

# **Evaluation of the** ***Parenting After Separation for Indigenous Families Course***

**Prepared for:**

**Family Justice Service Division  
Justice Services Branch  
Ministry of Attorney General**

**Submitted by:**

**Cassidy Caron Consulting**

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## 1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides the findings from the evaluation of the *Online Parenting After Separation for Indigenous Families (OPAS for Indigenous Families)* course. The purpose of this evaluation was to review Family Justice Services Division's OPAS for Indigenous Families course that first launched in November, 2019. It is intended to highlight successes, identify gaps or areas to improve, and provide recommendations on opportunities for enhancement.

### Summary of findings

#### Reach & Engagement

To date, OPAS for Indigenous Families is reaching its intended audience. During the data collection phase of the evaluation that ran from November 26, 2019 to March 31, 2020, a total of 62 individuals completed the course. The majority of OPAS for Indigenous Families participants identified as Indigenous parents. It was more common for participants to take the OPAS for Indigenous Families course voluntarily rather than be mandated to complete it.

It was found that offering the OPAS for Indigenous Families course online enhanced access for participants. In order to remove barriers to Indigenous families who do not have access to proper technology, evaluation participants recommended identifying and promoting available public spaces for participants to access and complete the course.

Evaluation participants also recommended expanding the promotion of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course by increasing outreach to BC First Nations communities. Most participants shared that they learned about the course online through social media and recommend increasing social media marketing. Finally, evaluation participants suggest connecting with First Nation communities as well as Indigenous service providing organizations such as the BC Association for Friendship Centres to make them aware of OPAS for Indigenous Families.

#### Design & Delivery

Nearly all evaluation participants stated that OPAS for Indigenous Families course is culturally relevant. Furthermore, because it is designed and delivered in a culturally relevant and appropriate manner, the OPAS for Indigenous Families course is engaging Indigenous parents and family members in a more meaningful way.

It was noted that the culturally relevant course content was an overall strength of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course. Evaluation participants shared that the course content considers the unique ways that Indigenous families approach family issues and recognizes that it may be different from non-Indigenous peoples' way of approaching family issues.

The OPAS for Indigenous Families advisory committee were an integral part of the course design process. The all-Indigenous advisory committee worked to ensure that the diversity of Indigenous peoples was recognized throughout the course and contributed to the course being culturally relevant and appropriate. Additionally, the advisory committee has contributed to the promotion of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course by referring and recommending Indigenous families to it.

The online delivery model for the OPAS for Indigenous Families course was highlighted as an overall strength. Taking the course online provided participants with flexibility to complete it on their own time and in the comfort and safety of their own home. Those who suggested that OPAS for

Indigenous Families be offered in person explained that having an Elder available at an in-person delivery would improve the course. However, in lieu of being supported in person by an Elder, a course participant recommended adding check points throughout the modules as a reminder for participants to take a break, smudge, pray and re-ground themselves.

Overall, participants of OPAS for Indigenous Families indicated that they were highly satisfied with the course.

### Outcomes

The OPAS for Indigenous Families course is achieving its intended outcomes. Evaluation participants stated that OPAS for Indigenous Families is being delivered in a culturally relevant and appropriate way, which is attracting Indigenous parents and family members to complete the course. Furthermore, because it is being delivered in a culturally relevant and appropriate manner, OPAS for Indigenous Families is educating and engaging Indigenous parents and family members in a meaningful way.

To date the OPAS for Indigenous Families course has been successful in supporting Indigenous parents and family members to meet the intended learning objectives. Most notably, participants shared that the course has provided them with a better understanding of the need to make decisions in the best interest of their child. Through the evaluation, it was also found that participants of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course are more informed of alternatives to court such as mediation.

Upon completion, participants are more likely to utilize FJSD services. Evaluation participants shared that the course has provided them with a better understanding of programs and services that exist and that will support them through separation and divorce.

### Lessons Learned & Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed based on the findings from the evaluation participants:

1. Seek out innovative ways to increase access to the OPAS for Indigenous Families course
2. Promote and raise awareness of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course
3. Explore opportunities to share the OPAS for Indigenous Families course with other provinces and territories throughout Canada
4. Add to and continuously update available resources promoted within the OPAS for Indigenous Families course
5. Redesign certain aspects of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course layout
6. Expand and build upon the success of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course
7. Continue to ensure the OPAS for Indigenous Families course is culturally relevant
8. Regularly test and improve the OPAS for Indigenous Families online platform
9. Ensure continuous and ongoing evaluation is built into the OPAS for Indigenous Families course.

## 2.0 Introduction

The first section of this report provides details on the history of the Parenting After Separation (PAS) as well as a description of OPAS for Indigenous Families. Following this background, a review of the evaluation's purpose, scope, questions, and methods are presented. The final sections of this report present the findings of the evaluation of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course as well as a summary of recommendations to ultimately sustain and enhance this work.

### 2.1 About the Online Parenting After Separation for Indigenous Families (OPAS for Indigenous Families) Course

Separation and divorce can have a profound impact on all family members. Stress, grief and feelings of insecurity can affect children, teenagers and parents. Parenting After Separation (PAS) was developed to support parents in making careful and informed decisions about their separation and divorce and any conflicts that may result from it, as well as to ensure that these decisions are based on the best interests of their children.<sup>1</sup>

Intended specifically for Indigenous parents experiencing separation and divorce in British Columbia (BC), OPAS for Indigenous Families is an online resource designed to be a culturally appropriate version of BC's PAS programs. The OPAS for Indigenous Families course is offered by the BC Ministry of Attorney General, Family Justice Services Division (FJSD) and is hosted online by the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC).

### 2.2 Background of the Parenting After Separation (PAS) Programs

#### In-Person Parenting After Separation (PAS)

PAS was first developed and implemented by FJSD in BC in 1998 as an in-person workshop in an effort to encourage consensual approaches to resolving disputes, reduce costs associated with litigation and to manage the backlog of cases in the court system.<sup>2</sup>

The in-person PAS was a free three-hour workshop designed to inform separating parents about: the separation and divorce process and its stages; the impact of parental separation and divorce on children and how to best help children through this difficult time; how the court decides child support issues; and the full range of options available to parents to resolve issues in dispute.<sup>3</sup>

Rule 21 of the Provincial Court (Family) Rules mandates that parties involved in a family matter at any one of the 17 designated Provincial Court registries must complete PAS before a first appearance at provincial court can be scheduled, unless an exemption is provided. The purpose of Rule 21 is to promote the best interests of children by providing a program to persons in dispute over issues respecting children.<sup>4</sup> In addition to those mandated to complete PAS, any separating parents in BC can voluntarily choose to complete a PAS course if they want to, even if it is not required.

#### Online PAS (OPAS)

An online version of PAS was developed in 2011 and the Justice Education Society (JES) was contracted to host the course. The online program content mirrors that of the in-person PAS workshops, as well as the topics covered, including key legal rights and responsibilities; the impact on children; and, communication and problem solving. The OPAS program includes videos, audio, text, worksheets and

interactive exercises and is guided by virtual presenters who support participants to navigate through the course content.<sup>5</sup>

OPAS shared the same goal as the in-person PAS version, which was to help participants make positive decisions about the way they resolve parenting issues after separation. However, OPAS is designed to provide parents with a way to take it from their homes and/or mobile devices, as it best fits their schedule, without the need to travel to attend in-person sessions.<sup>6</sup>

#### [Online Parenting After Separation for Indigenous Families \(OPAS for Indigenous Families\)](#)

According to the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) and the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS), 232,290 Aboriginal people reside in BC (17% of Canada's total Aboriginal population), making up over 5% of BC's total population.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, the 2011 NHS identified that 37% of BC's Aboriginal children live in lone parent households compared to 21% of non-Aboriginal children.<sup>8</sup> FJSD has highlighted that Indigenous families in BC are an underserved population in their client base.

In an effort to better engage with the Indigenous population in BC, FJSD has adapted PAS with a goal of providing a course that considers Indigenous peoples' cultures and ways of approaching family issues: the Online Parenting After Separation for Indigenous families course. The intention of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course is to inform Indigenous parents of issues related to separation and divorce and, also, inform them of, and encourage them to use other FJSD services such as mediation. Through their participation, participants will gain a better understanding of:

- ✓ The family justice system including its relevant laws and services ✓
- Alternatives to court (e.g., mediation, collaborative family law)
- ✓ Parents' responsibilities (e.g., financial support for children, parenting time, decision making, effective communication, child support)
- ✓ The impact of separation and/or divorce on children
- ✓ The impact of separation and/or divorce on parents
- ✓ The need to make decisions in the best interests of children

Additionally, the OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants will be provided with information and resources so that they are better able to:

- ✓ Approach issues with respect to their family situation (e.g., financial support);
- ✓ Listen and talk to their children about separation and divorce;
- ✓ Make family changes easier for children;
- ✓ Address conflict with respect to family law issues (e.g., communicating more effectively with the other parent);
- ✓ Understand their children's needs when their parents separate or divorce.

OPAS for Indigenous Families has been developed as an online course, like OPAS, for several reasons. According to previous evaluations of OPAS, many participants prefer to engage with the course in the online format. Additionally, by providing OPAS for Indigenous Families course as an online service, FJSD aims to reduce access barriers, such as travel to and from a course location, to the 30% of BC's Indigenous population who live outside of urban areas. FJSD has developed OPAS for Indigenous Families as a modern user-focused family justice service model based on the lessons learned from FJSD's

provision and evaluations of in-person and online PAS programs. The OPAS for Indigenous Families course is hosted on the Justice Institute of BC's (JIBC) website.

Furthermore, it is hoped that by providing OPAS for Indigenous Families in a way that considers the unique realities of Indigenous peoples, FJSD will attract and more meaningfully engage Indigenous parents, thus promoting increased use of FJSD services. The overall objectives for OPAS for Indigenous Families are:

1. To deliver PAS in a culturally appropriate manner by adapting content to consider the unique realities of Indigenous peoples, which attracts more Indigenous parents to the course and educates them in a more engaging and meaningful way; and
2. To inform parents of, and encourage them to use, other FJSD services such as mediation.

### **2.3 About the Course Administrator, Service Provider & Advisory Committee**

#### Family Justice Services Division

Family Justice Services Division (FJSD) provides information, dispute resolution and mediation services to parents undergoing separation and divorce to help them understand and resolve their parenting and support issues.

#### Justice Institute of British Columbia

Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC) is one of Canada's public safety educators.<sup>9</sup> JIBC offers a wide range of programs and courses including those that lead to a career as a Family Justice Counsellor with FJSD. JIBC was selected as the Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI) organization to develop and host the OPAS for Indigenous Families course on their website.

#### OPAS for Indigenous Families Advisory Committee

The OPAS for Indigenous Families course was developed with the support and guidance from an advisory committee. The advisory committee consisted of 9 members: a representative from FJSD; a representative from JIBC; two Family Justice Counsellors; and 5 regional representatives. The 5 regional representatives represented the same regions as the First Nations Health Authority. There was one representative for each of the following regions: Interior Region; Fraser Region; Vancouver Coastal Region; Vancouver Island Region; and the Northern Region. All members of the advisory committee were Indigenous, except for the representatives from FJSD and JIBC. The role of the Family Justice Counsellors on the committee was to ask questions throughout the process, be present, but not necessarily be decision makers. Ultimately, decisions of the advisory committee were made by the 5 regional representatives.

The purpose of the advisory committee was to discuss and decide on the goals, format and direction of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course. The advisory committee was also involved in approving the learning objectives of the course, and providing input and feedback into the content as it was being developed.



### 3.0 Methodology

The evaluation approach was participatory, strength-based, grounded in an Indigenous worldview and incorporated culturally relevant methodologies. The evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach where both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed. This section outlines details of the evaluation approach and scope, presents the evaluation questions that guided the methodology, outlines the data collection and analysis methods, and describes the particulars of data security and storage.

#### 3.1 Purpose & Scope

**The Purpose** of this evaluation was to review FJSD’s OPAS for Indigenous Families course through the gathering of feedback on its implementation, including its target audience, strengths, challenges and opportunities for enhancement, and through measuring the outcomes.

**The Scope** of the OPAS for Indigenous Families evaluation included both a process and outcome evaluation. The scope of the **process evaluation** measured the reach and engagement, course design and delivery, including the effectiveness of the online delivery of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course and the satisfaction of OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants. The **outcome evaluation** assessed preliminary outcomes from all evaluation participants’ perspectives. Unexpected outcomes resulting from the OPAS for Indigenous Families course have also been documented. The intended outcomes that were assessed throughout this evaluation were two-fold:

1. For OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants:
  - a. Increased access to and deepened engagement with PAS
  - b. Successful achievement of all OPAS for Indigenous Families course learning objectives
  - c. Increased awareness of FJSD services
    - i. Increased likeliness to use FJSD services
2. For FJSD:
  - a. Increased participation of Indigenous parents in PAS
  - b. Improved reach of FJSD services (e.g., mediation) to Indigenous parents, an identified under-served segment of FJSD’s client base

#### 3.2 Evaluation Questions

Based on the evaluation purpose and scope, the following evaluation questions guided the evaluation of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course:

##### Reach & Engagement

1. **How effective is the reach and engagement of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?**
  - a. Are the intended audiences being reached? (*Who is accessing, registering and completing the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?*)
  - b. What factors enhance access and what factors serve as barriers to reaching the intended audiences?

##### Design & Delivery

2. **How effective is the design and delivery of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?**

- a. Is the OPAS for Indigenous Families course culturally relevant? If so, is delivering PAS in a culturally relevant and appropriate way engaging Indigenous parents in a more meaningful way?
- b. What are the strengths and challenges in relation to the **design** of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?
- c. What are the strengths and challenges in relation to the **delivery** of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?

#### Satisfaction

3. **How satisfied were the OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants, as well as FJSD, JIBC and the advisory committee with the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?**
  - a. Is the course generating high user satisfaction ratings?

#### Outcomes

4. **To what extent are the outcomes of the OPAS for Indigenous Families achieved?**
  - a. Is the OPAS for Indigenous families achieving its intended outcomes?
    - o *Participant outcomes*
    - o *FJSD outcomes*
  - b. Are participants receiving the appropriate information through the OPAS for Indigenous Families course? Are participants achieving the intended learning objectives?
  - c. What unexpected outcomes, if any, are arising from participation in the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?

#### Lessons Learned

5. **What are the lessons learned from the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?**
  - a. What are the opportunities to improve the course?

### 3.3 Methodological Approach

#### Indigenous Methodologies

Given that the OPAS for Indigenous Families course is targeted toward Indigenous peoples, it was important that the evaluation was grounded in an Indigenous worldview and took a holistic approach to all evaluation activities. Therefore, **Indigenous methodologies were utilized throughout the OPAS for Indigenous Families course evaluation.** The evaluator drew from several Indigenous methodologies that were utilized as foundational approaches to the evaluation of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course. The following Indigenous methodologies were integrated throughout the methodological approach of this evaluation:

#### Two-eyed seeing

Two-eyed seeing is a pedagogy, epistemology and way of life that balances Western and Indigenous ways of knowing. Two-Eyed seeing does not merge Western and Indigenous knowledge nor does it sprinkle in pieces of Indigenous knowledge into a Western system. This methodology creates space for both ways of knowing to work together for the betterment of all.<sup>10</sup>

#### Culturally Responsive Evaluation

Culturally responsive evaluation (CRE) is an approach that is used to ensure evaluations are responsive and sensitive to culture and cultural context.<sup>11</sup> CRE is necessary especially when working with diverse cultural, contextual and complex communities and individuals.

#### Strengths-based

Researchers and evaluators should recognize and validate the knowledge, expertise and strengths in the communities they work with. These strengths should guide the development and implementation of research and evaluation. As a guiding principle for evaluation, all findings can be presented in ways of seeking out existing strengths and presenting “bad news” findings as learning opportunities and areas for growth.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4 R's

The 4 R's, published by Kirkness and Barnhardt, articulate four core values for conducting research in an Indigenous context.<sup>13</sup> The 4 R's are: respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility.

#### Social determinants lens

At the core of this work is an element of social justice, where research and evaluation can seek to understand and elevate the role of social determinants for Indigenous communities in dealing with health, mental health, education and justice issues. Therefore, a social determinants lens was applied to this work.

#### Community-Based Participatory Research

This evaluation adhered to a participatory model of research and evaluation to ensure that the work prepared is useful and meaningful to all key stakeholders. **A community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach** was adopted for this evaluation. This approach emphasized involving the community and key stakeholders as equal partners in all phases of the evaluation process. In the case of this evaluation, stakeholders were identified as OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants, FJSD, JIBC, and the advisory committee.

By utilizing a CBPR approach the evaluation approach was **community-based**, meaning that the evaluation framework, data collection, analysis and report were all grounded in the needs, issues, concerns and strengths of all communities involved (e.g., course participants, course developers and administrators, and partner agencies). Through utilizing a CBPR approach, the evaluation aims to elevate diverse perspectives in reporting, while compiling all findings in a tangible and accessible way.

Furthermore, the CBPR approach ensured that the evaluation was **participatory**. The evaluator engaged directly on all matters of the evaluation, with all stakeholders involved in and affected by the evaluation. As such, to ensure consistency with literature regarding best practices in community-based participatory approaches, an **evaluation steering committee (ESC)** was convened to oversee this work. The ESC played a key role in overseeing the evaluation activities and providing guidance about the identification of evaluation participants; the development of the evaluation framework and data collection tools; recommendations; and subject matter expertise. The ESC was comprised of:

- Judy Smith (Métis Nation British Columbia)
- Catherine Tait
- Elizabeth Araujo (JIBC)
- Julie Meier (FJSD)
- Kristine Heaney (FJSD)

The ESC continuously participated in a review process where the evaluator submitted deliverables (e.g., evaluation framework, data collection tools, draft report) with sufficient time to review to create opportunities for their input and feedback.

### 3.4 Data Collection Methods

The evaluation methods included **culturally relevant, mixed-methods approaches** where data were collected and analyzed.

#### Evaluation Participants

The OPAS for Indigenous Families course evaluation engaged with several target groups; these target groups will be referred to as evaluation participants throughout this report. Evaluation participants included OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants, members of the ESC and the advisory committee.

#### Data Sources

Data sources included an online survey and semi-structured key informant telephone interviews whereby evaluation participants had the opportunity to answer guiding questions that contributed to the OPAS for Indigenous Families course evaluation.

#### **Online Evaluation Survey**

An online survey was developed for OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants. The focus of the online evaluation survey covered the evaluation areas of course reach and engagement, design and delivery, outcomes, and lessons learned.

- **The online survey for OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants** was designed to gather feedback from a large sample of course participants with a goal of gathering sufficient data to reach saturation and provide a complete and thorough review of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course.

It is important to note that the evaluation was designed with the goal of efficiency; thereby intended to not over-evaluate OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants. The online evaluation survey was integrated with the OPAS for Indigenous Families course “Exit Survey.” As such, data from the “exit survey” was also used as a key line of evidence for this evaluation.

#### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants, members of the advisory committee, as well as members of the ESC. The focus of the interviews covered the evaluation areas of course reach and engagement, design and delivery, outcomes, and lessons learned. More specifically, the interviews were designed to gather primarily qualitative feedback from target groups on: experiences taking OPAS for Indigenous Families; feedback on the online delivery model; views on the whether the course is culturally appropriate; levels of satisfaction; successes; perceived strengths and challenges; areas for improvement; and outcomes for both participants and for FJSD. A live transcription method was used for all interviews, where the evaluator typed verbatim notes to transcribe the conversation.

- **The telephone interview for OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants** was optional. The interview served to gather fuller qualitative data than what might have been provided through the online survey. Participants were given the ability to volunteer to participate in a telephone interview at the end of the course exit/evaluation survey by providing a link that took participants to a separate page where they could provide their contact information for the evaluator. The evaluator then followed up with participants who indicated

interest in participating in the interview within two weeks of receiving their contact information to schedule a time to complete the interview.

### Summary of Data Collection

The OPAS for Indigenous Families course evaluation data collection tools were designed to align with the overarching evaluation questions noted in section 3.2 of this report. All data collection tools can be found in Appendix A.

Table 1 provides a summary of data collection tools and methods and their alignment to the evaluation framework.

Table 1: Summary of data collection methods

Data collection method	Target evaluation participant	Description
Online evaluation and exit survey	OPAS for Indigenous Families course Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Reach &amp; engagement</li> <li>✓ Design &amp; delivery</li> <li>✓ Satisfaction</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Outcomes</li> <li>✓ Lessons learned</li> </ul>
Semi-structured telephone interview	OPAS for Indigenous Families course Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Reach &amp; engagement</li> <li>✓ Design &amp; delivery</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Outcomes</li> <li>✓ Lessons learned</li> </ul>
	Evaluation Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Design &amp; delivery</li> <li>✓ Satisfaction</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Outcomes</li> <li>✓ Lessons learned</li> </ul>
	Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Reach &amp; engagement</li> <li>✓ Design &amp; delivery</li> <li>✓ Satisfaction</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Outcomes</li> <li>✓ Lessons learned</li> </ul>

### Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP)

Recognizing Canada’s negative record of research with Indigenous peoples, including a history of harmful research practices done on Indigenous peoples, there is a legacy of mistrust between Indigenous communities and those conducting research for various purposes. Given this history and the current shift toward ethical guidelines, it was of utmost importance to incorporate ethical considerations into the evaluation of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course. This included incorporating ethical considerations into the design of the overall evaluation as well as the gathering of information from OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants.

The principles of **Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP)**<sup>14</sup> were adhered to throughout the evaluation. It is the belief of the evaluator that all data collected is owned by the participant who provides the data. In keeping with the principles of OCAP, the evaluator utilized a process of returning interview data to the interviewees. This process also served as a way of verifying the data for accuracy, through providing participants with opportunities to share additional information or retract data.

### Participant Selection, Recruitment and Response Rate

All OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants, those mandated to complete the course as well as those taking it voluntarily, were made aware that the OPAS for Indigenous Families course was undergoing an evaluation and that they were invited to participate in the evaluation. A disclaimer noting

such details, and how they could participate was included at the outset of the course (see Appendix B for the evaluation disclaimer). This disclaimer was located on one of the first pages for all participants to read.

The data collection period for this evaluation began when the course launched on November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019, and ran through to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. The data collection phase ended on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, which was 5 days after the BC Provincial Court suspended regular court operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The decision to end the data collection period was made so as not to favour data based on voluntary participation in the course as there would be no courts mandating the completion of OPAS for Indigenous Families from March 25<sup>th</sup> until proceedings resumed.

Of the 62 people who completed the course during this time, 48 people submitted responses to the survey. Table 2 provides information regarding the response rates for the survey and telephone interviews for all evaluation participants.

**Table 2: Evaluation Participant Response Rate**

Data collection method	Completed Responses	Response Rate
<b>Online Survey</b>		
OPAS for Indigenous Families course Participants	48	77.42%
<b>Telephone Interview</b>		
OPAS for Indigenous Families course Participants	8	32.00%
Evaluation Steering Committee	3	75.00%
Advisory Committee	6	66.67%

**Participant Consent**

It is important to note that all individuals who participated in this evaluation were advised that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw their participation from the evaluation at any time (e.g., from interviews or surveys) by contacting the evaluator and requesting their withdrawal. They were informed that: their responses are confidential; their data will be collected only for the purpose of course evaluation and improvement; and their data will be reported in aggregate with only anonymous, de-identified quotations included in reporting.

Participants were made aware that Cassidy Caron, an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party research consultant, would be collecting all the data and conducting the data analysis on behalf of FJSD. All information provided by participants will be treated with respect. Reasonable measures will be taken to protect the identity of all participants. Participants were also made aware that the final report may include quotations from key informants, with participant consent, to highlight key findings.

**3.5 Data Analysis**

Qualitative data was categorized through content analysis. Data analysis included several rounds of open coding, grouping and thematic categorization of interview and survey responses. Qualitative data

was analyzed utilizing thematic analysis, where common themes across data sets will be identified. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. All information in this report is presented in aggregate form to ensure responded anonymity pursuant to provincial and federal legislation and research ethical guidelines.

## 4.0 Findings

This section includes an overview of all the findings for this evaluation. As presented in the methodology section, many target groups were invited to provide input into the evaluation of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course. In this report, findings will be presented across evaluation participants. Please note that when the term *evaluation participants* is used, this is referring to all individuals who participated in the evaluation. This section is organized by evaluation questions.

### 4.1 Reach & Engagement

This section provides an overview of who has taken the OPAS for Indigenous Families course since its launch date and reviews findings from measuring the effectiveness of the reach and engagement of the course. This section also includes factors that enhanced access and factors that served as barriers to reaching the intended audiences.

The online evaluation survey was integrated with the course exit survey that participants were invited to complete prior to receiving their certificate of completion. The survey participant demographics provide an overview of who has completed the OPAS for Indigenous Families course. During the data collection period from when the course launched on November 26, 2019, through to March 31, 2020, a total of 62 individuals completed the OPAS for Indigenous Families course. Of those, 48 participants submitted a complete exit and evaluation survey.

With respect to the demographics of individuals completing the OPAS for Indigenous Families course, many participants identified as female ( $n = 31$ ) and “mother” ( $n = 22$ ). Fathers, parents, grandparents, step-parents and other relatives also completed the course during the data collection phase. The following figures present an overview of the OPAS for Indigenous Families participant demographics based on survey results.

#### **The OPAS for Indigenous Families course is reaching its intended audience.**

- ✓ A total of 62 individuals completed the course between November 26, 2019 – March 31, 2020.
- ✓ The majority of course participants were Indigenous parents who opted to complete the course voluntarily.

#### **Offering the OPAS for Indigenous Families Course online enhances access for participants.**

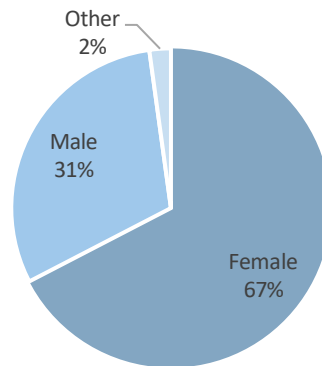
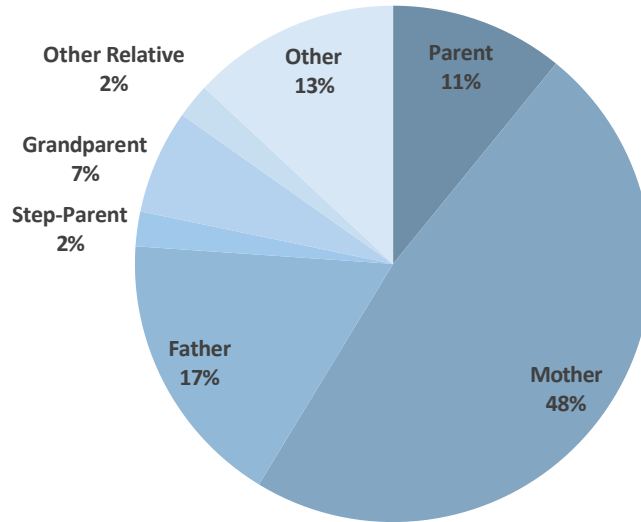
- ✓ Identifying and promoting available public spaces for participants to complete the course will reduce barriers to those who do not have access to proper technology required to complete the course.

#### **It is recommended to expand promotion of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course by increasing outreach to BC First Nations communities.**

- ✓ Most course participants learned about the course online through social media.
- ✓ Connecting with First Nation communities as well as Indigenous service organizations to make them aware of the course will increase the reach of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course.



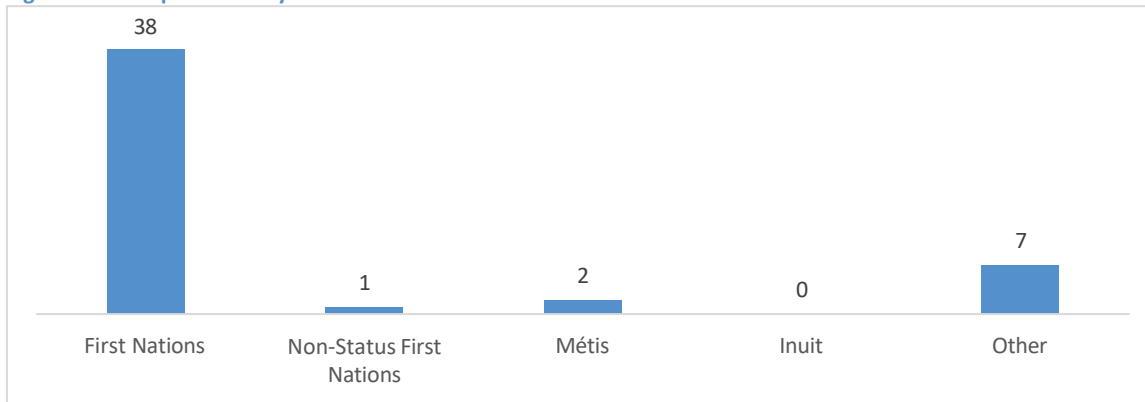
Figures 1 & 2: OPAS for Indigenous Families Participant Demographics



According to the exit and evaluation survey, many participants were Indigenous. In indicating how they identify, almost all the participants selected First Nations (n = 38) while the remaining identified as Métis (n = 2) or other (n = 7). Of those who indicated “other,” two survey respondents specified that they identify as:

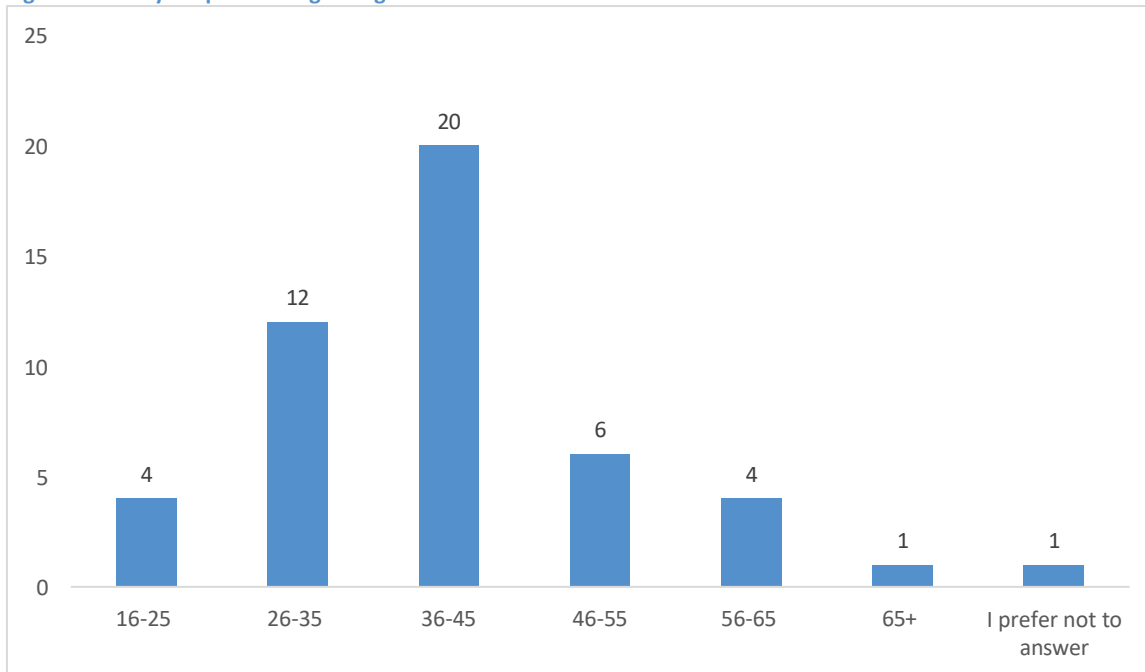
- Caucasian (n = 2)
- Non-Indigenous foster parent (n = 1)

Figure 2: Participant Identity:



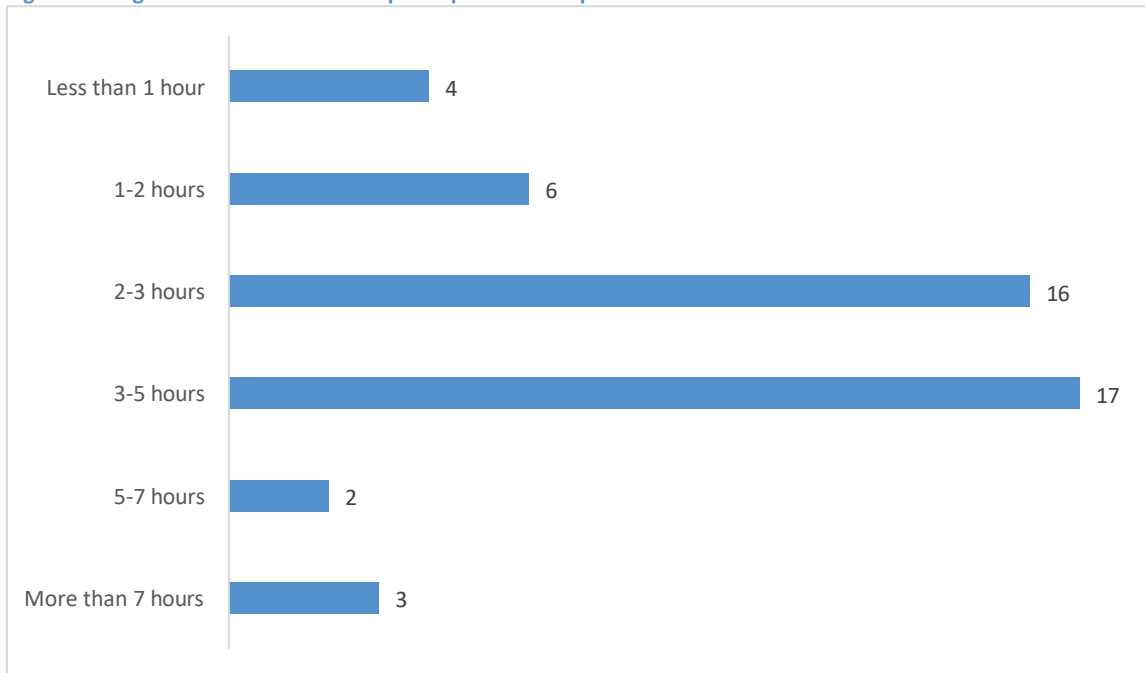
The age range of participants varied, however the largest number of participants indicated that they fell between the ages of 36 to 45 (n = 20).

Figure 3: Survey Respondent Age Range



Survey participants indicated the amount of time it took them to complete the course. A large number of course participants noted that it took them 3-5 hours (n = 17) with another bulk of course participants sharing that it took them 2-3 hours (n = 16) to complete the course. The chart below provides an overview of how survey respondents answered the question that asked them how long it took them to complete the course.

Figure 4: Length of time it took course participants to complete the course




Of the 48 exit and evaluation survey respondents, one-third indicated that they were mandated or required to complete the course ( $n = 16$ ), while the remaining two-thirds indicated that they chose to take the course voluntarily ( $n = 32$ ). In interviewing course participants, two individuals shared their reasons for choosing to take the course voluntarily. One participant explained that they saw the course promoted on social media and completed the course because the topic was of interest to them even though they were not currently going through a separation or divorce. Another participant explained that they work with Indigenous families and wanted to explore the course as a potential resource for their clients. Members of the advisory committee also noted that a lot of interest in the course though social media appears to be coming from Indigenous parents who were not involved in any court process; that there was many individuals interested in taking the course voluntarily. One advisory committee member opined that voluntary participation in the course was likely since the course is targeted toward Indigenous families because there are not many resources like that available. One member of the EAC noted that it is likely that having the course available free online is encouraging parents to sign up and complete the course voluntarily due to it being highly accessible.

Participants of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course provided insight into how they heard about the course. Most commonly, participants learned about the course online ( $n = 14$ ). They also indicated that they learned about the course through:

- The Family Justice Centre or Justice Access Centre ( $n = 8$ )
- A lawyer ( $n = 6$ )
- A friend or family member ( $n = 5$ )
- A Judge/Court Registry Staff ( $n = 4$ )
- A family mediator ( $n = 2$ )

Regarding how the OPAS for Indigenous Families course is being promoted, EAC members and advisory committee members noted that the course is being promoted in a variety of ways ( $n = 5$ ). One advisory committee member specifically shared that the course is being promoted on social media.

Advisory committee members also shared that they have been referring family, friends and clients from their organizations to take the OPAS for Indigenous Families course (n = 5).

-  *“I have already done a number of referrals and have been talking to resource people in communities to let them know about this option for the course is available.”*  
- OPAS for Indigenous Families Advisory Committee Member

Additionally, one advisory committee member explained that they volunteered as the media spokesperson to promote the course through television and newspaper interviews, and through radio interviews with the CBC as well as northern remote community radio stations.

In providing suggestions to enhance access and reduce barriers to reach Indigenous parents, members of the advisory committee recommended increasing outreach to First Nation communities. For example, they suggested reaching out to the communities to identify someone in the community, such as someone in the health unit or a community resource person, who can be aware of the course and assist people to complete it (n = 3).

Members of the EAC as well as the advisory committee also suggested that identifying existing spaces or providing spaces for participants to complete the course would enhance access and reduce barriers to reach Indigenous parents (n = 1; n = 2). It was suggested to include a list of safe, confidential spaces available for participants to take the course on the FJSD website. One advisory committee member suggested building partnerships with Indigenous community organizations such as the Friendship Centres to make them aware of the course and create opportunities for parents to use space and technology at the Friendship Centres to complete the course (n = 5).

## 4.2 Design & Delivery

This section reviews the evaluation findings from measuring the effectiveness of the design and delivery of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course. This includes findings on whether or not the course is perceived to be culturally relevant as well as the strengths and challenges in relation to the design and delivery.

### Cultural Relevance

In their responses to the exit and evaluation survey, respondents were asked if the OPAS for Indigenous Families course content was culturally appropriate, in other words, that it considered the unique realities and cultures of Indigenous peoples. Most survey respondents strongly agreed (n = 27) or agreed (n = 16) that this was the case. The remaining survey respondents indicated neutral feelings (n = 2) or no opinion (n = 1) about this aspect, while one survey participant indicated that they disagreed with the statement.

Almost all of survey respondents strongly agreed (n = 25) or agreed (n = 18) that the course recognized that families may have different backgrounds and experiences. The remaining survey respondents indicated neutral (n = 3) feelings or no opinion (n = 1) about this aspect. Furthermore, the survey responses indicated that because the OPAS for Indigenous Families course was culturally appropriate, course participants were more engaged with the course in a more meaningful way. Specifically, 28 survey respondents strongly agreed and 14 agreed that this was the case.

Additionally, all the participants of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course who completed an evaluation interview expressed that the course was culturally relevant (n = 8). One participant shared that they were able to learn more about the subject matter because the content was culturally relevant. Interview participants explained that the course content was understandable and relatable because it included stories from people who have first-hand experiences dealing with separation, divorce and even domestic violence.

### Nearly all evaluation participants stated that the OPAS for Indigenous Families Course is culturally relevant.

- ✓ Because it is delivered in a culturally relevant and appropriate way, the OPAS for Indigenous Families course is engaging Indigenous parents and family members in a more meaningful way.
- ✓ The course content considered the unique ways Indigenous families approach family issues and recognized that it may be different from non-Indigenous peoples' way of approaching family issues.
- ✓ Evaluation participants highlighted that the culturally relevant course content was an overall strength of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course.

### The OPAS for Indigenous Families advisory committee were an integral part of the course design process.


- ✓ The all-Indigenous advisory committee ensured that the diversity of Indigenous peoples was recognized throughout the course and contributed to the course being culturally relevant and appropriate.
- ✓ The advisory committee has contributed to the promotion of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course by referring and recommending Indigenous families to the course.


### The online delivery model for the OPAS for Indigenous Families was highlighted as an overall strength.


- ✓ Taking the course online provided participants with flexibility to complete the course on their own time and in the comfort and safety of their own home.
- ✓ In lieu of being supported in person by an Elder, it was recommended to add check points throughout the course as a reminder for participants to take a break, smudge, pray and regroup themselves.

### Overall, OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants indicated that they were highly satisfied with the course.

In responding to what else made the course culturally relevant, interview participants commonly shared that it was because the course took into consideration a broad conceptualization of who makes up a family unit (n = 5). Participants conveyed that a strength of the course content was that it recognized all the people who can be considered family members and who can act as supports throughout a separation or divorce. They shared that this re-emphasized the point that parents do not have to feel alone or isolated when working through separation.


-  *“Realizing that there are more people out there really helps, because when you separate you think it is you and your kid against the world, and it’s not like that. The course brought that to light.”*

- OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Interview Participant
-  *“I like how it made it seem like family isn’t just the three of you – father, mother, child – it is everyone else who has been in your life like Elders, Aunties and Uncles, and even family members on the father’s side.”*

- OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Interview Participant
-  *“The course drew in family and culture and displayed those as foundation and the strengths of bringing us back to spirituality and where we are supposed to be with our families – it was good to be reminded to think of everyone involved and how it affects our children and our families.”*


- OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Interview Participant

Interview participants who completed the course also shared that the course was culturally appropriate and relevant as it connected culture to the well-being of children and families (n = 3). This was also expressed by one respondent to the exit and evaluation survey. Participants shared that the course made connections to Indigenous cultures and the important role cultural connections play in the well-being of children while parents are separating. Interview participants also highlighted that the course encouraged them to connect to their culture for themselves by incorporating culture into their everyday life.

-  *“When [the course] talked about cultural practices, it made me able to relate how to bring in the healing part and the cultural part together because it can be hard to connect the two. Simple examples given in the course were great, such as getting back into picking berries, get into relationship with the land. Those examples were great.”*

- OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Interview Participant

Furthermore, in responding to what made the OPAS for Indigenous Families course culturally appropriate and relevant, interview participants spoke about the course activities (n = 2). One participant shared gratitude for the course providing participants with a blank medicine wheel to fill out as one of the activities. Additionally, evaluation participants from the interviews, the exit and evaluation survey, and the EAC shared that the course was culturally relevant because of the videos that included Elders sharing their stories and knowledge (n = 3; n = 2; n = 2).

-  *“I live off reserve, so I don’t get to go home much. To get to listen to the videos and hear the Elders, it reminds me of home. It was really nice.”*

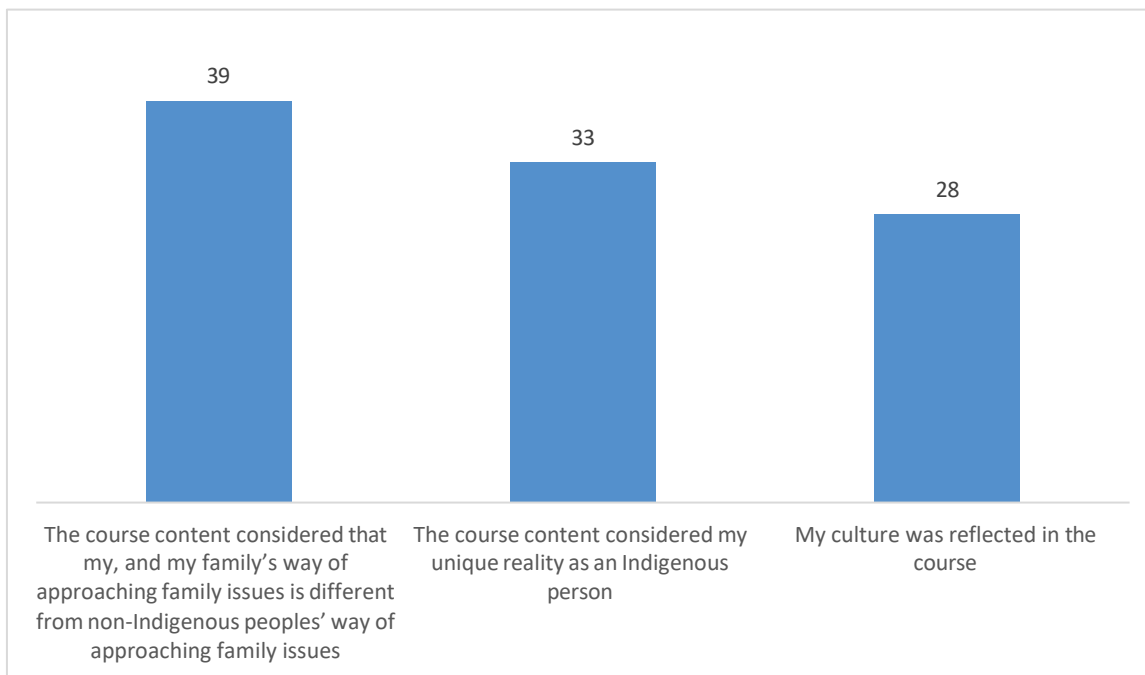
- OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Interview Participant

“I think this was totally awesome for the Elders to tell the stories which is more cultural and spiritual ways of teaching is storytelling so I thought that was awesome.”  
 - OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Survey Participant

“It is the story telling aspect of the OPAS for Indigenous families that is resonating.”  
 - OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Evaluation Steering Committee Member

Survey respondents selected examples from a list of what made the OPAS for Indigenous Families course culturally appropriate for course participants. These findings are presented in figure 3.

Figure 3: OPAS for Indigenous Families Participant ratings on cultural relevance



All members of the Advisory committee who completed an interview also stated that, in their opinion, the course is culturally appropriate (n = 6). One member of the advisory committee shared that each individual advisory committee member brought their own lived experience to the work that needed to be done, “that is an asset to the program.”


Advisory committee members explained that the committee was comprised of representatives from a wide range of Indigenous nations which contributed to ensuring that the diversity of Indigenous peoples was recognized throughout the course (n = 2). Because of this, advisory committee members shared that the course can be considered relatable for many Indigenous families, which is one of the reasons that the course is culturally relevant (n = 5). In explaining what makes the course relatable, advisory committee members mainly noted the photos of Indigenous community members and their families that were added throughout the course.

“I want to believe that when Indigenous people go through this course, they will have a good experience, they will identify and understand and make a connection so that it will make sense to them.”  
 - OPAS for Indigenous Families Advisory Committee Member

Additionally, in thinking about what makes the OPAS for Indigenous Families course culturally relevant, one advisory committee member spoke about an activity informing participants about how to improve coping skills. They explained that Indigenous ways of being are woven into the activity by including coping practices such as picking berries or utilizing the medicine wheel, “all these things are something we wouldn’t recognize as things that can be used for coping. I hope [participants] see that practicing their culture promotes who they are and helps them be proud of who they are.”

Advisory committee members also shared that the course takes into consideration the inter-generational effects of colonization on Indigenous families and how that impacts family separation (n = 3). However, one participant spoke about how this is done in a way that promotes pride, “it would be hard to complete this course and leave not being proud of who we are as Indigenous people.”

Though one of the course participants who completed an interview shared that they were not brought up in their culture, they recognized that if they were, this course would be culturally relevant. This is important to note as not all Indigenous participants are as immersed in their culture or are only rediscovering their Indigenous roots later in their lives, however participants may still see themselves reflected in the OPAS for Indigenous Families course.

 *“It is fairly easy to navigate through and just take what you want. There is a strong Indigenous component there with culture, but the ideas are not that farfetched so people can sort of tweak it and adjust it to what it means to them or leave it out. There is enough content that I just think that it is better and more holistic.”*

- OPAS for Indigenous Families Advisory Committee Member

One interview participant who had completed the OPAS for Indigenous Families course recognized that it can be challenging to create a course that is culturally relevant for everyone because every Indigenous community and nation is diverse. However, they highlighted that the course captured common Indigenous values and beliefs that are shared amongst many communities, “I think they did the best they could, I think they did well at that.” It was also noted by the EAC that the course was developed to be somewhat pan-Indigenous so that it could be accessed by and relevant to many peoples from many Indigenous Nations. However, it was explained that this piece was done in a way that encouraged participants to put their own nation’s thoughts, ideas and values around it.

In the exit and evaluation survey as well as in the participant telephone interviews, course participants were asked if they had recommendations to make the OPAS for Indigenous Families course more culturally relevant or culturally appropriate to which many respondents shared no suggestions. Many participants shared praise and positive feedback regarding the design of the course as it relates to ensuring materials were culturally relevant (survey; n = 12).

Of those who did share suggestions, one interview participant shared that some of the activities throughout the course could potentially be adapted to ensure they are culturally relevant to a more diverse number of Indigenous communities and nations. For example, they spoke about the activities involving the medicine wheel and explained that the medicine wheel isn’t traditionally used by some BC Coastal Nations. However, they shared that the activity could be adapted to be culturally relevant to these nations by doing a similar exercise but illustrated as a Long House:



“For Coast Salish peoples, we refer to House Posts. The activity could take the concepts from the medicine wheel and make it into House Posts.” They shared that the course could potentially offer both activities and allow participants to select which activity is most relevant to them, “If you are Coast Salish, you can click on that activity, but if you are from an Interior Nation, you can click on the medicine wheel activity.”

- OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Interview Participant

Additionally, one survey respondent recommended adding in additional suggestions and reminders to Indigenous participants that feasts, gatherings, and harvesting contributes to healing and involving more variety of BC First Nations by using different video clips or photos to represent the diversity amongst BC First Nations.

Because the course content is culturally appropriate survey respondents strongly agreed (n = 28) or agreed (n = 14) that they are more likely to recommend the OPAS for Indigenous Families course to friends and family. Two interview participants who had completed the OPAS for Indigenous Families course explained that they have taken both the mainstream parenting after separation course and now the course for Indigenous families. Both participants shared that they enjoyed the Indigenous Families course and were able to gain new lessons and a better understanding of ways to support their children while going through separation by taking it as it was more relatable and culturally relevant.

#### Course Design

Evaluation participants provided feedback on the design and delivery of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course noting strengths, challenges, and providing some recommendations to improve the course for future iterations.


#### Feedback on the Design Process

In their telephone interviews, all advisory committee members shared that, overall, participating on the OPAS for Indigenous Families advisory committee was a positive experience (n = 6). In sharing about their experience in designing the course, advisory committee interview participants commonly spoke about the Indigenous representation on the committee as a factor that contributed to their positive experience (n = 6). It was noted that there was a good variety of Indigenous representation on the committee and the structure of the committee allowed for the inclusion of many different perspectives from Indigenous peoples, communities and organizations across British Columbia. Advisory committee members shared that there was an understanding amongst the committee that there are differences throughout Indigenous cultures in BC, yet there are also some similarities with respect to Indigenous values. Advisory committee members shared that having the variety of Indigenous representation on the committee was important to ensuring the course reflected, as best as possible, the diversity of Indigenous cultures throughout BC.

“The variety and diversity of committee members provided the opportunity to be thorough with respect to ensuring the course was sensitive to many cultures in BC because we are a diverse province with so many Indigenous cultures.”

- OPAS for Indigenous Families Advisory Committee Member

Furthermore, advisory committee members shared that, as Indigenous representatives on the committee, they felt meaningfully engaged. Specifically, they stated that they felt their participation was valued and non-tokenistic. Participants also shared that all voices on the advisory committee were respected.

 *“I felt like I was heard, the feedback I offered was seriously considered and when it was used, I really appreciated it.”*


- *OPAS for Indigenous Families Advisory Committee Member*

Advisory committee interviewees were asked to reflect on the course development process and share which aspects of the process they enjoyed the most. Most frequently, interview participants spoke about collaboration (n = 6). They shared that collaborating with the other members of the advisory committee was one aspect of the course development process they enjoyed as well as the structure of the distance collaboration. With respect to the structure of the distance collaboration, interview participants shared that participating via email and through teleconferencing was made convenient for them by the host organization, Family Justice Services Division (FJSD). It was further explained that it was this collaboration that created the space for everyone to be able to bring their personal experiences and ideas to the committee which was another contributing factor to making the course inclusive and reflective of a variety of Indigenous cultures.

Though it was noted that distance collaboration via email and teleconferencing was convenient, members of the advisory committee highlighted that the in-person meetings were another aspect of the process they enjoyed (n = 5). They elaborated by explaining that the face-to-face meetings were valuable, especially for the first meeting of the advisory committee. In speaking about the first meeting of the advisory committee, one interview participant said, “it was inclusive and collaborative and brought the whole thing to life.”

Advisory committee members also highlighted specific aspects of the process that they enjoyed, including:


- Communication from the host organization (n = 1)
  - It was noted that the consistent communication from FJSD made their experience enjoyable.
- The size of the advisory committee (n = 1)
  - One participant shared that the number of representatives was not too large and that the number was small enough to be able to get to know one another and effectively collaborate.
- Participation in specific activities (n = 2).
  - Advisory committee members shared specific activities such as taking part in the photography sessions for the course, and having discussions about what kind of dialogue the Elders and course speakers were going to deliver was what they enjoyed the most.

 *“The people who organized these sessions did a phenomenal job. They were on task, they had a style that worked for the entire group. [They were] very skilled and intelligent and caring and empathetic.”*

- *OPAS for Indigenous Families Advisory Committee Member*

Interview participants also made note of the enjoyable experience in partnering with FJSD on the development of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course (n = 2). They shared that the individuals they worked with from FJSD were thoughtful and respectful. Finally, some advisory committee members

simply noted that being involved as a representative on the advisory committee was what they enjoyed the most (n = 2).


-  *“I think from the beginning to the end, being able to give input to making something so necessary come to life was my favourite part.”*


- OPAS for Indigenous Families Advisory Committee Member


In sharing more about their experiences on the advisory committee, interview participants highlighted that the acknowledgement via the letter of recognition from the Attorney General’s Office for their participation on the advisory committee contributed to an overall positive experience (n = 4). Advisory committee members stated that they were appreciative of the letter acknowledging the parts they played in the development of the course. These advisory committee members recommended that in any future collaborative work with Indigenous communities, FJSD should continue this practice.

Advisory committee members provided additional recommendations to improve future collaborative work between FJSD and Indigenous communities. Some committee members shared that, based on their experiences, they would recommend hosting more face-to-face meetings throughout the process (n = 3). These advisory committee members noted that they would have preferred more opportunities to come together to do the work in person as they found face-to-face meetings more productive than distance collaboration. It was also suggested that, in any future collaboration with Indigenous communities, FJSD should continue to seek out and include a diverse representation of Indigenous cultures on advisory committees (n = 2). Additionally, it was suggested that, in any future projects that are specifically designed for an Indigenous audience, it might be beneficial to have an Indigenous staff person lead the collaboration work. It was mentioned that there are a lot of Indigenous people who work within the public service and that for Indigenous specific strategies that require collaboration with Indigenous communities, departments should look to an Indigenous public servant to lead the work. One final recommendation shared by an advisory committee member was to ensure advisory committee members are aware of the length of the process before committing. They shared that any course or program development process often takes more time than anticipated due to unforeseen circumstances. They recommended that when inviting people to participate on a committee, to ensure members are aware that the process might be a longer commitment than anticipated.

Advisory committee members rated their satisfaction on a scale from one to five, where 5 was very satisfied and one was not at all satisfied. On average, advisory committee members indicated that they were very satisfied with the process and final product of the OPAS for Indigenous Families Course (average rating = 4.9/5). The following comments were provided by advisory committee members in sharing more about their satisfaction ratings:

-  *“I was really happy with the process, I have been part of other advisory committees and you can feel like your voice is not useful, but I felt valued the whole way through.”*

- OPAS for Indigenous Families Advisory Committee Member
-  *“It was a really rewarding experience and I am thrilled and honoured to be part of it.”*

- OPAS for Indigenous Families Advisory Committee Member
-  *“We did this as a group with our people in mind, we had a lot of integrity. The people at that [advisory committee] table had so much to give.”*

- *OPAS for Indigenous Families Advisory Committee Member*

Interviews with the advisory committee for the OPAS for Indigenous Families course highlighted that the partnership between FJSD and representatives of Indigenous peoples, communities and organizations from across the province was successful in several ways. Most notably, the authentic collaboration that occurred was successful in creating a course development process that worked for both government and Indigenous peoples to co-create a course that considers the unique realities of Indigenous peoples with a goal of engaging Indigenous parents in a more meaningful way.

💬 *“I think this was an excellent project – I wouldn’t improve anything for this process due to its specific goal and our ability to collaborate and work together.”*

- *OPAS for Indigenous Families Advisory Committee Member*

### **Design - Strengths**

OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants who were interviewed spoke about aspects of the course that they liked, in other words, the strengths of the course. Most frequently, interview participants specifically highlighted the course activities, videos, and the photographs (n = 6).

Regarding the course design, interview participants shared that the course activities were a strength of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course (n = 3). They specifically highlighted the medicine wheel activity explaining that it was simple and easy to understand and that the medicine wheel was traditionally used as a teaching tool therefore bringing more meaning to the participants. Interview participants also noted that they enjoyed the videos because they made the course relevant and relatable (n = 3).

💬 *“The videos were great. I think utilizing community members in the videos made it relatable and really effective.”*

- *OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Interview Participant*

💬 *“The videos were really well done. They were really honest.”*

- *OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Interview Participant*

💬 *“The videos that talked about what people went through, it made it look normalized... not normalized, but like what happened to me was not abnormal”*

- *OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Interview Participant*

Additionally, participants highlighted that they enjoyed the quizzes throughout the course noting that the quizzes challenge participants to think deeply about, and further engage with, the course content (n = 2). One participant also shared that they were grateful for the ability to re-take the quizzes several times as it supported them in their learning.

Furthermore, regarding strengths of the course, one interview participant shared that they appreciated that they were given a certificate upon completion of the course, “it was rewarding to get the certificate, it made me feel like I can be a mom now.”

Another strength of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course as mentioned by interview participants who had completed the course, was that the content is culturally relevant (n = 4). Some participants

simply stated that the most important strength of the course is that it is culturally relevant and teaches Indigenous parents about separation from a traditional perspective.

💬 *“I was really glad there was a choice for a First Nations version of this course. There is the other course available but I wasn’t too sure I would relate to it. This one made more sense.”*  
- OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Interview Participant

💬 *“It is really good to have this course available. No one has done it before. It is a great course.”*  
- OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Interview Participant

Advisory committee members shared that a strength of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course is that it is designed to be accessible, user friendly and informative which enables participants to successfully complete the course (n = 3). They explained that because of these changes made to the course, they are now more likely to recommend this course to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous families. Advisory committee members mentioned additional strengths of the course including that the course includes engaging video and audio content as well as activities to ensure participants do not lose interest in the self-motivated course (n = 2).

#### *Design - Challenges*

In thinking about aspects of the course that participants found challenging or that they did not enjoy, some participants who completed the OPAS for Indigenous Families course shared that not all the information in the course was relevant to their specific situations (n = 2). Interview participants shared that there were content areas within the course that were not relevant to them and that when they arrived at that content, they chose to skip over it. For example, one participant shared that they had no experiences with domestic violence so chose to skip the section. It was suggested by one interview participant to adjust the course platform to allow for sections of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course to be skipped over if they are not relevant to the participant.

One participant shared that they were not raised in their First Nations culture until they were older, so some parts of the course were not as relevant to them. They specifically mentioned the course suggestions that include visiting Elders and bringing culture back into your life when you are going through separation is advice that is not relevant to participants who did not grow up surrounded by Elders.

Another challenge expressed by interview participants was regarding the language used to explain the legal information expressed throughout the course. It was explained that the language needs to be simplified so that it can be understood by anyone who might not understand the complexity of the legal system. More generally, one participant noted that it can be challenging to read and understand parts of the course. It was suggested to review the language and ensure that it can be understood by someone with a grade seven education level.

#### *Course Delivery*

##### *Course Delivery – Strengths*

With regard to the delivery of the course being online, the majority of survey participants indicated that they were satisfied with the online registration and log in. Of the 48 survey respondents, 15 participants indicated that they “strongly agree,” and 21 participants indicated that they “agree” with the statement “I was satisfied with the online registration and log in. Only 2 survey respondents disagreed with the

statement indicating they were unsatisfied with the online registration and log in process, while the remainder indicated “neutral” feelings or no opinion about the process (n = 7; n = 1).


Some interview participants expressed that they experienced some technological challenges such as troubles with registration and log in process, however they included that by calling or emailing FJSD staff, challenges were remedied in a timely manner.

Survey participants were asked to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with several statements about the design of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course. Table 4 provides an overview of the survey responses. Overall, participants shared positive feedback about aspects of the course design and delivery. Specifically, most participants strongly agreed that it was easy to navigate from section to section, there was a good mix of video instruction, video presentation, on- screen text, and online activities, the video presentations were informative and interesting and that it was nice to be able to complete the course at the participant’s own pace.

Table 4: OPAS for Indigenous Families Participant Ratings on Course Design

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
It was easy to register for the course online	17 (35.42%)	17 (35.42%)	8 (16.67%)	4 (8.33%)	0	2 (4.17%)
It was easy to complete the course online	23 (47.92%)	17 (35.42%)	6 (12.50%)	1 (2.08%)	0	1 (2.08%)
It was easy to navigate from section to section	25 (52.08%)	15 (31.25%)	7 (14.58%)	0	0	1 (2.08%)
It was easy to understand the course material	22 (45.83%)	24 (50.00%)	1 (2.08%)	0	0	1 (2.08%)
The course provided information clearly	22 (46.81%)	21 (44.68%)	3 (6.25%)	0	0	1 (2.13%)
There is a good mix of video instruction, video presentation, on-screen text, and online activities	25 (53.19%)	18 (38.30%)	3 (6.25%)	0	0	1 (2.13%)
The interactive exercises were relevant and helpful	21 (43.75%)	23 (47.92%)	3 (6.25%)	0	0	1 (2.08%)
The video presentations were informative and interesting	26 (54.17%)	17 (35.42%)	4 (8.33%)	0	0	1 (2.08%)
The resources section included information on other parenting, family and legal resources in the community	23 (47.92%)	20 (41.67%)	4 (8.33%)	0	0	1 (2.08%)
It was nice to be able to do this course at my own pace	32 (66.67%)	14 (29.17%)	1 (2.08%)	0	0	1 (2.08%)

Interview participants also drew attention to the delivery model and expressed that offering the course online was a strength (n = 4). They explained that, offering the course online allowed participants to make their way through the material and complete the course on their own time, which was reiterated by interview participants as a strength (n = 3). One participant explained that parents who have children might not have the ability to sit for four consecutive hours to complete the course but by offering the course online, participants noted that they could take it when their schedules permitted, like in the evenings after their children have been put to bed (n = 3).

 *“I am very busy, so it was easy to log in and out when I had the time to do the course.”*  
- OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Interview Participant


Additionally, one participant shared that the ability to choose the media format of the course was a strength. For example, participants had the choice to watch the course videos, listen to audio clips, or read through the transcripts. This participant noted that they particularly enjoyed being able to read the transcript simultaneously as the videos play because it supports their style of learning.

One of the EAC members reiterated that providing the course online is a strength as it provides the ability for participants to take it on their own time. The EAC also shared that they assume an online course would be more appealing to some participants who are not comfortable sharing their personal life in face-to-face group courses. This was supported by one course participant who explained that having the ability to take the course online in the comfort of their own home created a safe space for them to take the course. They explained that parts of the course were emotional, but being home in a private, safe space, they were comfortable dealing with their emotions.

Though some participants shared that, if it were an option, they would have rather taken the course in person (n = 2), all interview participants expressed that offering the course online increased their access to it (n = 8). Of those who suggested that the course be offered in person, they explained that having the option to choose to take it in person or complete the course online would be the best route forward. One participant suggested that the course be delivered by the band office as part of their parenting programs.

Another participant offered their thoughts from a Northern BC perspective explaining that the communities are far away from any city centres and access to in person programming can be difficult. Therefore, having the course online increases access for many Northern Indigenous peoples. This participant also recognized that internet connectivity can be challenging for people in the north, however they suggested that parents could go to the band office to use a computer and internet to complete the course.

Of the 47 survey participants who responded to the question, 40 participants stated that they did not encounter any challenges or barriers in taking the course online.

 *“I very much enjoyed the way the content was delivered. I have taken the PAS over 5 years ago and prefer the Indigenous version. I will definitely recommend this to others.”*  
- OPAS for Indigenous Families survey participant

Survey participants indicated overall satisfaction with the online course delivery. Of the 48 survey respondents, 21 participants “strongly agree” and 18 participants “agree” with the statement, “Overall, I



was satisfied with the online course.” Of those who responded to the question, the remaining survey respondents indicated “neutral” feelings or no opinion about the online course delivery (n = 8; n = 1).

#### *Course Delivery – Challenges*

Most evaluation participants recognized the importance of offering OPAS for Indigenous Families online as it increases accessibility. However, two interview participants who had completed the course mentioned that offering OPAS for Indigenous Families in person might improve it. One interview participant explained that offering the course in person could allow for an Elder to be in the room with participants to offer support and that would increase cultural appropriateness. However, recognizing that the course is offered online, this participant suggested that it could be improved by including simple reminders or ‘check-points’ throughout to suggest participants take a break to smudge, pray, or re-ground themselves in a way that works for them, “I find drumming makes me feel calmer.”

A small number of survey participants expressed disagreement with statements indicating that, for some, it was not easy to register for the course online (n = 4) and that it was not easy to complete the course online (n = 1). In the interviews with course participants, it was explained that there were some challenges regarding registration, however with a phone call to FJSD, they were able to login. It has been noted by the ESC that these challenges have been fixed since it was brought to their attention.

Of the 47 survey participants who responded to the question, seven participants stated that they encountered challenges or barriers in taking the course online. Most frequently, those who shared more about the challenges they encountered noted technical difficulties with the link and/or login process (n = 3). Additionally, participants shared that they experienced challenges in taking the course online because they did not know how to use or does not feel comfortable using a computer or the internet (n = 2).

Though some EAC and advisory committee members shared that internet connectivity and access to public spaces with computers is improving throughout the province, namely in the northern remote parts of the province, many stated that the poverty experienced by Indigenous communities as well as the lack of internet connectivity may serve as barriers to Indigenous parents in completing the OPAS for Indigenous Families course (n = 5).

Additionally, one advisory committee member mentioned that the length of the course, which can take some individuals longer than others, could be a potential barrier. This challenge would be exacerbated if the family needed to use a public computer as they would be limited to the hours of whichever facility they were using.

Another factor, raised by a member of the advisory committee, that may serve as a barrier to Indigenous parents completing the OPAS for Indigenous Families course was that it could potentially be court ordered. They explained that when courses are mandated or even highly recommended by social services, parents will be less motivated to complete the course.

#### *Satisfaction*

OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants who completed the survey provided high satisfaction ratings with the OPAS for Indigenous Families course, overall. Almost all survey respondents strongly agreed (n = 23) or agreed (n = 22) to the statement, “overall, I am satisfied with the OPAS for Indigenous Families course. No survey respondents indicated low satisfaction with the course overall, the remaining



survey respondents selected “neutral” (n = 2) and “no opinion” (n = 1). Finally, participants shared that they would recommend the OPAS for Indigenous Families course to others (n = 43).

Survey Participant general praise for the course:

- 🗨️ *“Amazing course.”*
- 🗨️ *“I think it is great just as it is.”*
- 🗨️ *“It is very informative in its current format”*
- 🗨️ *“I’m glad I came across the link to this course. It has helped calm my mind on seeing that I am and have been doing and saying the proper things around my daughter.”*
- 🗨️ *“You have done a good job.”*
- 🗨️ *“Overall, well developed and administered.”*

### 4.3 Outcomes

This section includes feedback on the outcomes of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course, including progress toward intended goals.

Through their participation in the OPAS for Indigenous Families course, it was intended that participants would gain a better understanding of:

- ✓ The family justice system including its relevant laws and services
- ✓ Alternatives to court (e.g., mediation, collaborative family law)
- ✓ Parents' responsibilities (e.g., financial support for children, parenting time, decision making, effective communication, child support)
- ✓ The impact of separation and/or divorce on children
- ✓ The impact of separation and/or divorce on parents
- ✓ The need to make decisions in the best interests of children

Survey participants rated their own learning outcomes by indicating their level of agreement to the statement,

“the program gave me a better understanding of...”. The most highly ranked outcome suggests that the course provided participants with a better understanding of the need to make decisions in the best interest of the children, to which 28 participants strongly agreed, and 16 agreed with the statement. The second highest rated statement suggests that the program provided participants with a better understanding of the impact of separation and/or divorce on children, to which 24 participants strongly agreed and 16 agreed. Table 5 provides an overview of how participants rated their learning outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

**The OPAS for Indigenous Families course is achieving its intended outcomes.**

- ✓ Evaluation participants stated that the OPAS for Indigenous Families course is being delivered in a culturally relevant and appropriate way, which is attracting Indigenous parents and family members to complete the course.
- ✓ Because the course is delivered in a culturally relevant and appropriate manner, the OPAS for Indigenous Families course is educating and engaging Indigenous parents and family members in a meaningful way.
- ✓ Participants of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course are more informed of alternatives to court such as mediation as an outcome of completing the course.

**The OPAS for Indigenous Families course is successful in supporting Indigenous parents and family members to meet the intended learning objectives.**

- ✓ Most notably, participants shared that the course provided them with a better understanding of the need to make decisions in the best interest of their child.

**Course participants are more likely to utilize FJSD services after completing the OPAS for Indigenous Families course.**

- ✓ The OPAS for Indigenous Families course provided Indigenous parents and family members with an understanding of programs and services that exist and will support them through separation and divorce.

<sup>1</sup> Based on evaluation participant demographics, many participants who completed this course during the data collection phase were not mandated to do so. Some took it voluntarily to educate themselves as they are in a position where they are going through separation while others completed the course and the exit survey in their roles as service providers from various organizations and other provincial government workers. It is the assumption of the evaluator that a few of the responses that were “neutral” or “no opinion” would have been from individuals who were not seeking to specifically learn more about parents' responsibilities or the impact of separation and/or divorce on parents but rather they were reviewing the course to learn more about it as a resource for their clients.

A second hypothesis that would provide an explanation for the above situation would be that these two indicators speak directly to the impact the course made on parents specifically (parents' responsibilities and the impact of separation and/or divorce on parents). Because some participants indicated that they identified as something other

Table 5: OPAS for Indigenous Families participant rated learning outcomes

The program gave me a better understanding of...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
The need to make decisions in the best interest of the children	28 (59.57%)	16 (34.04%)	2 (4.26%)	0	0	1 (2.13%)
The impact of separation and/or divorce on children	24 (51.06%)	16 (34.04%)	6 (12.77%)	0	0	1 (2.13%)
The impact of separation and/or divorce on parents.	23 (48.94%)	14 (29.79%)	9 (19.15%)	0	0	1 (2.13%)
Alternatives to court (e.g., mediation, collaborative family law, etc.)	22 (46.81%)	18 (38.30%)	6 (12.77%)	0	0	1 (2.13%)
Parents' responsibilities (e.g., financial support for children, parenting time, decision making, effective communication)	22 (46.81%)	14 (29.79%)	10 (21.28%)	0	0	1 (2.13%)
The family justice system including its relevant laws and services	21 (44.68%)	19 (40.43%)	6 (12.77%)	0	0	1 (2.13%)
Make family changes easier for my children	21 (44.68%)	18 (38.30%)	6 (12.77%)	0	0	1 (2.13%)
Understand my children's needs when their parents separate or divorce	20 (42.55%)	22 (46.81%)	4 (8.51%)	0	0	1 (2.13%)
Listen and talk to my children about separation and divorce	19 (40.43%)	22 (46.81%)	5 (10.64%)	0	0	1 (2.13%)
Approach issues and concerns with respect to my family situation (e.g., financial support, parenting arrangements, decision making)	19 (40.43%)	22 (46.81%)	5 (10.64%)	0	0	1 (2.13%)
Address conflict with respect to my family law issues (e.g., communicating more effectively with the other parent)	17 (36.17%)	21 (44.68%)	8 (17.02%)	0	0	1 (2.13%)




It is anticipated that by providing the OPAS for Indigenous Families course in a way that considers the unique realities of Indigenous peoples, FJSD will attract, and more meaningfully engage, Indigenous parents, thus promoting increased use of FJSD services. The overall objectives for the OPAS for Indigenous Families course are:

than a parent, mother, or father, it could be that participants indicated "neutral" as the question did not pertain to them specifically.

1. To deliver PAS in a culturally appropriate manner by adapting content to consider the unique realities of Indigenous peoples, which attracts more Indigenous parents to the course and educates them in a more engaging and meaningful way; and
2. To inform parents of, and encourage them to use, other FJSD services such as mediation.

Because of the amount of work that went into ensuring the course content was culturally appropriate, advisory committee members expressed the shared opinion that more Indigenous people would likely want to take the course and would engage with the content in a more meaningful way (n = 6). One advisory committee member shared that this course is filling a programming gap for Indigenous families, “I see so many young families who part ways and parents aren’t always equipped to deal with a lot of things. It is a step in the right direction.”

Over half of the survey participants who responded to the question indicated that the OPAS for Indigenous Families course was their first exposure to services offered by FJSD (n = 26). They were also asked if the OPAS for Indigenous Families course was their first exposure to information about alternatives to court, of the 47 survey participants who responded to the question, a majority indicated that it was not their first exposure to alternatives to court (n = 32). However, many survey respondents indicated that, after completing the OPAS for Indigenous Families course, they are more likely to try other FJSD services (n = 35). Almost all survey respondents indicated that the OPAS for Indigenous Families course provided them with information on where to go to obtain further help and information (strongly agree (n = 16)/agree (n = 25)). One participant shared that they are now seeking out additional supports, some from FJSD. Some participants also expressed that they hope to access counselling services, but from a counsellor who understands intergenerational and residential school trauma.

-  *“I am really impressed with this course and I will definitely look into more FJSD programs.”*  
 - OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Interview Participant
-  *“It is nice to see this resource out there. It walks through the purpose of the family justice councillors and the other FJSD services that I had no clue existed.”*  
 - OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Interview Participant
-  *“I also liked how the course talked about mediation, I had no clue to do anything like that, this is all new – having that at the end of the course was helpful because that is what I am now doing. I thought you had to deal with everything in the court house, not that you could go to mediation.”*  
 - OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Interview Participant

One interview participant shared that they are unlikely to use other FJSD services unless they are accessible online as they live 1.5 hours away from the nearest city centre hub where services are offered.


Upon completion of the course, participants were asked about their planned next steps. Half of the interview participants shared that they will be looking to plan for mediation services since completing the OPAS for Indigenous Families course (n = 4). Additionally, of those who responded to the survey, the most common responses regarding their planned next steps were to:

- Develop a parenting plan (n = 18)
- Develop a safety plan (n = 18)
- Look into mediation or alternative dispute resolution (n = 16)

The least common responses, though still selected by 20% of survey respondents, were:

- Seek a lawyer (n = 10)
- Access a family justice centre (n = 10)

Participants of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course were asked about the most valuable outcome they have gained by completing the course to which a common response was regarding learning about the best interest of their child (n = 8). In their comments, participants explained that the course has taught them many lessons that relate to doing what is best for their child throughout a separation or divorce including how to understand and consider the children's' feelings and how to support children through a cultural lens.

-  *“The most valuable thing that I have gained by completing the OPAS for Indigenous Families Course is how my needs and feelings as a parent are not the most important ones when it comes to deciding what is best for the child. Common sense tells me that this was true long ago, but sometimes it is easy to get caught up in the chaos of the separation, and act on feelings about the separation, rather than the children. I am thankful for the opportunity to take this course.”*
- OPAS for Indigenous Families survey participant

OPAS for Indigenous Families course participants also shared that a valuable outcome for them was learning how to cope and understand their emotions while going through separation or divorce (n = 6). Additionally, both interview and survey participants shared that being provided with information on the various supports available to parents, including learning more about mediation and the various court processes was a valuable outcome (n = 4; n = 5). Regarding learning about the available supports, one interview participant noted that they did not expect to learn about so many services that could be helpful to them immediately, specifically mediation. Learning about parenting plans was also highlighted by interview participants as being valuable (n = 2). Finally, one participant shared that the most valuable outcome from completing the course was that they have gained custody of their children.

#### 4.4 Lessons Learned & Recommendations

This section reviews the findings regarding the lessons learned from the OPAS for Indigenous Families course including recommendations for opportunities to improve the course.

##### 1. Seek out and implement innovative ways to increase access to the OPAS for Indigenous Families Course.

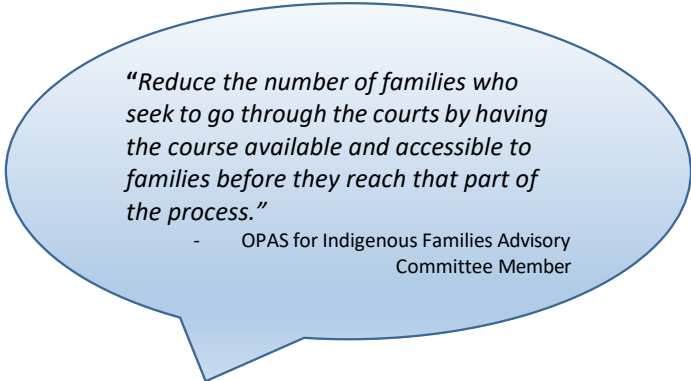
*Evaluation participants stated that access to the OPAS for Indigenous Families course would be increased if suggestions for where they can complete the course were made to parents and family members should they have limited access to the technology needed to complete the course.*

- ✓ Identify public spaces where parents or family members can access public computers and internet and promote on the FJSD web page or the OPAS for Indigenous Families course registration page. Evaluation participants' suggestions included:
  - Band office
  - Public or School Libraries
  - FJSD offices that exist around the province

##### 2. Promote and raise awareness of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course.

*Evaluation participants recommend expanding the promotion and publicity of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course.*

- ✓ Consider sharing the course with the health department staff in each BC First Nation community who offer services to band members
- ✓ Continue and expand use of social media to promote the course
- ✓ Explore promoting the course outside of the courts and the justice system as a means of prevention through education.



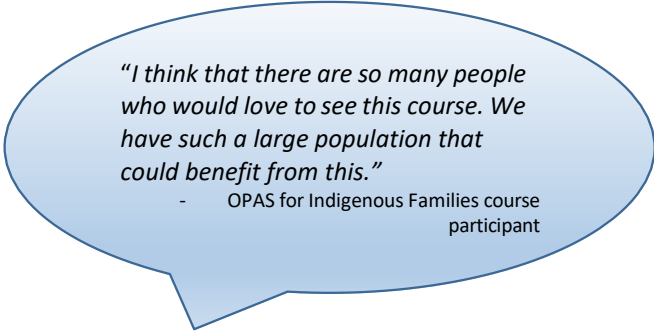
*“Reduce the number of families who seek to go through the courts by having the course available and accessible to families before they reach that part of the process.”*

- OPAS for Indigenous Families Advisory  
Committee Member

##### 3. Explore opportunities to share the OPAS for Indigenous Families course with other provinces and territories throughout Canada.

*Evaluation participants recognized the value of the course for Indigenous families and suggested sharing the course with other provinces and territories.*

- ✓ Continue sharing the course with colleagues across Canada at Federal Provincial Territorial meetings to promote the course Nationally for other provinces and territories to experience.



*"I think that there are so many people who would love to see this course. We have such a large population that could benefit from this."*

- OPAS for Indigenous Families course participant

#### 4. Add to and continuously update available resources promoted within the OPAS for Indigenous Families course.

*Evaluation participants recommend continuously adding to and updating the available support resources that are promoted within the OPAS for Indigenous Families course to ensure it remains up to date and relevant.*

- ✓ Evaluation participants suggested adding resources regarding:
  - How to access counselling, including Indigenous counsellors or culturally appropriate counselling services
  - Mental wellness

#### 5. Redesign some aspects of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course layout.

*Evaluation participants provided recommendations to improve the design of the course layout including:*

- ✓ Adapting the layout to provide for the ability to skip over sections that are not relevant to participants
- ✓ Merging the videos into one seamless video stream so participants are not required to switch over and navigate the pages
- ✓ Provide for the ability to view and read the transcripts and watch the videos simultaneously

#### 6. Expand the OPAS for Indigenous Families course.

*Evaluation participants provided suggestions to expand the OPAS for Indigenous Families Course by adding additional modules to the course.*

- ✓ Evaluation participants recommended expanding on the information provided in the course by:
  - Building more information into the sections that inform parents about the process of going to mediation.
  - Adding to the section about domestic violence by incorporating more information about what to do when experiencing lateral violence, emotional abuse, or sexual abuse during separation.
  - Designing a module for parents experiencing higher conflict separation and divorce.
- ✓ Evaluation participants also suggested designing an online learning series to provide further support to Indigenous parents and families.
  - Evaluation participants suggested the following courses be added to a learning series that begins with the OPAS for Indigenous Families course:
    - How to co-parent
    - A course for Indigenous children whose parents are separating

#### 7. Continue to ensure the OPAS for Indigenous Families Course is culturally relevant.

*Evaluation participants provided recommendations on how to ensure the OPAS for Indigenous Families course remains culturally relevant.*

- ✓ Evaluation participants suggested adapting course activities to be flexible to ensure cultural relevance with a diverse number of Indigenous communities and nations. Should the course be expanded or built upon, participants suggested exploring the possibility of creating specific cultural modules for participants to choose based on where they are from
- ✓ Members of the advisory committee recommended that the committee be involved in continuous review of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course to ensure the course remains culturally relevant. Advisory committee members suggested that diverse representatives of Indigenous cultures continue to sit on the committee
- ✓ Evaluation participants recommend that the course updates the photos every few years to ensure they are not outdated or out of style.

#### **8. Continue regularly testing the OPAS for Indigenous Families online platform**

*Evaluation participants recommend having FJSD and JIBC staff continually test the course online to ensure the technological challenges are identified and remedied.*

#### **9. Ensure continuous and ongoing evaluation is built into the OPAS for Indigenous Families Course**

*Evaluation participants shared that they would like to see continuous and ongoing evaluation of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course so that little adjustments can continue to be made to the course as needed.*

- ✓ Evaluation participants recommend that the course be regularly reviewed, evaluated and updated accordingly.



## Appendix A: Data Collection Tools

**Table 6: Participant Exit/Evaluation Survey**

\* Evaluation Survey Questions (Voluntary)

\* Justice Canada Exit Survey Question (Mandatory)

OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Participant Online Survey	
Participant Profile	
Please select the following that apply	
<p>1. I identify as the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Parent</li> <li>b. Step-parent</li> <li>c. Grandparent</li> <li>d. Other relative</li> <li>e. Other</li> </ul> <p>2. I identify as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Male</li> <li>b. Female</li> <li>c. Other</li> </ul> <p>3. I self-identify as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. First Nations</li> <li>b. Non-Status First Nations</li> <li>c. Métis</li> <li>d. Inuit</li> <li>e. Other (please specify):</li> </ul> <p>4. I am:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 16-25 years old</li> <li>b. 26-35 years old</li> <li>c. 36-45 years old</li> <li>d. 46-55 years old</li> <li>e. 56-65 years old</li> <li>f. 65+ years old</li> <li>g. I prefer not to answer</li> </ul>	
<p>5. I completed the course in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Less than 1 hour</li> <li>b. 1-2 hours</li> <li>c. 2-3 hours</li> <li>d. 3-5 hours</li> <li>e. 5-7 hours</li> <li>f. More than 7 hours</li> </ul>	
REACH	
<p>1. How did you hear about the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Judge/Court Registry staff</li> <li>b. Family Justice Centre/Justice Access Centre</li> <li>c. Family mediator</li> <li>d. Friend/Family member</li> <li>e. An Indigenous Service Provider – Please share which Indigenous Service Provider (optional):</li> <li>f. Brochure/poster</li> <li>g. Lawyer</li> <li>h. Online – Please share which website:</li> <li>i. Other – Please share:</li> </ul>	
<p>2. Were you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Mandated or required to complete the course; or</li> <li>b. Did you take the course voluntarily?</li> </ul>	
<p>3. Did you complete the OPAS for Indigenous Families course? (Y/N)</p>	

<p>a. Yes</p> <p>b. No</p> <p>i. If you did not complete the OPAS for Indigenous Families course, please share why</p>
<p>4. Please rate the following on a scale from 1 – 5 (very difficult, difficult, neutral, easy, very easy):</p> <p>a. How easy or how difficult was it to <b>register for the course</b>?</p> <p>Please share more about what made it easy or what made it difficult to register for the course. (Open ended question)</p> <p>Do you have any suggestions or recommendations on what would make it easier to register for the course? (Open ended question)</p>
<p>5. Please rate the following on a scale from 1 – 5 (very difficult, difficult, neutral, easy, very easy):</p> <p>a. How easy or how difficult was it to <b>complete the course online</b>?</p> <p>Please share more about what made it easy or what made it difficult to complete the course online. (Open ended question)</p> <p>Do you have any suggestions or recommendations on how to make it easier to complete the course? (Open ended question)</p>
<p>6. Overall, I was satisfied with:</p> <p>a. The online registration and log-in. (1 – 5 or N/A)</p> <p>b. The quality of the online course. (1 – 5 or N/A)</p>
<p><b>DESIGN &amp; DELIVERY</b></p>
<p>7. Please indicate, on a scale from 1 – 5, how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the design of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree):</p> <p>a. It was easy to navigate from section to section</p> <p>b. It was easy to understand the course material</p> <p>c. The course provide information clearly</p> <p>d. There is a good mix of video instruction, video presentation, on-screen text, and online activities</p> <p>e. The interactive exercises were relevant and helpful</p> <p>f. The video presentations were informative and interesting</p> <p>g. The resources section includes information on other parenting, family and legal resources in the community</p> <p>h. It was nice to be able to do this course at my own pace</p>
<p>8. What did you like the most about the OPAS for Indigenous Families course? (i.e., what are the strengths of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?) (Open ended question)</p> <p>a. I prefer not to answer</p>
<p>9. Was there anything about the OPAS for Indigenous Families course that you did not like? (i.e., what are the challenges of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?) (Open ended question)</p> <p>a. I prefer not to answer</p>
<p>10. Please share any recommendations you may have to improve the OPAS for Indigenous Families course. (Open ended question)</p> <p>a. I prefer not to answer</p>
<p><b>Online Delivery</b></p>
<p>11. Did you encounter any challenges or barriers in taking this course online, if yes what challenges did you encounter? (Choose all that apply):</p> <p>a. I do not have access to internet at my home</p> <p>b. I do not have access to internet in my community</p> <p>c. I do not have access to a computer/tablet/smartphone</p> <p>d. I do not know how to use a computer or the internet</p> <p>e. I do not feel comfortable using a computer or the internet</p> <p>f. Other (please specify):</p>

Cultural Relevance
<p>12. The program recognized that families may have different backgrounds and experiences (e.g., materials show diverse families, etc.) (1 – 5 or N/A)</p> <p>13. Please indicate, on a scale from 1 – 5, how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the OPAS for Indigenous Families course (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The OPAS for Indigenous Families course content was culturally appropriate, as in it considered the unique realities and cultures of Indigenous peoples</li> <li>b. Because the OPAS for Indigenous Families course was culturally appropriate, I was more engaged with the course in a more meaningful way</li> <li>c. I am more likely to recommend the OPAS for Indigenous Families course to friends and family because the course content is culturally appropriate</li> </ul> <p>14. What made the OPAS for Indigenous Families course culturally appropriate for you? (Check all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The course content considered my unique reality as an Indigenous person</li> <li>b. My culture was reflected in the course content</li> <li>c. The course content considered that my, and my family’s way of approaching family issues is different from non-Indigenous peoples’ way of approaching family issues</li> <li>d. Other (Please specify):</li> </ul> <p>15. Please share any suggestions or recommendations to improve the OPAS for Indigenous Families course to ensure it is culturally appropriate. (Open ended question)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. I prefer not to answer</li> </ul>
SATISFACTION
<p>16. Please indicate, on a scale from 1 – 5, how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the OPAS for Indigenous Families course (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Overall, I am satisfied with the OPAS for Indigenous Families course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Please share more about your satisfaction rating. (Open ended question)</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. I would recommend the OPAS for Indigenous Families course to others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Why or why not? (Open ended question)</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. I prefer not to answer</li> </ul>
OUTCOMES
<p>17. The program gave me a better understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The family justice system including its relevant laws and services. (1 – 5 or N/A)</li> <li>b. Alternatives to court (e.g., mediation collaborative family law). (1 – 5 or N/A)</li> <li>c. Child support, including support guidelines. (1 – 5 or N/A)</li> <li>d. Parents’ responsibilities (e.g., financial support for children, parenting time, decision making, effective communication) (1 – 5 or N/A)</li> <li>e. The impact of separation and/or divorce on children. (1 – 5 or N/A)</li> <li>f. The impact of separation and/or divorce on parents. (1 – 5 or N/A)</li> <li>g. The need to make decisions in the best interest of the children. (1 – 5 or N/A)</li> </ul> <p>18. I feel better able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Approach issues and concerns with respect to my family situation (e.g., financial support, parenting arrangements, decision making) (1 – 5 or N/A)</li> <li>b. Address conflict with respect to my family law issues (e.g., communicating more effectively with the other parent) (1 – 5 or N/A)</li> <li>c. Listen and talk to my children about separation and divorce. (1 – 5 or N/A)</li> <li>d. Understand my children’s needs when their parents separate or divorce. (1 – 5 or N/A)</li> <li>e. Make family changes easier for my children. (1 – 5 or N/A)</li> </ul> <p>19. The program provided information on where I can go to get further help and information. (1 – 5 or N/A)</p> <p>20. Having completed the course, I plan to take these next steps (Select all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Work at settling without going to court</li> <li>b. Develop a parenting plan</li> <li>c. Develop a communication plan</li> <li>d. Develop a safety plan</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. Seek more information</li> <li>f. Access a family justice centre</li> <li>g. Look into mediation or alternative dispute resolution</li> <li>h. Seek a lawyer</li> <li>i. Go to court</li> </ul>
<p>21. Was this your first exposure to information about alternatives to court?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Yes</li> <li>b. No</li> </ul>
<p>22. Was this your first exposure to services offered by Family Justice Services Division (FJSD)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Yes</li> <li>b. No</li> </ul>
<p>23. After completing the OPAS for Indigenous Families course, are you more likely to try other FJSD services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Yes</li> <li>b. No</li> </ul>
<p>24. What has been the most valuable thing you have gained by completing the OPAS for Indigenous Families course? (Open ended question)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. I prefer not to answer</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unexpected Outcomes</b></p>
<p>25. Did you learn or gain anything from taking this course that surprised you, or that you didn't expect when you registered for the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Yes – Please share what surprised you:</li> <li>b. No</li> <li>c. I prefer not to answer</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LESSONS LEARNED</b></p>
<p>26. Do you have anything else you would like to share? (Open ended question)</p>
<p><b>Follow up</b></p>
<p>Thank you for completing this survey. We may have some follow-up questions for you in order to get a better understanding of what is, and what is not working well with this course. Would you be interested in participating in a short telephone interview?</p> <p>If you are interested in participating in the short telephone interview, please click on the link below to provide your email and phone number. The evaluator will contact you to schedule a time to complete the telephone interview on a date and time that works best for you.</p> <p><b>**Simple Survey Link**</b></p>

Table 7: Interview Guide for the Advisory Committee

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Advisory Committee Interview</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To begin, can you share a little about your experience being on the OPAS for Indigenous Families course Advisory Committee? (e.g., overall, was it a positive experience for you?)</li> <li>2. Thinking about the OPAS for Indigenous Families course development process:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What aspects of the process did you enjoy being involved in?</li> <li>b. Was there anything that you didn't like about the OPAS for Indigenous Families course development process?</li> <li>c. Do you have any tips or suggestions to improve future collaborative work between FJSD and Indigenous communities?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>REACH</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. It was intended that by offering OPAS for Indigenous Families course in a culturally appropriate way, where the content considered the unique realities and cultures of Indigenous peoples, the course would attract more Indigenous parents to the course. After X# of months after the course launch, do you believe these two factors have impacted the reach, thus expanding PAS participation to more Indigenous parents?</li> <li>4. What are some of the challenges or barriers you feel Indigenous parents might have with accessing and completing the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?</li> </ol>

<p>a. What do you think makes it easy for Indigenous parents to access and complete the course?</p> <p>5. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations to enhance access and reduce barriers to reach Indigenous parents?</p>
<b>DESIGN &amp; DELIVERY</b>
<b>Cultural Relevance</b>
<p>6. In your opinion, was the OPAS for Indigenous Families course culturally appropriate?</p> <p>a. What made it this way?</p> <p>b. Because the OPAS for Indigenous Families course was culturally appropriate, do you believe participants might be engaged with the course in a more meaningful way? How so?</p> <p>7. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations to improve the OPAS for Indigenous Families course to ensure it is culturally appropriate?</p>
<b>SATISFACTION</b>
<p>8. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the OPAS for Indigenous Families course:</p> <p>a. Overall, I am satisfied with the final product of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course</p> <p>i. Please share more about your satisfaction rating</p>
<b>OUTCOMES</b>
<p>9. In your opinion, would you say that the OPAS for Indigenous Families course has achieved its overall objectives of:</p> <p>a. Delivering PAS in a culturally appropriate manner by adapting content to consider the unique realities of Indigenous peoples, in order to attract more Indigenous parents to the course and educate them in a more engaging and meaningful way.</p> <p>b. Informing parents of, and encouraging them to use, other FJSD services such as mediation</p>
<b>LESSONS LEARNED</b>
<p>10. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience being on the advisory committee for the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?</p>

Table 8: Interview Guide for OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Participants

<b>OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Participant Interview</b>
<b>DESIGN &amp; DELIVERY</b>
<p>1. What did you like the most about the OPAS for Indigenous Families course? (i.e., what are the strengths of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?)</p> <p>2. Was there anything about the OPAS for Indigenous Families course that you did not like? (i.e., what are the challenges of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?)</p> <p>3. In your opinion, was the OPAS for Indigenous Families course culturally appropriate? What made it that way? (e.g., The course content considered my unique reality as an Indigenous person, my culture was reflected in the course content, the course content considered that my, and my family's way of approaching family issues is different from non-Indigenous peoples' way of approaching family issues)</p> <p>a. Would you say that providing this course in a culturally appropriate way engaged you in a more meaningful way?</p> <p>b. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations to improve the OPAS for Indigenous Families course to ensure it is culturally appropriate?</p> <p>4. Would you say that offering the OPAS for Indigenous Families course online increased your access to it? (i.e., would you have been able to take this course somewhere in person?)</p> <p>5. Did you experience any challenges or barriers in taking this course online?</p>
<b>OUTCOMES</b>
<p>6. Was this your first exposure to services offered by Family Justice Services Division (FJSD)?</p> <p>a. Are you more likely to use other FJSD services?</p> <p>7. Since completing the course, have you accessed any other FJSD services? (OR) Have you made arrangements to access other FJSD services?</p>

8. Did you learn or gain anything from taking this course that surprised you, or that you didn't expect when you registered for the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?
<b>LESSONS LEARNED</b>
9. Do you have anything else you would like to share? Or do you have any other recommendations to improve the course?

Table 9: Interview Guide for Members of the ESC

<b>ESC Interview</b>
<b>REACH</b>
1. Last year X# of individuals registered and completed the mainstream OPAS program. This year X# of Indigenous parents registered and completed the OPAS for Indigenous Families course. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Do you feel that the OPAS for Indigenous Families course was successful in reaching its intended audience (Indigenous parents)? Please explain.</li> <li>d. From your knowledge, how did FJSD and JIBC promote awareness of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?</li> </ul>
2. What are some of the challenges or barriers you feel Indigenous parents might have with accessing and completing the OPAS for Indigenous Families course? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. What are the enablers?</li> </ul>
3. It was intended that by offering OPAS for Indigenous Families course online and in a culturally appropriate way, where the content considered the unique realities and cultures of Indigenous peoples, the course would attract more Indigenous parents to the course. After X# of months after the course launch, do you believe these two factors have impacted the reach, thus expanding PAS participation to more Indigenous parents?
4. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations to enhance access and reduce barriers to reach Indigenous parents?
<b>DESIGN &amp; DELIVERY</b>
<b>Online delivery</b>
5. From your perspective, how viable is the online delivery of OPAS for Indigenous Families course as a means to reach BC's Indigenous community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>f. Did you experience any challenges in creating and launching OPAS for Indigenous Families course online?</li> <li>g. If yes, how did you, or how will you in the future, overcome these challenges?</li> <li>h. Did you hear about clients experiencing challenges or barriers accessing or completing the course online?</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Relevance</b>
6. In your opinion, was the OPAS for Indigenous Families course culturally appropriate? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. What made it this way?</li> <li>d. Because the OPAS for Indigenous Families course was culturally appropriate, do you believe participants were engaged with the course in a more meaningful way? How so?</li> </ul>
7. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations to improve the OPAS for Indigenous Families course to ensure it is culturally appropriate?
8. With regard to the design and delivery of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course, is there anything that you can suggest should be done differently in the future?
<b>SATISFACTION</b>
9. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the OPAS for Indigenous Families course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Overall, I am satisfied with the OPAS for Indigenous Families course                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Please share more about your satisfaction rating</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>OUTCOMES</b>
10. In your opinion, would you say that the OPAS for Indigenous Families course has achieved its overall objectives of:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Delivering PAS in a culturally appropriate manner by adapting content to consider the unique realities of Indigenous peoples, in order to attract more Indigenous parents to the course and educate them in a more engaging and meaningful way.</li><li>j. Informing parents of, and encouraging them to use, other FJSD services such as mediation</li></ul>
11. Do you think the OPAS for Indigenous Families course is an effective means of raising awareness of FJSD services to Indigenous parents?
12. Have you seen an increase of Indigenous parents accessing FJSD services?
13. Have there been any unexpected outcomes for your organization as a result of the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?
<b>LESSONS LEARNED</b>
14. Moving forward, are there any other opportunities you have identified to improve the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?
15. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with the OPAS for Indigenous Families course?

## Appendix B: Evaluation Disclaimer for OPAS for Indigenous Families Course Participants

Online Parenting After Separation for Indigenous Families course participant,

We are writing to let you know that the *Online Parenting After Separation (OPAS) for Indigenous Families* course is undergoing a program evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation is to review the BC Family Justice Services Division's *Online Parenting After Separation (OPAS) for Indigenous Families* course through measuring its outcomes and by gathering feedback on how it is being implemented, including how easy it is to take the course or any challenges you might have in taking the course, as well as the strengths, challenges and opportunities for improving the course.

As someone who is taking the OPAS for Indigenous Families course, we would really like to hear about your experience taking the online course. This is a brand-new course and we hope to learn from you about what worked well and how we can improve the course. Your ideas and feedback will be extremely important.

Please note that the evaluation is being conducted by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party evaluation consultant and not by Family Justice Services Division. Participation in the evaluation is voluntary. Should you choose to participate in the evaluation, your participation will be confidential, your responses will remain anonymous and no personal or identifying information will be provided to Family Justice Services Division or included in the final evaluation report.

### How do you participate in the evaluation?

#### Exit/Evaluation Survey

After you complete this course, you will be provided with a link to an exit survey. We have included evaluation questions in the exit survey that will help us in the evaluation of the course. Upon completion of the exit/evaluation survey, you will receive your certificate of completion.

If you are taking this course voluntarily, you have the option to skip to the exit/evaluation survey at any time during your participation in the course.

#### Telephone Interview

We may have additional or follow up questions for you after you do the survey. If you would like to share more about your experience taking this course through a short telephone interview, you can leave your contact information on the last question of the survey. If you consent to participating in the telephone interview, the evaluator will follow up with you to schedule a time and date to complete the telephone interview.

If you have any questions about the evaluation, please do not hesitate to contact our evaluation consultant:

Cassidy Caron

[cassidycaron@gmail.com](mailto:cassidycaron@gmail.com)

250-231-0362

Or Kristine Heaney at FJDS:

Kristine Heaney

[Kristine.Heaney@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Kristine.Heaney@gov.bc.ca)



## References

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