

Indigenous Public Legal Education and Information

Final Report and Recommendations – July 2019

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Executive Summary

Legal Services Society (LSS) commissioned this study to identify the need for public legal education and information (PLEI) materials in Indigenous communities. The consultation addressed topics of law where information is needed, presentation format of materials, and delivery methods. LSS can use the recommendations to develop, revise, or adapt materials for Indigenous people.

A literature review included reports and studies from relevant sources, the Aboriginal Legal Aid in BC website, and existing Indigenous public legal education information materials. The literature review identified some of the ongoing challenges Indigenous clients face in accessing Indigenous PLEI materials.

Preliminary recommendations arising from the literature review were used to guide the overall content and approach for a series of focus groups in Haida Gwaii, Kelowna, Kamloops, and Vancouver. Participants included community agency workers, Indigenous and other intermediaries that serve Indigenous communities, and LSS staff and Aboriginal Community Legal Workers.

Discussion focused on legal information needs in Indigenous communities, especially about child protection. Discussion and recommendations about other issues, such as legal advice or representation, fell outside the scope of this project and are not included in this report.

Discussion reflected that existing PLEI for Indigenous users provides useful information and effectively addresses certain barriers (such as literacy level) but does not meet the needs of all users, especially those in isolated communities.

LSS could do more to improve availability of materials; increase awareness of Legal Aid, PLEI, and Indigenous-specific materials; and make materials easier to access. The recommendations arising from the discussions and interviews are presented in these categories. Recommendations include strategies and topics for developing future PLEI materials; communications and training strategies for raising awareness of materials among Indigenous users and in general; and strategies to deliver, distribute, and disseminate the materials in print, on the web, and in person.

Introduction

Legal Services Society (LSS) is committed to promoting access to justice for Indigenous peoples in BC and to being a leader in the journey to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada. This commitment is documented in LSS's *Reconciliation Action Plan, 2018 – 2013*, which guides decision-making and service delivery at all levels of the organization. The LSS board has told LSS management that Indigenous justice and family law, especially in child protection, are organizational priorities for 2018 – 2019.

The Community and Publishing Services department is exploring alternative modes of delivery and distribution of Indigenous public legal education and information (PLEI) to ensure this material reaches the most underserved and vulnerable members of Indigenous communities. PLEI helps to advance reconciliation through education (Reconciliation Action Plan, goal 1) and to advance reconciliation by empowering Indigenous peoples (goal 3). LSS commissioned this study to identify where Indigenous PLEI is succeeding, what the barriers and gaps are, and ways to address those barriers and gaps.

LSS operates two regional centres and has local agents offering services in another 33 communities in BC. Staff at these offices take applications for legal representation and refer eligible people to a lawyer. They, and LSS community partners in all 33 locations in BC, also provide free legal information services. Indigenous PLEI (IPLI) plays a critical role in linking Indigenous clients living outside these 33 communities to the legal information and advice they need.

LSS also operates Parents Legal Centres (PLC) in Campbell River, Duncan, Kamloops, Prince George, Smithers/Hazelton, Surrey, Terrace, Vancouver, Victoria, and Williams Lake. PLCs offer a team-based approach to helping families with child protection matters.

LSS has developed online PLEI web resources and print publications for Indigenous audiences, covering child protection and more. These resources were developed based on recommendations from the CFCSA (*Child, Family, and Community Services Act*) Services Evaluation (2015), the Accessibility Initiative Report (2012), and the Building Bridges Report (2007). The following strategies in the Reconciliation Action Plan will also inform the development of additional Indigenous PLEI resources and distribution methods:

- 1.1. Seek feedback from Indigenous clients about their experiences with LSS services and LSS service providers.
- 1.2. Engage with Indigenous peoples about their legal needs.
- 3.1. Provide knowledge-sharing opportunities by holding workshops, presenting at conferences, and sharing information via social media and other means of technology.
- 6.2. Improve LSS services to better address the procedural, financial, informational, geographical, and cultural barrier that Indigenous peoples face.
- 6.6. Develop protocols to ensure Indigenous clients receive information and advice at multiple access points.

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- 8. Increase resources and support for Legal Aid and other services that seek to reduce the number of Indigenous children in care.
- 9. Increase resources and support for Legal Aid and other services that seek to reduce the number of Indigenous people in custody.
- 12. Increase resources to support Indigenous justice initiatives in BC.
- 13. Support the development and use of Indigenous laws, legal traditions, and languages.
- 17. Foster understanding between Indigenous peoples and the justice system.

This report reflects LSS's ongoing commitment to focused and informed research into the topics that are most needed and effective delivery methods and distribution strategies.

Methodology

Literature review

The consultation and research project on Indigenous PLEI included a review of LSS documents including the CFCSA2 Evaluation, Aboriginal Justice Dialogue Session summaries, Accessibility Initiative Report, and related materials on how communities access information. The literature review also included reports prepared by the Law Foundation about CFCSA PLEI needs, other relevant reports, and summaries of the Parents Legal Centres Indigenous Community Engagement, the recently redeveloped Aboriginal Legal Aid in BC website, and LSS's collection of PLEI developed with Indigenous people in mind.

The review of the literature identified some of the ongoing challenge of the accessibility of the Indigenous PLEI materials to clients.

Focus groups

The community consultation and engagement phase began in early 2019, with focus groups held alongside the LSS Regional Conferences in Haida Gwaii, Kelowna, and Kamloops. Community advocates and workers who serve Indigenous communities discussed how relevant, useful, and understandable the various Indigenous PLEI is for their clients, and for themselves in supporting their clients. These participants had a voice in the future of Indigenous PLEI materials and their feedback reflected the specific needs of their various regions.

LSS also hosted a focus group in Vancouver with key LSS staff, Indigenous community partners, and community members to continue the dialogue.

Community engagement built from one LSS Regional Conference to another to maintain dialogue threads across all the focus groups. This reflective practice supported the deepening of the dialogues from one session to another as participants learned about and engaged on the conversations that participants shared in previous engagements.

Participants were asked open-ended questions to identify what they thought was working well and what the ongoing challenges were. Needs assessment questions were used to gauge how well Indigenous PLEI meets the needs of clients from Indigenous communities. The discussion then focused on solutions to make Indigenous PLEI accessible to and overcome literacy, disability, and other barriers to access.

LSS staff participated in the sessions, writing notes about the dialogue and answering questions. Where questions or concerns fell outside the scope of the focus group, they referred them to another LSS staff member.

Interviews

Interviews were held with Aboriginal Community Legal Workers who work at Parents Legal Centres around the province, and other interested parties who were unable to participate in the focus groups or who wanted to provide feedback. Interviews were done over the phone or by web-conference. Interviewees were invited to review their interviewer's notes to ensure they were accurate.

LSS Indigenous Public Legal Education and Information

The information and recommendations from the various Indigenous PLEI focus groups and the interviews were aggregated and form the basis of the findings in the next section. This report includes recommendations for future engagement and development of Indigenous PLEI, consistent with LSS's commitment to ongoing and deliberative community engagement processes to ensure Indigenous PLEI materials meet the needs of Indigenous people.

Discussion and Findings

Indigenous clients with serious family, child protection, and criminal law issues face many barriers when seeking help from LSS. These include language differences, lower rates of literacy¹, higher rates of cognitive disability², highly variable rates of digital readiness, and the accessibility of PLEI in general.

Literacy and cognitive barriers

LSS writes and designs its PLEI to be understandable by a wide audience. LSS also presents legal information for Indigenous readers in innovative ways, such as comic books, to make information more relatable, less intimidating, and more memorable for readers with low literacy or cognitive impairments.

The literature suggests that Indigenous users of PLEI also benefit from materials that follow the oral tradition. Presenting public legal information in audio or video format, or as a guided inquiry with in-person support, can help readers with low literacy or cognitive impairments. Checklists, flow charts, and other diagrams also benefit these readers. Youth, people who learn best by watching or listening, and people with visual impairment may prefer audio or video over print.

Audio and video content can be shared on Facebook and other social media, and this could help increase awareness of and engagement with legal topics. User testing of a harvesting rights publication recommended that information be more accessible, such as on video. LSS would benefit from engaging with other forms of media.

Digital readiness

People adopt new technologies and devices unevenly across all population segments.³ People's preparedness for using computers, smartphones, and the Internet varies widely. No single digital solution suits all possible users of information. Location also affects digital readiness. People living in areas with poor cellular reception or unreliable Internet access may have different needs from people living in area with good reception and connectivity.

LSS publishes PLEI on three different websites: MyLawBC, Family Law in BC, and Aboriginal Legal Aid in BC. LSS redeveloped the Aboriginal Legal Aid in BC website in 2018 to include users' voices and perspectives. The updated website has a more focused purpose, better information design, simpler language, and clearer next steps.

Focus group discussions revealed that service providers communicate and share information with Indigenous clients primarily by text message. Virtually all Indigenous clients (93%) own a cell phone, but less than half (41%) reported having a computer, and about a third (31%) reported having a tablet. Only 3% reported having none of these devices. Participants considered IPLEI designed for viewing on mobiles or easily shared by text more effective than that available only in print or online.

¹ See Walkem, at 3. Update INAC statistic.

² Specifically those related to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). The cognitive impacts on attention, memory, and reasoning capacities lead people with FASD to be more involved in legal system while simultaneously impairing their ability to seek the legal help they need. See Walkem, at 4. Quotes Child and Youth Officer of BC.

³ <https://www.pewinternet.org/2016/09/20/the-meaning-of-digital-readiness/>

Many intermediaries cut and paste material from resource libraries or databases, and then either print it for clients or email or text it to clients who prefer to get information electronically. Intermediaries and advocates wanted materials with links to resources they could download and either print or email or text to Indigenous clients. Content should be simple, straightforward, and designed specifically for clients who use their phones to access information. Documents sent by email or text, especially youth-related content, could include a reminder to take photos or screenshots so the information is easy to find later.

Accessibility of information

The LSS Accessibility Initiative Report, published in 2012, identified accessibility of PLEI as a barrier. Access to information is the freedom or ability to identify, obtain and use information effectively⁴.

Access to information also requires that

- the information is **available** in a usable form, such as in print or online, and
- the user is **aware** that usable information exists.

Availability

Useful information resources have an identifiable purpose and are recognizably intended for their users. For example, the title *Keeping Aboriginal Kids Safe: Your family's rights* clearly states both the booklet's purpose and its audience. These elements are visually reinforced by the cover illustration of three generations of an Indigenous family.

Focus group participants recommended that PLEI for Indigenous users continue to include images of Indigenous people, artwork, and graphics. It should also have culturally appropriate content and titles wherever possible. LSS should also source and recommend subject matter experts and Indigenous writers, editors, and designers to create Indigenous PLEI.

Materials should be user tested by Indigenous clients to ensure they are user-focused, user-friendly, and culturally appropriate. Wherever possible, they should be tested by users with varying literacy levels, ability levels, and other barriers to access. Literacy levels should be checked consistently to ensure materials meet the range of abilities of the intended target audiences, especially those experiencing trauma or crisis.

Materials for families in crisis

PLEI materials should also consider when, where, and how a user is likely to use a given resource. Many families do not know that they can get help before their child is removed from the home. Indigenous PLEI materials, especially those related to child protection, are often not used until the family is in trauma and crisis. Parents then need to learn as much as possible about what is going to happen to them and their children. Parents must take in new, complex information while feeling powerless and managing their own emotions and stress, and often those of other family or community members.

In such situations of crisis and trauma, in-depth legal information can be more a burden than a help. Ideally, publications work to empower Indigenous people, so they know what to expect and

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_access

what questions to ask. Advocates and community workers asked for brief resources they can print and share with parents, with simple instructions, information condensed into bullet points, checklists, timelines, etc., for needs such as

- to help explain the parents' rights and their children's rights,
- to outline the steps people can take if they do not qualify for Legal Aid,
- to walk through timelines such as for out-of-care and in-care options,
- checklists for advocates and community workers, and
- checklists of questions a client might want to ask in a given situation. For example, questions a child in care might ask their lawyer or an advocate, community worker, or family duty counsel.

Advocates and community workers said they often use *Parents' Rights, Kids' Rights: A parent's guide to child protection law in BC* when working with Indigenous parents. This booklet includes content relevant to Indigenous parents, but some service providers asked for a similar publication specifically for Indigenous parents.

Parents do not always understand how involvement with child protection works or that it can be a long process. Focus group participants commonly asked for a chart of important timelines that presents this information in a way that is easy for service providers to explain and for parents to understand. Flow charts designed specifically for parents, especially with key timelines identifying when parents can take action, might be beneficial.

When to get help

Families also need to know that they can — and should — apply for Legal Aid as soon as the ministry contacts them. More than 70% of lawyers who handled CFCSA matters for LSS clients have said that clients do not seek legal help early enough in the process. Many clients applied for Legal Aid only after the ministry removed their child (42%), or on or after the day of their first court hearing (48%).

Focus group participants expressed the need for more targeted materials like the “Has a social worker contacted you about your children?” wallet card or campaigns to let parents know when they need to get a lawyer.

Children's cultural rights

Focus group feedback also included requests for more information about advocating for cultural rights for Indigenous children and youth. Many social workers do not give cultural ties the priority they should have. Indigenous clients, intermediaries, and advocates need to know children's cultural rights, including how social workers can help ensure that Indigenous children in care get culturally appropriate services (e.g., bringing them back to the community for cultural events, language classes, etc.). *Wrapping Our Ways Around Them* is a good plain-language explanation of CFCSA and how it applies to children keeping their Indigenous culture. Similar publications could share best practices for intermediaries to advocate for clients with other ministries or service

providers to address barriers, such as accessing Jordan's Principle for culturally appropriate social services.

Focus group participants identified the need for materials written for Indigenous children. Children aged 12 and older can be involved in making a plan of care that affects them and have the right to have their own lawyer. Materials could help them self-advocate for their rights, empower them within the child welfare system, and help them understand their rights in this and other situations.

Legal Aid: applying and appealing

Focus group participants identified the need to prepare Indigenous clients for applying for Legal Aid, especially if doing it without an intermediary. Material that lays out the steps and talks about the questions they may be asked and the kind of documents they will need to provide when applying would help Indigenous clients better understand the process.

One suggestion was to write a booklet as a guided inquiry led by someone familiar with the process, such as an Aboriginal Community Legal Worker (ACLW) or a LSS call centre staff member. Readers could then see the steps involved in applying at a PLC or applying by phone, including when to call, how long they might wait to talk to a person, the kinds of questions they'll be asked, and any other aspect of the process of applying for Legal Aid that Indigenous clients should be aware of.

Indigenous clients whose application for Legal Aid is denied need extra help navigating the appeal process. If the appeal is also denied, they need guidance in applying for a free court-appointed lawyer with a JG application. A new publication, perhaps based on the existing publication *If You Can't Get Legal Aid for Your Child Protection Case – A Step-by- Step Guide to Making a JG Application*, could be written for Indigenous clients who are facing a court hearing and cannot afford a lawyer.

Working with a Legal Aid lawyer

Indigenous clients may benefit from LSS developing a document outlining shared responsibilities of Indigenous clients and Legal Aid lawyers. This document could help them work effectively with each other, build a strong working relationship, and better understand the process.

Advocates and community members asked for information on when and how to ask to change a Legal Aid lawyer. This information could set out the steps to take if the client thinks their lawyer has not met their responsibilities. It should also identify the problems that can arise if changing a lawyer in the middle of the case.

Indigenous clients need to know what actions to take first, such as getting free legal advice by calling Family LawLINE or speaking to a family duty counsel at the courthouse. They also need to know that they can look for an advocate through PovNet or find a mediator at Mediate BC. They may be able to find advocates or mediators who are Indigenous or have experience working with Indigenous clients and communities.

Indigenous services directory

In all the focus groups, intermediaries and service providers asked for the return of the Indigenous services directory, a former LSS resource booklet (called *Benefits, Services and Resources for Aboriginal Peoples*) that covered a range of topics. This booklet explained the processes involved in

getting help, relevant information about the subject, and addresses and phone numbers for where to get help. The print version could link to the website version, which would always be the most up to date reference.

A list of First Nation Band or community representatives could be shared. Several key community champions could be profiled on how they offer support during the child protection process.

Awareness

Awareness continues to be the largest barrier to Indigenous clients' use of LSS services and related services from other agencies. Some clients had difficulty finding advocate information or had misconceptions about where advocates were available. Indigenous clients need to know that advocates are available throughout the province and there is no charge for their services.

A list of services and First Nation outreach services should be available on all materials. For example, the Parents Legal Centres provide services to people facing the possibility of their children being removed from the family home. They focus on early collaborative processes and help with underlying issues such as housing and addictions. PLCs are now open in Campbell River, Duncan, Kamloops, Prince George, Smithers/Hazelton, Surrey, Terrace, Vancouver, Victoria, and Williams Lake. In a recent CFCSA Services Evaluation, 25% of clients who had experienced child protection issues were unaware of child protection PLEI materials.

IPLEI can give crucial information to people who need help, especially in rural and remote reserves and communities that do not have community supports or advocates to help parents going through the child protection process.

Indigenous clients may not know how to access Indigenous PLEI materials themselves, and rely on intermediaries to help connect them with materials and knowledge. But intermediaries may also be unaware that resources are available. For example, most focus group participants did not know how to order the free Indigenous PLEI materials. It would be helpful if ordering Indigenous PLEI materials were easier, perhaps by including referencing links, reminder notifications, order forms, and outreach to community partners by phone or email to support distribution. Intermediaries also need to be educated about the content and availability of resource materials.

Indigenous PLEI materials support the process of accessing LSS services, such as Parents Legal Centres and Legal Aid by phone or in-person intake. All resources (print, online, video) should build in culturally appropriate ways of sharing information. Emphasis should be on building relationships between LSS and the clients. Indigenous people who experience social exclusion are more likely to rely on in-person assistance from someone they trust. Some clients prefer to deal with people in person rather than calling a 1-800 number if wanting to do a Legal Aid application.

The Parents Legal Centres should have their own website identifying each PLC, including contact and location information and office hours. The website could include inviting staff profiles that share their values, commitment, reasons for choosing to work in this area, and how they intend to approach Indigenous clients in their work. There may be innovative opportunities to explore how to support establishing relationships between LSS with intermediaries and clients through sharing PLEI.

Ministry of Children and Families (MCFD) and LSS data show that the ratio of Legal Aid applications to closed investigations/family development responses is about 1 to 5. Many clients and referring organizations are simply not aware that clients can get legal help before children are removed from the home. Many families could get help with CFCSA matters if they knew they could apply for Legal Aid at the first mention of risk of removal.

Communication

Most clients learn about available Legal Aid services from friends or family members, an LSS representative (often at courthouse or family duty counsel), or a social worker with the MCFD. They do not generally find out through forms of LSS outreach like the LSS website, formal or informal relationships with community organizations, or distribution of posters or pamphlets.

Indigenous clients and criminal law clients are the least likely to report being referred to the Legal Aid website or publications (only 21% and 23% say they were referred).

Indigenous clients prefer in-person meetings (38%), telephone calls on mobile phone (24%), and email (20%). Half of all Indigenous clients preferred to answer surveys and evaluations by email (49%).

Participants in the Aboriginal Justice Dialogue Session identified a number of strategies to increase and improve communication, particularly in rural and remote areas, to raise awareness of LSS services and publications. These included making better use of existing distribution channels (print distribution networks, social media, the Factum blog) and building new channels customized to the needs of hard-to-reach communities.

Indigenous communities have good information sharing pathways, and each community shares information differently. Some have a printed community newsletter or a community Facebook page, while others lean more toward to using a physical location such as a Band office, health station, or library. They might share information at events such as regular community safety meetings, council meetings, or supper clubs. Print newsletters and community meetings are good ways to reach people who do not have access to the Internet, who may be some of the most vulnerable members of the community.

Indigenous communities seek guidance from people and community advocates they trust and respect. (For example, Elders at the First Nations Court). LSS could connect with these trusted advisers to support their work and help them relay and share relevant information.

LSS could also do outreach at First Nation community service or council meetings. For example, Haida Gwaii has regularly scheduled Community Coordinated Response meetings attended by counsellors, school staff, MCFD, and police. Service meetings can be a good forum for knowledge sharing.

Furthermore, local LSS staff and regional stakeholders can offer community engagement and short presentations on topics of interest or concern, with time for questions and commentary. Gathering over a meal, or providing food at a community meeting, is a good way to attract an audience.

Other suggested strategies LSS might want to consider include the following:

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- Distributing print legal information resources such as posters and pamphlets to Band Offices, Friendship Centres, RCMP detachments.
- Promoting the Legal Aid Facebook page to increase visibility.
- Creating more content that can be easily shared in community newsletters or on social media to raise awareness.
- Promoting *The Factum* more.
- Emailing information to contacts in First Nation communities to share with their networks.
- Sharing information about LSS services and resources at Indigenous events.

Training

LSS provides training and support for community intermediaries and advocates throughout the province to help communities and social service agencies build their strengths and skills in legal problem solving. LSS also partners with organizations in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities to connect people to Legal Aid and other resources. Advocates and service providers mentioned it might be helpful to promote and do registration for training events through an online platform so that events can be shared on social media.

Focus group participants asked for training and workshops on Legal Aid services and resources to be delivered both in the community and online, with webinars. Sharing recordings of webinars on LSS social media, newsletters, etc., can then help spread awareness.

Intermediaries need workshops and training activities that will help them better serve Indigenous peoples in the community, especially in child protection.

The "lunch and learn" model might be effective for online training for intermediaries. Incentives to participate could include a certificate of completion, prize draws, etc. Intermediaries suggested that training should not have to be completed within a restricted period. Consistency is key to raising awareness.

Intermediaries also expressed interest in short five-minute instructional videos they could share with clients. These could reinforce or build on existing Indigenous PLEI materials on topics of interest and concern to Indigenous clients and service providers. The training could be updated through LSS so it is always on the website, consistent with updated information.

Online learning helps some people retain the information learned by reading, which empowers those learners. Continue to seek new ways of engaging with intermediaries to know what they would like to learn.

Access

Improving access to PLEI relies on having the information in the right place, in the right format, so that people can get it when they need it. LSS must also consider the cultural context for Indigenous peoples when exploring how to improve access to PLEI for Indigenous users.

LSS Indigenous Public Legal Education and Information

LSS distributes print materials (booklets, pamphlets, posters, postcards, and wallet cards, etc.) through agencies and community partners and to Aboriginal Friendship Centres and other community locations. Most materials are also available online. Printed Indigenous PLEI could also be made available in number of other ways, including

- at Child and Family Service offices
- at information tables and booths at conferences and events
- at Service BC and Work BC, school, courthouse and Native Courtworker and the Counselling Association of BC
- at Indigenous-focused conferences and events, such as the Joint Gathering co-hosted by the BC First Nations Leadership Council and the BC Region office of Indigenous Services Canada, First Nations Health Authority's Gathering Wisdom Forum, and Gathering Our Voices Youth Leadership Training by the BC Aboriginal Association of Friendship Centres
- at an annual workshop for invited representatives to keep them up to date and knowledgeable of all the resources. Provide options for web-conference or Livestream or upload for on-demand viewing.
- through Band offices, libraries, RCMP, victim services, and other relevant organizations so that people can access these materials without being online. (Some of this distribution is already in place through Crown Publications, but could be augmented by regular mailouts or outreach activities to draw attention to availability.)

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Participants also suggested that LSS create an email list that people could subscribe to for updates. Subscribers could choose how they wanted to receive notifications and alerts.

Conclusion

This consultation focused on the legal topics where Indigenous clients most need help and how to implement effective delivery and distribution strategies to counter the ongoing challenge of Indigenous clients' access to PLEI materials.

Focus groups identified ways LSS could increase awareness of its Indigenous PLEI materials, particularly for rural and remote areas and Indigenous communities that do not have access to LSS services through local agents or community partners.

The recommendations arising from focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews address various ways LSS can meet the needs of clients from Indigenous communities and improve their access to justice by making Indigenous PLEI more accessible.

Recommendations

LSS coordinates its services with their many partners in the justice and social services systems, sharing knowledge and improving access to justice. Many of the following recommendations focus on creating awareness, access, and improvement to legal information, advice, and representation of LSS services to support Indigenous clients.

Advancing reconciliation

LSS's goal is to advance reconciliation through education, fostering equity, and empowering Indigenous people.

- Engage Indigenous people, including Elders and other stakeholders, to identify ways that LSS can foster understanding between Indigenous peoples and the justice system.
- Have LSS representation at Indigenous events to build relationships and trust with Indigenous people.
- Continue to consult with Indigenous communities and Elders about the ways to meaningfully recognize and support the implementation of Indigenous laws to foster understanding between Indigenous peoples and the justice system and provide culturally appropriate Legal Aid services, advice, and information.
- Support Indigenous communities and advocates in raising awareness and knowledge about best practices in functioning as intermediaries between the courts, Legal Aid lawyers, Crown counsel, and others. This will in turn support community members and advocates whose roles are multifaceted.
- Offer more prevention-based resources directed toward seeking supports and services for Indigenous families, such as traditional parenting practices, family health and healing (i.e., basic life skills, parenting workshops, school district resources, helping pregnant teens).
- Put a list of services and First Nation outreach services on all materials.

Doing what works

- Continue to offer a variety of printed publication formats, such as the suite of booklets, pamphlets, posters, postcards, and wallet cards, etc.
- Continue to include images of Indigenous people, artwork, and graphics.
- Use culturally appropriate content and titles wherever possible.
- Ensure readability levels meet the range of abilities of the intended target audiences.
- Continue to seek new ways of engaging with intermediaries to know what they would like to learn.

Keeping PLEI culturally relevant and identifiable

- Develop LSS publications to support the development and use of Indigenous laws, legal traditions, and languages while raising public awareness about Indigenous justice initiatives.
- Develop LSS publications that support the role of Indigenous communities and advocates.
- Engage subject matter experts and Indigenous writers, editors, and designers to create Indigenous PLEI.
- User-test materials with Indigenous clients. Wherever possible, test with users with varying literacy levels, ability levels, and other barriers to access.

Making PLEI more available

Format and design

In addition to print materials and web-based materials, consider additional formats and designs such as the following:

- For viewing on mobile, sharing by text message. Content should be simple, straightforward, and brief.
- Print-on-demand "cheat sheets" that intermediaries can share with parents. Simple instructions, information condensed into bullet points, checklists, timelines, etc., are ideal for this format.
- Simplifying child protection processes to promote parents' understanding and prompt action to seek Legal Aid.
- Using various media, visual diagrams, and infographics to present the child protection process for functional use during times of crisis.
- More video content.
- Question-and-answer.
- Simplified resources. Short, condensed, bullet-point information without paragraphs. Flow charts for out of court process options like extended family program.

Content

Create PLEI that fills content gaps, such as the following resources:

- A document for Indigenous clients and Legal Aid lawyers, outlining their individual and shared responsibilities, to help them work effectively with each other.
- Self-advocacy knowledge about Indigenous peoples' rights, especially in child protection, family, and criminal law areas.
- More information for Indigenous people going through the court system (accused and victim).
- A timeline flow chart for parents to support their understanding of important timelines within child protection processes.
- Frequently Asked Questions to address parents' questions about child protection.
- A separate webpage/website for PLCs.
- Information for intermediaries on how best to prepare Indigenous clients to apply for Legal Aid.
- Indigenous-specific information guide for clients who are denied Legal Aid.
- How to change your Legal Aid lawyer.
- Indigenous resource booklet that covers a range of topics all-in-one (condensed version).
- Interactive toolkits and guidebooks.

Raising awareness of PLEI

Communication

- Share information with Band Offices, Friendship Centres, RCMP – hard copy items like posters and pamphlets to distribute legal information.
- Promote the Legal Aid Facebook page to increase visibility. Add more content, encourage sharing.
- Promote The Factum blog more.
- Send email to contacts in First Nation communities to share with networks.

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- Share information about LSS services and resources at Indigenous events.
- Develop video content that can be shared on YouTube or other social media.
- Develop community-specific sharing pathways.
- Make information available at Indigenous-focused conferences and events.
- Distribute print materials through Child and Family Service offices, Service BC, Work BC, schools, courthouses, Native Courtworkers, Counselling Association of BC.
- Have an annual workshop and invite representatives to keep them up to date and knowledgeable of all the resources. Provide options for web-conference or Livestream or upload for on-demand viewing.

Training

- Train intermediaries about the content and availability of resource materials.
- Promote and do registration for training events through an online platform so events can be shared on social media.
- Schedule live webinars on a variety of LSS Indigenous PLEI related-topics to promote engagement.

Improving access to PLEI

- Make it easier for intermediaries to order Indigenous PLEI materials. For example, including referencing links, reminder notifications, order forms, and outreach to community partners by phone or email to support distribution.