfare Services in Cases of Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence in Ontario, Canada. *Journal of Family Violence*.
- 67 Grant, I., Mosoff, J., Boyd, S., & Lindy, R. (2017). Intersecting Challenges: Mothers and Child Protection Law in BC. Allard Research Commons Faculty Publications.
- 68 Perez-Darby, S. (2024). Non-Carceral Responses to Intimate Partner Abuse. Accountable Communities Consortium. P. 11.
- 69 MacDougall, A.M., Walia, H., & Wise, M. (2022). Colour of Violence. Race, Gender & Anti-Violence Services. BWSS.
- 70 BC Representative for Children and Youth. (2024). Don't Look Away. How one boy's story has the power to shift a system of care for children and youth; Giesbrecht, C. J., Kikulwe, D., Watkinson, A. M., Sato, C. L., Este, D. C., & Falihi, A. (2023). Supporting Newcomer Women Who Experience Intimate Partner Violence and Their Children: Insights From Service Providers. *Affilia*, 38(1), 127-148; Haller, A., White, S., Bresch, L., Peter, T., Novick, J., Kurbatfinski, S., Marshall, S., Giacobbo, O., Nixon, K., Wood, D., & Letourneau, N. (2022). Examining the Nature & Context of IPV in 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Rainbow Resource Centre and RESOLVE Network; Hawkins, K. & Mangat, R. (2023). Joint Submission on the potential criminalisation of coercive control. Rise Women's Legal Centre and West Coast LEAF; MacDougall, A.M., Walia, H., & Wise, M. (2022). Colour of Violence. Race, Gender & Anti-Violence Services. BWSS.
- MANDATORY REPORTING**
- 71 Child, Family and Community Service Act, RSBC 1996, c. 46, s.14. (1996). BC Laws.
- 72 Child, Family and Community Service Act, RSBC 1996, c. 46, s.14(3). (1996). BC Laws.
- 73 Trivedi, S. (2023). Mandating Support for Survivors. *Virginia Journal of Social Policy & the Law*, 30(1), 85-98.
- 74 O'Connor, C., Alaggia, R., & Nixon, K.L. (2024). "Something's got to give": A Qualitative Exploration of Policies and Practices by Child Welfare Services in Cases of Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence in Ontario, Canada. *Journal of Family Violence*. P. 2.; see also Nikolova, K., Fallon, B., Black, T., Passanha, N., & Isaac, K. (2021). Responding to intimate partner violence (IPV) in Ontario, Canada: A closer look at police involvement. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 128.
- 75 MacDougall, A.M., Walia, H., & Wise, M. (2022). Colour of Violence. Race, Gender & Anti-Violence Services. BWSS. P. 74
- 76 O'Connor, C., Alaggia, R., & Nixon, K.L. (2024). "Something's got to give": A Qualitative Exploration of Policies and Practices by Child Welfare Services in Cases of Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence in Ontario, Canada. *Journal of Family Violence*. P. 2.; see also Nikolova, K., Fallon, B., Black, T., Passanha, N., & Isaac, K. (2021). Responding to intimate partner violence (IPV) in Ontario, Canada: A closer look at police involvement. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 128.
- 77 Black, T., Fallon, B., Joh-Carnella, N., Houston, E., & Livingston, E. (2025). Children's exposure to intimate partner violence as a form of child maltreatment in Canada: Analysis of the Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect (CIS). *Children and Youth Services Review*, 175.
- 78 O'Connor, C., Alaggia, R., & Nixon, K.L. (2024). "Something's got to give": A Qualitative Exploration of Policies and Practices by Child Welfare Services in Cases of Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence in Ontario, Canada. *Journal of Family Violence*.
- 79 Harvey, B., Gupta-Kagan, J., & Church, C. (2021). Reimagining Schools' Role Outside the Family Regulation System. *Columbia Journal of Race and Law*, 11(3), 575-610; Mohamud, F., Edwards, T., Antwi-Boasiako, K., William, K., King, J., Igor, E., & King, B. (2021). Racial disparity in the Ontario child welfare system: Conceptualizing policies and practices that drive involvement for Black families. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 120.
- 80 Trivedi, S. (2023). Mandating Support for Survivors. *Virginia Journal of Social Policy & the Law*, 30(1), 85-98. P. 95; see also Harvey, B., Gupta-Kagan, J., & Church, C. (2021). Reimagining Schools' Role Outside the Family Regulation System. *Columbia Journal of Race and Law*, 11(3), 575-610.
- 81 Black, T., Fallon, B., Joh-Carnella, N., Houston, E., & Livingston, E. (2025). Children's exposure to intimate partner violence as a form of child maltreatment in Canada: Analysis of the Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect (CIS). *Children and Youth Services Review*, 175.
- 82 Trivedi, S. (2023). Mandating Support for Survivors. *Virginia Journal of Social Policy & the Law*, 30(1), 85-98.
- 83 Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. BC Ministry of the Attorney General; see also BC First Nations Justice Council (2024) Indigenous Women's Justice Plan: Final Draft; MacDougall, A.M., Walia, H., & Wise, M. (2022). Colour of Violence. Race, Gender & Anti-Violence Services. BWSS.
- 84 Petit, G. & Tedds, L.M. (2020). Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) of the Current System of Income and Social Supports in British Columbia.
- 85 MacDougall, A.M., Walia, H., & Wise, M. (2022). Colour of Violence. Race, Gender & Anti-Violence Services. BWSS.

- 86 Lippy, C., Jumarali, S.N., Nnawulezi, N.A., Williams, E.P., & Burk, C. (2020). The Impact of Mandatory Reporting Laws on Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: Intersectionality, Help-Seeking and the Need for Change. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35, 255–267.
- 87 Alaggia, R., Jenney, A., Mazzuca, J., & Redmond, M. (2007). In whose best interest? A Canadian case study of the impact of child welfare policies in cases of domestic violence. *Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention*, 7(4), 275–290.
- 88 Tabibi, J., Lalonde, D., & Scott, K. (2023). Mothering in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: Realities and Resilience. Learning Network Brief (42). Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children.
- 89 Lippy, C., Jumarali, S.N., Nnawulezi, N.A., Williams, E.P., & Burk, C. (2020). The Impact of Mandatory Reporting Laws on Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: Intersectionality, Help-Seeking and the Need for Change. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35, 255–267.
- 90 Haller, A., White, S., Bresch, L., Peter, T. Novick, J., Kurbatfinski, S., Marshall, S., Giacobbo, O., Nixon, K., Wood, D., & Letourneau, N. (2022). Examining the Nature & Context of IPV in 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Rainbow Resource Centre and RESOLVE Network; Hawkins, K. & Mangat, R. (2023). Joint Submission on the potential criminalisation of coercive control. Rise Women’s Legal Centre and West Coast LEAF; Hoogendam, R. & Maki, K. (2022). Child Welfare Practices and Policies in Canada. Environmental Scan: Prepared for the Advisory Council. Women’s Shelters Canada.
- 91 Lippy, C., Jumarali, S.N., Nnawulezi, N.A., Williams, E.P., & Burk, C. (2020). The Impact of Mandatory Reporting Laws on Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: Intersectionality, Help-Seeking and the Need for Change. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35, 255–267.
- 92 Tabibi, J., Lalonde, D., & Scott, K. (2023). Mothering in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: Realities and Resilience. Learning Network Brief (42). Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children.
- 93 Hawkins, K. & Mangat, R. (2023). Joint Submission on the potential criminalisation of coercive control. Rise Women’s Legal Centre and West Coast LEAF. P. 8.
- 94 For instance, B.C.’s handbook for service providers states that it is “always best to err on the side of caution.” Government of BC. (2017). B.C. Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect. P. 26
- 95 Harvey, B., Gupta-Kagan, J., & Church, C. (2021). Reimagining Schools’ Role Outside the Family Regulation System. *Columbia Journal of Race and Law*, 11(3), 575–610. P. 575; see also Trivedi, S. (2023). Mandating Support for Survivors. *Virginia Journal of Social Policy & the Law*, 30(1), 85-98.
- 96 See, e.g.: BC Representative for Children and Youth. (2024). Don’t Look Away. How one boy’s story has the power to shift a system of care for children and youth; Provincial Perinatal Substance Use Project (2021). Provincial Blueprint for a Perinatal Substance Use Continuum of Care. BC Women’s Hospital + Health Centre.
- 97 Harvey, B., Gupta-Kagan, J., & Church, C. (2021). Reimagining Schools’ Role Outside the Family Regulation System. *Columbia Journal of Race and Law*, 11(3), 575–610. P. 596.
- 98 Bresch, L. (2022). Who is Responsible? Discourses on Mothering and Protecting Children in Service Provider Responses to Intimate Partner Violence. [Master’s Thesis, University of Manitoba.] MSpace.
- 99 Harvey, B., Gupta-Kagan, J., & Church, C. (2021). Reimagining Schools’ Role Outside the Family Regulation System. *Columbia Journal of Race and Law*, 11(3), 575–610.
- 100 See e.g., Powell, R. M. (2024). Under the Watchful Eye of All: Disabled Parents and the Family Policing System’s Web of Surveillance. *California Law Review*, 112, 2005-2064.
- 101 Goodman L. A., & Fauci, J. E. (2020). The Long Shadow of Family Separation: A Structural and Historical Introduction to Mandated Reporting in the Domestic Violence Context. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35(3), 217–223.
- 102 Glaberson, S.K. (2024). The Epistemic Injustice of Algorithmic Family Policing. *UC Irvine Law Review*, 14(2), 404-456. P. 436.
- 103 Bresch, L. (2022). Who is Responsible? Discourses on Mothering and Protecting Children in Service Provider Responses to Intimate Partner Violence. [Master’s Thesis, University of Manitoba.] MSpace. Pp. 23-24.
- 104 Bresch, L. (2022). Who is Responsible? Discourses on Mothering and Protecting Children in Service Provider Responses to Intimate Partner Violence. [Master’s Thesis, University of Manitoba.] MSpace; Goodman L. A., & Fauci, J. E. (2020). The Long Shadow of Family Separation: A Structural and Historical Introduction to Mandated Reporting in the Domestic Violence Context. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35(3), 217–223.
- 105 MacDougall, A.M., Walia, H., & Wise, M. (2022). Colour of Violence. Race, Gender & Anti-Violence Services. BWSS.
- 106 Hoogendam, R. & Maki, K. (2022). Child Welfare Practices and Policies in Canada. Environmental Scan: Prepared for the Advisory Council. Women’s Shelters Canada.
- 107 Harvey, B., Gupta-Kagan, J., & Church, C. (2021). Reimagining Schools’ Role Outside the Family Regulation System. *Columbia Journal of Race and Law*, 11(3), 575–610. P. 588.
- 108 Harvey, B., Gupta-Kagan, J., & Church, C. (2021). Reimagining Schools’ Role Outside the Family Regulation System. *Columbia Journal of Race and Law*, 11(3), 575–610.
- 109 See Narrowing the Front Door to NYC’s Child Welfare System.
- 110 Government of Canada (2022). Gender Based Violence Strategy.
- 111 Ministry of Children and Family Development. (2025). Child Protection Response Policies – Chapter 3. Government of British Columbia. Family Policing Interventions and Investigations

- 112 Ministry of Children and Family Development. (2025). Child Protection Response Policies – Chapter 3. Government of British Columbia; T.L. v. British Columbia (Attorney General). (2023). BCCA 167. CanLII See paras 25-27.
- 113 Ministry of Children and Family Development. (2025). Child Protection Response Policies – Chapter 3. Government of British Columbia. P. 11; T.L. v. British Columbia (Attorney General). (2023). BCCA 167. CanLII See para 26.
- 114 Child, Family and Community Service Act, RSBC 1996, c. 46, s.17, s.65, s.96. (1996). BC Laws; Ministry of Children and Family Development. (2025). Child Protection Response Policies – Chapter 3. Government of British Columbia, s.3.2-3.3. See, e.g., p. 21, p. 28.
- 115 Child, Family and Community Service Act, RSBC 1996, c. 46, s.30(1-3). (1996). BC Laws.
- 116 Child, Family and Community Service Act, RSBC 1996, c. 46, s.35. (1996). BC Laws.
- 117 Feeney, K., McCallum, M., Chambers, R. (2025). The Access Toolkit: A parent’s counsel’s guide to advocating for meaningful access arrangements in child and family services cases. West Coast LEAF.
- 118 Ministry of Children and Family Development. (2025). Child Protection Response Policies – Chapter 3. Government of British Columbia.
- 119 Child, Family and Community Service Act, RSBC 1996, c. 46, s.30. (1996). BC Laws; Ministry of Children and Family Development. (2025). Child Protection Response Policies – Chapter 3. Government of British Columbia, s. 3.2. P. 27
- 120 See also: BC Representative for Children and Youth. (2024). Don’t Look Away. How one boy’s story has the power to shift a system of care for children and youth. P. 124, where plans were described as “paternalistic and authoritative”; and Ono, E. (2023). The Violence of “Best Interests of the Child”: Social Work in the Ruling Relations. [Doctoral Dissertation, University of British Columbia.] cIRcle, pp. 224-225, for a first-person account of “voluntary” agreements as coercive.
- 121 BC Representative for Children and Youth. (2024). Don’t Look Away. How one boy’s story has the power to shift a system of care for children and youth. P. 13.
- 122 Harvey, B., Gupta-Kagan, J., & Church, C. (2021). Reimagining Schools’ Role Outside the Family Regulation System. Columbia Journal of Race and Law, 11(3), 575–610. P. 591
- 123 Bresch, L. (2022). Who is Responsible? Discourses on Mothering and Protecting Children in Service Provider Responses to Intimate Partner Violence. [Master’s Thesis, University of Manitoba.] MSpace; Harvey, B., Gupta-Kagan, J., & Church, C. (2021). Reimagining Schools’ Role Outside the Family Regulation System. Columbia Journal of Race and Law, 11(3), 575–610.
- 124 Bresch, L. (2022). Who is Responsible? Discourses on Mothering and Protecting Children in Service Provider Responses to Intimate Partner Violence. [Master’s Thesis, University of Manitoba.] MSpace. P. 22.
- 125 BC Representative for Children and Youth. (2024). Don’t Look Away. How one boy’s story has the power to shift a system of care for children and youth; BC Representative for Children and Youth. (2025). No Time to Wait. A review of MCFD’s child welfare workforce. Part two. E.g., p. 121.
- 126 Bresch, L. (2022). Who is Responsible? Discourses on Mothering and Protecting Children in Service Provider Responses to Intimate Partner Violence. [Master’s Thesis, University of Manitoba.] MSpace; De Simone & Heward-Bell. (2020). Evidencing better child protection practice: why representations of domestic violence matter. Current Issues in Criminal Justice, 32(4), 403-419; Trivedi, S. (2023). Mandating Support for Survivors. Virginia Journal of Social Policy & the Law, 30(1), 85-98.
- 127 De Simone & Heward-Bell. (2020). Evidencing better child protection practice: why representations of domestic violence matter. Current Issues in Criminal Justice, 32(4), 403-419.
- 128 Brown (2009), cited in Bresch, L. (2022). Who is Responsible? Discourses on Mothering and Protecting Children in Service Provider Responses to Intimate Partner Violence. [Master’s Thesis, University of Manitoba.] MSpace. P. 35.
- 129 De Simone & Heward-Bell. (2020). Evidencing better child protection practice: why representations of domestic violence matter. Current Issues in Criminal Justice, 32(4), 403-419; O’Connor, C., Alaggia, R., & Nixon, K.L. (2024). “Something’s got to give”: A Qualitative Exploration of Policies and Practices by Child Welfare Services in Cases of Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence in Ontario, Canada. Journal of Family Violence.
- 130 Nixon & Tutty (2010), Cited in Bresch, L. (2022). Who is Responsible? Discourses on Mothering and Protecting Children in Service Provider Responses to Intimate Partner Violence. [Master’s Thesis, University of Manitoba.] MSpace. P. 21.
- 131 Government of Canada. (2019). An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families. Section 10.
- 132 West Coast LEAF. (2019). Pathways in a Forest. Indigenous Guidance on Prevention-based Child Welfare. P. 41-42.
- 133 Bresch, L. (2022). Who is Responsible? Discourses on Mothering and Protecting Children in Service Provider Responses to Intimate Partner Violence. [Master’s Thesis, University of Manitoba.] MSpace; Trivedi, S. (2023). Mandating Support for Survivors. Virginia Journal of Social Policy & the Law, 30(1), 85-98; see also O’Connor, C., Alaggia, R., & Nixon, K.L. (2024). “Something’s got to give”: A Qualitative Exploration of Policies and Practices by Child Welfare Services in Cases of Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence in Ontario, Canada. Journal of Family Violence. P. 9-10.
- 134 RR v. Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (No. 6). (2022.) BCHRT 116. CanLII. See paras 163-167, where family policing workers placed children in the same group home where they faced abuse, but reasoned the action being taken due to a lack of resources (i.e., they had no other option).

- 135 Per MCFD policies, if reports are screened as not requiring protection, the Ministry can opt to take no further action, offer voluntary services, or make a referral to other supports. See Ministry of Children and Family Development. (2025). Child Protection Response Policies – Chapter 3. Government of British Columbia, s. 3.1, p. 7.
- 136 BC Representative for Children and Youth. (2024). Don't Look Away. How one boy's story has the power to shift a system of care for children and youth; Harvey, B., Gupta-Kagan, J., & Church, C. (2021). Reimagining Schools' Role Outside the Family Regulation System. Columbia Journal of Race and Law, 11(3), 575–610; Lippy, C., Jumarali, S.N., Nnawulezi, N.A., Williams, E.P., & Burk, C. (2020). The Impact of Mandatory Reporting Laws on Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: Intersectionality, Help-Seeking and the Need for Change. Journal of Family Violence, 35, 255–267.
- 137 See, for example, the significant numbers of youth and parents in need of help who were unable to access PEACE anti-violence services. BC Society of Transition Houses. (2024). 2023 PEACE Programs 24 Hour Census.
- 138 Goodman L. A., & Fauci, J. E. (2020). The Long Shadow of Family Separation: A Structural and Historical Introduction to Mandated Reporting in the Domestic Violence Context. Journal of Family Violence, 35(3), 217–223. Pp. 217-218
- 139 See also West Coast LEAF (2019). Pathways in a Forest. Indigenous Guidance on Prevention-based Child Welfare, P. 57
- 140 Edwards, F., Fong, K., Copeland, V., Raz, M., & Dettlaff, A. (2023). Administrative burdens in child welfare systems. Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences, 9(5), 214–231.
- 141 E.g., Lippy, C., Jumarali, S.N., Nnawulezi, N.A., Williams, E.P., & Burk, C. (2020). The Impact of Mandatory Reporting Laws on Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: Intersectionality, Help-Seeking and the Need for Change. Journal of Family Violence, 35, 255–267; Olszowy, L., Jaffe, P.G., Dawson, M., Straatman, A-L., & Saxton, M.D. (2020). Voices from the frontline: Child protection workers' perspectives on barriers to assessing risk in domestic violence cases. Children and Youth Services Review, 116; Poor, E. (2023). Disentangling the Civil-Carceral State: Abolitionist Framework for the Non-Criminal Response to Intimate Partner Violence. New York University Review of Law & Social Change, 47, 273-337.
- 142 Hoogendam, R. & Maki, K. (2022). Child Welfare Practices and Policies in Canada. Environmental Scan: Prepared for the Advisory Council. Women's Shelters Canada; Nikolova, K., Fallon, B., Black, T., Passanha, N., & Isaac, K. (2021). Responding to intimate partner violence (IPV) in Ontario, Canada: A closer look at police involvement. Children and Youth Services Review, 128; Olszowy, L., Jaffe, P., & Saxton, M. (2021). Examining the Role of Child Protection Services in Domestic Violence Cases: Lessons Learned from Tragedies. Journal of Family Violence, 36, 927-939.
- 143 Nikolova, K., Fallon, B., Black, T., Passanha, N., & Isaac, K. (2021). Responding to intimate partner violence (IPV) in Ontario, Canada: A closer look at police involvement. Children and Youth Services Review, 128; see also Black, T., Fallon, B., Joh-Carnella, N., Houston, E., & Livingston, E. (2025). Children's exposure to intimate partner violence as a form of child maltreatment in Canada: Analysis of the Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect (CIS). Children and Youth Services Review, 175.
- 144 Olszowy, L., Jaffe, P.G., Dawson, M., Straatman, A-L., & Saxton, M.D. (2020). Voices from the frontline: Child protection workers' perspectives on barriers to assessing risk in domestic violence cases. Children and Youth Services Review, 116; Smith, J. & Humphries, C. (2019). Child protection and fathering where there is domestic violence: Contradictions and consequences. Child & Family Social Work, 24(1), 156-163; Tabibi, J., Lalonde, D., & Scott, K. (2023). Mothering in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: Realities and Resilience. Learning Network Brief (42). Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children.
- 145 Olszowy, L., Jaffe, P., & Saxton, M. (2021). Examining the Role of Child Protection Services in Domestic Violence Cases: Lessons Learned from Tragedies. Journal of Family Violence, 36, 927-939. P. 933, p. 936.
- 146 De Simone & Heward-Bell. (2020). Evidencing better child protection practice: why representations of domestic violence matter. Current Issues in Criminal Justice, 32(4), 403-419; Rise Magazine (2022). New Rise Series: The Intersection of Family Policing and Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence: Introduction.
- 147 BC Representative for Children and Youth. (2024). Don't Look Away. How one boy's story has the power to shift a system of care for children and youth.

INTERSECTING LEGAL SYSTEMS

- 148 Hawkins, K. & Mangat, R. (2023). Joint Submission on the potential criminalisation of coercive control. Rise Women's Legal Centre and West Coast LEAF. Pp 7-8.
- 149 Presler, C. (2021). Mutual Deference Between Hospitals and Courts: How Mandated Reporting from Medical Providers Harms Families. Columbia Journal of Race and Law, 11(3), 733–766.
- 150 Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. BC Ministry of the Attorney General.
- 151 Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. BC Ministry of the Attorney General.
- 152 Hawkins, K. & Mangat, R. (2023). Joint Submission on the potential criminalisation of coercive control. Rise Women's Legal Centre and West Coast LEAF; Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. BC Ministry of the Attorney General.

- 153 Grant, I., Mosoff, J., Boyd, S., & Lindy, R. (2017). Intersecting Challenges: Mothers and Child Protection Law in BC. Allard Research Commons Faculty Publications. P. 24.
- 154 De Simone & Heward-Bell. (2020). Evidencing better child protection practice: why representations of domestic violence matter. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 32(4), 403-419. P. 406.
- 155 Murray, K.M. (2021). Achieving Digital Equity in Access to Justice. Legal Aid BC.
- 156 Hawkins, K. & Mangat, R. (2023). Joint Submission on the potential criminalisation of coercive control. Rise Women's Legal Centre and West Coast LEAF. P. 7; see also Tabibi, J., Lalonde, D., & Scott, K. (2023). Mothering in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: Realities and Resilience. Learning Network Brief (42). Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children.
- 157 MacDougall, A.M., Walia, H., & Wise, M. (2022). Colour of Violence. Race, Gender & Anti-Violence Services. BWSS.
- 158 Tabibi, J., Lalonde, D., & Scott, K. (2023). Mothering in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: Realities and Resilience. Learning Network Brief (42). Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children. P. 8.
- 159 Ministry of Children and Family Development. (2023). Policy: Best Practice Approaches. Child Protection and Violence Against Women. Government of British Columbia. See Appendix 4, Pp. 57-58.
- 160 Chan, W., & Lennox, R. (2023). "This isn't justice": Abused women navigate family law in Greater Vancouver. In *Canadian Journal of Family Law*, 35(1), 81-129. Allard Research Commons.
- 161 Hawkins, K. & Mangat, R. (2023). Joint Submission on the potential criminalisation of coercive control. Rise Women's Legal Centre and West Coast LEAF. P. 4, citing Boyd & Lindy (2015).
- 162 Meier (2021), cited in Bresch, L. (2022). Who is Responsible? Discourses on Mothering and Protecting Children in Service Provider Responses to Intimate Partner Violence. [Master's Thesis, University of Manitoba.] MSpace.
- 163 Archer-Kuhn, B. & de Villiers, S. (2019). Gendered Practices in Child Protection: Shifting Mother Accountability and Father Invisibility in Situations of Domestic Violence. *Social Inclusion*, 7(1), 228-237. See p. 234.
- 164 Tabibi, J., Lalonde, D., & Scott, K. (2023). Mothering in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: Realities and Resilience. Learning Network Brief (42). Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children.
- 165 Boutilier, S. & Wells, L. (2018). The Case for Reparative and Transformative Justice Approaches to Sexual Violence in Canada: A proposal to pilot and test new approaches. The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence.
- 166 Hawkins, K. & Mangat, R. (2023). Joint Submission on the potential criminalisation of coercive control. Rise Women's Legal Centre and West Coast LEAF.
- 167 Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. BC Ministry of the Attorney General.
- 168 De Simone & Heward-Bell. (2020). Evidencing better child protection practice: why representations of domestic violence matter. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 32(4), 403-419; Haller, A., White, S., Bresch, L., Peter, T. Novick, J., Kurbatfinski, S., Marshall, S., Giacobbo, O., Nixon, K., Wood, D., & Letourneau, N. (2022). Examining the Nature & Context of IPV in 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Rainbow Resource Centre and RESOLVE Network; Lippy, C., Jumarali, S.N., Nnawulezi, N.A., Williams, E.P., & Burk, C. (2020). The Impact of Mandatory Reporting Laws on Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: Intersectionality, Help-Seeking and the Need for Change. *Journal of Family Violence*, 35, 255-267.
- 169 Hawkins, K. & Mangat, R. (2023). Joint Submission on the potential criminalisation of coercive control. Rise Women's Legal Centre and West Coast LEAF. P. 9.
- 170 Health Justice. (2024). Facade of Safety: Gender-based Violence in BC's involuntary mental health system; Rise Magazine (2022). New Rise Series: The Intersection of Family Policing and Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence: Introduction.
- 171 Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. BC Ministry of the Attorney General. P. 25.
- 172 Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. BC Ministry of the Attorney General.
- 173 Feeney, K., McCallum, M., Chambers, R. (2025). The Access Toolkit: A parent's counsel's guide to advocating for meaningful access arrangements in child and family services cases. West Coast LEAF.
- 174 Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. BC Ministry of the Attorney General.
- 175 Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. BC Ministry of the Attorney General.
- 176 Mussell, L. (2023). Decolonizing Research on the Carceral in Canadian Political Science. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 56(3), 571-595.
- 177 The Hul'q'umi'num word for grandparent. See Charlie, S., Luschiimtunaat. (2019). Kinship terms within the Hul'q'umi'num' territory. [Master's Thesis Simon Fraser University.]
- 178 E.g., Mass Casualty Commission. (2023). Final Report – Turning the Tide Together; Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. BC Ministry of the Attorney General; see also Boutilier, S. & Wells, L. (2018). The Case for

Reparative and Transformative Justice Approaches to Sexual Violence in Canada: A proposal to pilot and test new approaches. The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence.

- 179 Boutilier, S. & Wells, L. (2018). The Case for Reparative and Transformative Justice Approaches to Sexual Violence in Canada: A proposal to pilot and test new approaches. The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence
- 180 Stanton, K. (2025). Independent Systemic Review: The British Columbia Legal System's Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence. BC Ministry of the Attorney General.
- 181 Boutilier, S. & Wells, L. (2018). The Case for Reparative and Transformative Justice Approaches to Sexual Violence in Canada: A proposal to pilot and test new approaches. The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence.

GOVERNMENT CUSTODY AND SEPARATION FROM FAMILY

- 182 Child, Family and Community Service Act, RSBC 1996, c. 55, s.56. (1996). BC Laws.
- 183 Feeney, K., McCallum, M., Chambers, R. (2025). The Access Toolkit: A parent's counsel's guide to advocating for meaningful access arrangements in child and family services cases. West Coast LEAF. P. 6
- 184 Feeney, K., McCallum, M., Chambers, R. (2025). The Access Toolkit: A parent's counsel's guide to advocating for meaningful access arrangements in child and family services cases. West Coast LEAF.
- 185 Feeney, K., McCallum, M., Chambers, R. (2025). The Access Toolkit: A parent's counsel's guide to advocating for meaningful access arrangements in child and family services cases. West Coast LEAF. P. 7.
- 186 Grant, I., Mosoff, J., Boyd, S., & Lindy, R. (2017). Intersecting Challenges: Mothers and Child Protection Law in BC. Allard Research Commons Faculty Publications; Kenny, K.S. (2017).

Mental Health Harm to Mothers When a Child Is Taken by Child Protective Services: Health Equity Considerations. Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 63(5), 304-307; Lippy, C., Jumarli, S.N., Nnawulezi, N.A., Williams, E.P., & Burk, C. (2020). The Impact of Mandatory Reporting Laws on Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: Intersectionality, Help-Seeking and the Need for Change. Journal of Family Violence, 35, 255-267.

- 187 West Coast LEAF. (2019). Pathways in a Forest. Indigenous Guidance on Prevention-based Child Welfare; Martin, C.M., & Walia, H. (2022). Red Women Rising: Indigenous Women Survivors in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Downtown Eastside Women's Centre.
- 188 Kenny, K.S. (2017). Mental Health Harm to Mothers When a Child Is Taken by Child Protective Services: Health Equity Considerations. Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 63(5), 304-307.
- 189 Kenny, K.S., Barrington, C., & Green, S.L. (2015). "I felt for a long time like everything beautiful in me had been taken out": Women's suffering, remembering, and survival following the loss of child custody. International Journal of Drug Policy, 26(11), 1158-1166.
- 190 Wall-Weiler, E., Roos, L.L., Brownell, M., Nickel, N., Chateau, D., & Singal, D., (2017). Suicide Attempts and Completions among Mothers Whose Children Were Taken into Care by Child Protection Services: A Cohort Study Using Linkable Administrative Data. The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 63(3), 170-177.
- 191 Kenny, K.S. (2017). Mental Health Harm to Mothers When a Child Is Taken by Child Protective Services: Health Equity Considerations. Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 63(5), 304-307.
- 192 Trivedi, S. (2023). Mandating Support for Survivors. Virginia Journal of Social Policy & the Law, 30(1), 85-98.
- 193 Martin, C.M., & Walia, H. (2022). Red Women Rising: Indigenous Women Survivors in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Downtown Eastside Women's Centre.

194 MacDougall, A.M., Walia, H., & Wise, M. (2022). Colour of Violence. Race, Gender & Anti-Violence Services. BWSS. P. 80.

- 195 BC Representative for Children and Youth. (2024). Don't Look Away. How one boy's story has the power to shift a system of care for children and youth; Nikolova, K., Fallon, B., Black, T., Passanha, N., & Isaac, K. (2021). Responding to intimate partner violence (IPV) in Ontario, Canada: A closer look at police involvement. Children and Youth Services Review, 128.
- 196 MacDougall, A.M., Walia, H., & Wise, M. (2022). Colour of Violence. Race, Gender & Anti-Violence Services. BWSS. P. 74.
- 197 C Representative for Children and Youth. (2024). Don't Look Away. How one boy's story has the power to shift a system of care for children and youth. P. 109.

198 Martin, C.M., & Walia, H. (2022). Red Women Rising: Indigenous Women Survivors in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Downtown Eastside Women's Centre. Pp. 21-22.

GLOSSARY

- 199 Nicols, R. (2013). Toward a Critical Trans Politics: An Interview with Dean Spade. Upping the Anti: a journal of theory and action.
- 200 Alternatives to Violence Project. (2026). Glossary.
- 201 UpEND Movement. (2026). The Carceral Logic of the Family Policing System.
- 202 Women's Aid. (n.d.). What is coercive control?
- 203 West Coast LEAF. (2019). Pathways in a Forest. Indigenous Guidance on Prevention-based Child Welfare
- 204 MacDougall, A.M., Walia, H., & Wise, M. (2022). Colour of Violence. Race, Gender & Anti-Violence Services. BWSS.
- 205 Brown, L., Callahan, M., Strega, S., Walmsley, C., and Dominelli, L. (2009). Manufacturing ghost fathers: the paradox of fatherpresence and absence in child welfare. Child and Family Social Work, 14.

- 206 Raincity Housing. (n.d.). Duty to Support: Continuing the Conversation. Learning Network and Knowledge Hub.
- 207 Assembly of First Nations. (2025). National First Nations Justice Strategy.
- 208 Centre for Public Representation. (n.d.) Supporting Individualized Informed Choice: Conversations About The COVID-19 Vaccine.
- 209 Luke's Place. (2024). What is intimate partner violence?. Ontario, Canada.
- 210 UpEND Movement. (2026). The Carceral Logic of the Family Policing System.
- 211 Critical Disability Studies Collective. (2026) Terminology. University of Minnesota.
- 212 Abolitionist Futures. (n.d.) Abolishing the Police Glossary.
- 213 Youth First Justice Collaborative. (2025). #NoKidsinPrison Glossary.
- 214 Learn to be antiracist. (2025). Glossary of Terms: General Terms.
- 215 Well Living House, Raising the Village. (2020). Indigenous Outcomes: 5 Self-Determination.
- 216 National Survivor Network. (2026). Definitions.
- 217] Rutherford, A., Zwi, A. B., Grove, N. J., & Butchart, A. (2007). Violence: a glossary. *Journal of epidemiology and community health*, 61(8), 676–680, p.678. doi:10.1136/jech.2005.043711
- 218 Youth First Justice Collaborative. (2025). #NoKidsinPrison Glossary.
- 219 Copeland, V. and Pendleton, M. (2025). Surveillance of Black Families in the Family Policing System. UpEND Movement.



West Coast LEAF

www.westcoastleaf.org