

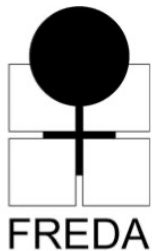
BULLETIN

April 2022

Issue No. 1

Family Violence and Family Law Community of Practice Bulletin

About the FVFL Community of Practice



With the support of our local community of practice, the FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children is actively engaging in research and knowledge mobilization as part of the Supporting the Health of Survivors of Family Violence in Family Law Proceedings project. This is a Canada-wide project with the aim of building the capacity of health and social service professionals to work safely and effectively with survivors of family violence. The Communities of Practice project is a collaborative project with the Alliance of Five Centres. This project is funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and runs November 2020 to November 2024.

The Five Communities of Practice

Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children

Western University www.learningtoendabuse.ca

Project Leads: Peter Jaffe and Katreena Scott

FREDA Centre for Research on Gender-based Violence Against Women and Children

Simon Fraser University www.fredacentre.com

Project Lead: Margaret Jackson

Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research

University of New Brunswick www.unb.ca/mmfc

Project Leads: Karla O'Regan and LA Henry

Recherches Appliquées et Interdisciplinaires sur les Violences intimes, familiales et structurelles

Université Laval www.raiv.ulaval.ca

Project Leads: Dominique Bernier and Geneviève Lessard

RESOLVE

University of Manitoba www.umanitoba.ca/resolve

Project Lead: Kendra Nixon

Meet Our Community of Practice

For the Public Health Agency of Canada Project

The FREDA Centre's community of practice consists of representatives from the family law and violence against women sectors, as well as women with lived experience and those who work with and support survivors of family violence. A few of our committee members are profiled below:

Dr. Balbir Gurm



Dr. Balbir Gurm (RN, Ed.D.) is a member of the Faculty of Health at Kwantlen Polytechnic University and Facilitator and Founder of the Network to End Violence in Relationships (NEVR). NEVR is a network of over 200 members from over 100 organizations from education, health and social services, justice, business and community members. Our vision is to create a society where relationship violence is not tolerated. Our goal is to bring multiple organizations together to coordinate services, share knowledge.

Learn more on NEVR's [website](#).

Committee News

NEVR is hosting its annual conference, which runs half days (8:30a-12p PST) on June 2, 9, 16, and 23.

This year's title is *Trauma: affects, resiliencies and informed practice*.

Vandana Sood



Vandana Sood is a Supervising Lawyer at Rise Women's Legal Center. Vandana has a J.D. from the University of British Columbia, and an M.Sc. from the University of Calgary, and has focused her legal career on working to achieve gender equality and empowerment for women. Vandana articulated in criminal law and practiced aboriginal law at two small Vancouver firms before opening her solo practice where she practised in the areas of family law, child protection law (as parent's counsel) and immigration & refugee law. Her primary focus was assisting racialized women and women with precarious status who had experienced family violence.

Learn more on Rise Women's Legal Centre's [website](#).

Kristi Yuris



Kristi Yuris (J.D.) is the Community Coordination for Women's Safety (CCWS) Program Manager at the Ending Violence Association of British Columbia (EVA BC). She has a law degree from the University of British Columbia. Kristi has worked in the feminist anti-violence and legal advocacy communities for over 20 years. Prior to her time with EVA, she provided support and legal advocacy services to a range of communities including survivors of gender-based violence, people living with HIV/AIDS and people living with mental health and substance misuse issues.

EVA BC provides supports to over 300 anti-violence programs and cross-sectoral initiatives across BC that respond to sexual and domestic violence, child abuse, and criminal harassment.

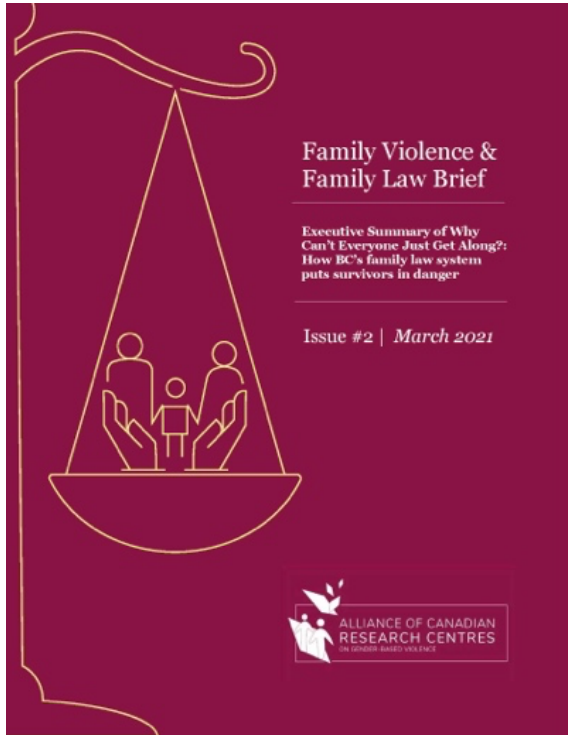
Learn more on EVA BC's [website](#).

2021 in Review

Knowledge Mobilization Activities

This project reaches children, youth, and families affected by violence, as well as professionals and service providers, while also helping to learn and share "what works" in this emerging field. These goals are achieved through the creation of webinars and learning briefs which are disseminated nationally and internationally.

Family Violence & Family Law Learning Briefs



Executive Summary of Why Can't Everyone Just Get Along?: How BC's family law system puts survivors in danger

Family Violence & Family Law Brief, Issue #2, March 2021

Haley Hrymak and Kim Hawkins, Rise Women's Legal Centre

This brief summarizes research conducted by Rise Women's Legal Centre between 2017 and 2020 about the response of the legal system in British Columbia when family violence is raised since the Family Law Act came into effect in 2013. Rise lawyer, Haley Hrymak, travelled to 27 communities in BC and interviewed survivors of family violence who had recently pursued their family law case in a BC court. Further, she administered surveys, organized focus groups and round-table discussions, and spoke directly with front-line workers and experts from different disciplines. The results of this research can be found within Rise's [recent report](#) of the same name, authored by Haley Hrymak and Kim Hawkins.

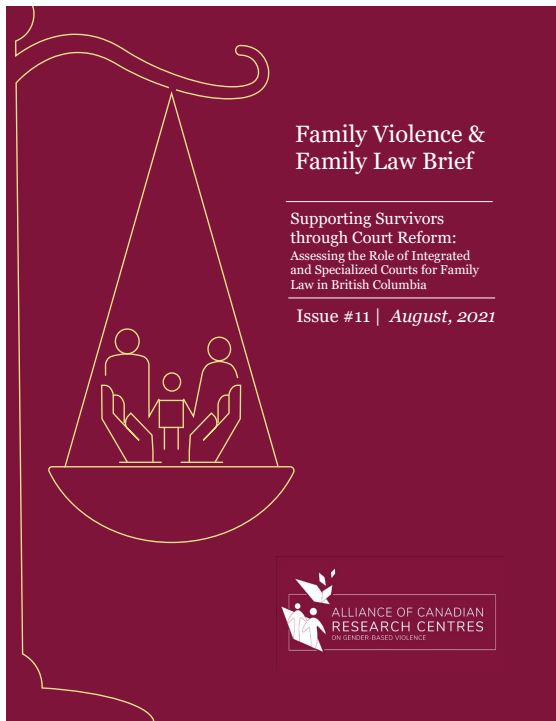


The 2021 Divorce Act: Using statutory interpretation principles to support substantive equality for women and children in family violence cases

Family Violence & Family Law Brief, Issue #5, June 2021

The Honourable Donna Martinson, Q.C., and Dr. Margaret Jackson

All of the principles of statutory interpretation reviewed by the Supreme Court of Canada in *Michel v. Graydon* in relation to the interpretation of the child support provisions of the FLA apply equally to the interpretation of the family violence provisions in all Canadian family law legislation including the Divorce Act. This Learning Brief reviews those principles and suggests ways to apply them in family violence cases.

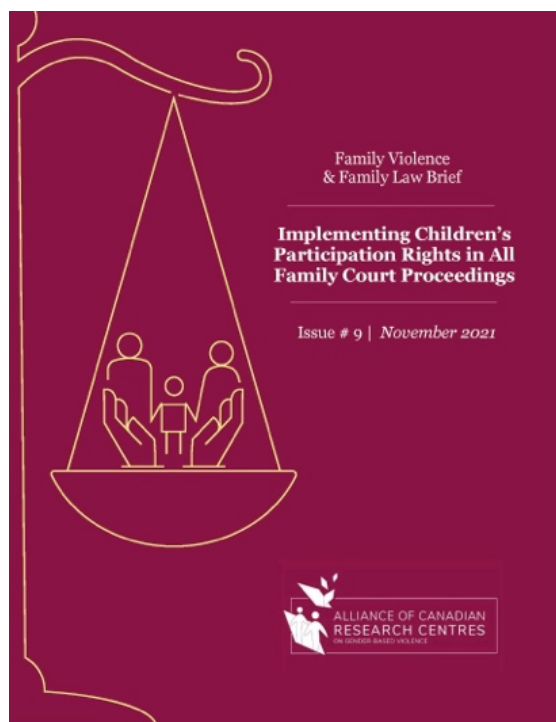


Supporting Survivors through Court Reform: Assessing the Role of Integrated and Specialized Courts for Family Law in British Columbia

Family Violence & Family Law Brief, Issue #11, August 2021

Chelsea Pang

This brief examines existing court models that address domestic violence in BC and discusses the primary issues that remain. Then, this brief provides an overview of different court models from other jurisdictions and describes the benefits and disadvantages of each model. Finally, this brief analyzes key elements that have been successful in developing integrated court systems, as well as ongoing issues and concerns with integrated and specialized courts.



Implementing Children's Participation Rights in All Family Court Proceedings

Family Violence & Family Law Brief, Issue #9, November 2021

The Honourable Donna Martinson, Q.C., and The Honourable Judge Rose Raven

Viewing children in Canada as full rights bearers includes making sure (1) that they are safe, secure and well – free from violence of all kinds within their “homes” and after separation, and (2) that their rights to be heard in all judicial proceedings when courts are determining their best interests are effectively implemented. These rights apply to all children, including those in cases involving family violence and/or “parental alienation”. This brief considers the issue of how children’s rights in all family law court proceedings can be implemented effectively, with the involvement of independent legal representation for children, using the Eight Child Rights Safeguards/Guarantees which the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child states are necessary to do so.

Webinars

Implementing Children's Rights in Family Court Cases

November 2021

The Honourable Donna Martinson, Q.C.
The Honourable Judge Rose Raven
Lauren Irvine
Suzette Narbonne
Dr. Margaret Jackson



Viewing children in Canada as full rights bearers includes making sure (1) that they are safe, secure and well – free from violence of all kinds within their “homes” and after separation, and (2) that their rights to be heard in all judicial proceedings when courts are determining their best interests are effectively implemented. These rights apply to all children, including those in cases involving family violence and/or “parental alienation”.

Principles in International Conventions, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), are part of Canada’s legal framework and help inform a contextual approach to the interpretation of both the general and the family violence and participation provisions of the Divorce Act and provincial family law legislation. The UNCRC states that the “right of all children [under 18] to be heard and taken seriously constitutes one of the fundamental values of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This webinar will consider the issue of how children’s rights in all family law court proceedings can be implemented effectively, with the involvement of independent legal representation for children, using the Eight Child Rights Safeguards / Guarantees which the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child states are necessary to do so.



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

March 2021



Haley Hrymak, Rise Women’s Legal Centre
Dr. Margaret Jackson, the FREDA Centre, Moderator

[Report](#), authored by Haley Hrymak and Kim Hawkins.

The focus of this webinar is on Rise’s research results (referred to above in the brief section) regarding the impacts the family court system had on survivors, particularly to their health. Further, this webinar will focus on the recommendations on how we can improve the court system in BC, starting with mandatory family violence training for lawyers, judges and police, and the creation of a specialized family court designed to address the needs of people attending court with a family law matter, most importantly their own safety and well-being.

The FREDA Centre's Community of Practice Project Team



Margaret Jackson, Ph.D.

Director, The FREDA Centre
Co-investigator, FVFL Project

Margaret Jackson, Ph.D., is Professor Emerita in the School of Criminology and Director of the FREDA Centre at Simon Fraser University. She was principal investigator for a Federal Ministry of Justice study on child abuse. Other research areas of interest include criminal justice policy analysis, problem-solving courts, and most recently, bullying and cyberbullying. Margaret primarily focuses upon research issues related to domestic violence and its impacts on women and children.



Sarah Yercich, Ph.D.

Associate Director, The FREDA Centre
Research Assistant & Coordinator, FVFL Project

Sarah Yercich, Ph.D., is an Associate Director at the FREDA Centre and an Instructor in the Departments of Sociology and Criminology Capilano University. She holds a Ph.D. in Criminology from Simon Fraser University (SFU), and an M.Sc. in Applied Criminology from Northern Arizona University (NAU). She began as a researcher early in her academic career as a Senior Information Specialist for the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative (2009-2010) and continuing through to her work at the FREDA Centre beginning in 2013.



Chelsea Pang, J.D.

Research Associate (2020-2021), FVFL Project

Chelsea holds a J.D. from the Peter A. Allard School of Law (University of British Columbia/UBC). She has been involved in numerous community initiatives, including the UBC AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre and Rise Women's Legal Centre.



Xilonen Hanson Pastran

Research Associate (2020-2021), FVFL Project

Xilonen is a current J.D. Candidate at the University of Victoria. She assisted in an anti-violence worker research project as a student intern at the Ending Violence Association of British Columbia. She is a recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Medal for Democracy, Inclusion and Reconciliation.

Stay in the Loop

Announcements about upcoming webinars, newly released learning briefs, and related project news will be posted to the FREDA Centre's [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). You can also locate information and knowledge mobilization materials from the national communities of practice on the Supporting the Health of Survivors of Family Violence in Family Law Proceedings project [website](#).