

PROGRESS REPORT

TAKING ACTION *on*  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
*in* BRITISH COLUMBIA

*Prepared by the* PROVINCIAL OFFICE *of* DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
MINISTRY *of* CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

BRITISH COLUMBIA | MARCH 2013



Ministry of  
Children and Family  
Development



## Introduction

*Taking Action on Domestic Violence in British Columbia* is an action plan developed by the BC government in response to the findings and recommendations made in the Representative for Children and Youth's report, *Honouring Kaitlynn, Max and Cordon: Make Their Voices Heard Now* (2012). This action plan sets the course towards a coordinated approach to addressing domestic violence across the child and family serving systems in BC and lays out the key deliverables, actions and timelines that respond to the recommendations in the Representative for Children and Youth's report.

The actions were broken down into the following time frames for completion:

1. Immediate (June – December 2012)
2. Short Term (January – December 2013)
3. Long Term (January 2014 onwards)

The *Progress Report on Taking Action on Domestic Violence in British Columbia* outlines the progress on the "Immediate Actions" taken by government between June and December 2012 to improve and strengthen the response to domestic violence in BC with a clear focus on the safety of children, women, families and communities.

Since some "Immediate Actions" have ongoing components, they will require further updating in future progress reports. In these circumstances the updates on these actions are as of January 31, 2013.

The Provincial Office of Domestic Violence is accountable for monitoring and reporting on the progress made in implementing the Taking Action on Domestic Violence in British Columbia action plan.

## Progress Report on Taking Action on Domestic Violence in British Columbia Status of Immediate Actions (June 2012 to December 2012)

### Coordination and Collaboration

Provincial Office of Domestic Violence		
Objective: To lead and build a coordinated systemic response across government to improve the supports and services to children, women and individuals impacted by domestic violence.		
IMMEDIATE ACTIONS	STATUS	COMMENTS
Establish the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence including staffing model and budget for new office	Complete	The Provincial Office of Domestic Violence was established as the permanent lead for government, focussed on strengthening the services and supports available for children and families affected by domestic violence in March 2012.
Develop an action plan in response to the recommendations in the Representative for Children and Youth report, <i>Honouring Kaitlynnne, Max and Cordon: Make Their Voices Heard Now</i> (2012)	Complete	The action plan, <a href="#"><i>Taking Action on Domestic Violence in British Columbia</i></a> , was developed in response to the recommendations in the, Representative for Children and Youth's report, <a href="#"><i>Honouring Kaitlynnne, Max and Cordon: Make Their Voices Heard Now</i></a> , (2012) and was publicly released on October 10, 2012.
Delegate Provincial Office of Domestic Violence staff under the <i>Child, Family and Community Service Act</i> to provide support and consultation to the Provincial Director of Child Welfare on case specific circumstances where domestic violence is a factor	Complete	The Provincial Office of Domestic Violence staff were delegated in July 2012 under the <i>Child, Family and Community Service Act</i> to provide support and consultation to the Provincial Director of Child Welfare in case specific circumstances where domestic violence is a factor.
Develop and implement an engagement strategy in collaboration with community partners to identify key issues, specific actions, strategies, timelines and desired outcomes	On Track	An on-line public consultation was launched on January 21, 2013 and will close on February 18, 2013. This consultation process provides an opportunity for all British Columbians to provide input for consideration into the three-year provincial plan to address domestic violence. This consultation builds on the consultation forum which occurred on November 6, 2012.

**Provincial Office of Domestic Violence**

**Objective: To lead and build a coordinated systemic response across government to improve the supports and services to children, women and individuals impacted by domestic violence.**

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS	STATUS	COMMENTS
Host provincial consultation forums on addressing domestic violence	Complete	<p>A provincial information exchange and community consultation forum on addressing domestic violence was held on November 6, 2012. 84 participants from across British Columbia representing 46 organizations attended the forum.</p> <p>On January 21, 2013, over 80 representatives from 65 community and government organizations attended an event with seven Cabinet Ministers hosted by Kwantlen College to participate in a dialogue on working together to end domestic violence and build safe communities.</p>
Develop a three-year provincial plan to address domestic violence in collaboration with community partners	On Track	The development of a three-year plan to address domestic violence is underway.
Identify all domestic violence training programs for service providers across government to identify strengths, duplications and gaps, and develop additional training or revise training as necessary	On Track	All training programs across sectors for government officials have been identified. Analysis of strengths, duplications and gaps is underway.
Identify and map all data systems across government and crown corporations used to collect domestic violence related data including identifying current data collected	Complete	All data systems across government and crown corporations have been identified. As a next step, analysis of current data collected is underway.
Identify and map across government all legislation, policies, programs, services and committees regarding domestic violence at the provincial and community level to identify strengths and gaps	Complete	Initial identification and mapping of all government legislation, policies, programs, services and committees related to domestic violence has been completed.

**Provincial Office of Domestic Violence**

**Objective: To develop an Aboriginal specific domestic violence strategy that informs and is interlinked with the three-year plan to address domestic violence.**

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS	STATUS	COMMENTS
Work with Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and consult with the Minister’s Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women on the development of an engagement strategy	Complete	Engagement strategy was developed in early Fall 2012.
Engage with First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal leadership, communities and organizations on the development of an Aboriginal specific domestic violence strategy	On Track	<p>A working group, comprised of First Nations, Métis, Aboriginal and anti-violence representatives, to support the development of the Aboriginal strategy was established.</p> <p>Meetings have occurred with Indigenous Caucus, First Nations and Aboriginal Services agencies in Winter 2012/13.</p> <p>Aboriginal stakeholders were invited to the November 6, 2012 Forum and January 21, 2013 cabinet ministers event.</p> <p>Aboriginal organizations and communities have been invited to participate in the on-line public consultation from January 21– February 18, 2013 to provide input into the three-year provincial plan and Aboriginal strategy to address domestic violence.</p> <p>The three-year plan will be inclusive of an Aboriginal strategy.</p>
Engage with First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal leadership, communities and organizations on the development of a three-year provincial plan to address domestic violence to ensure it is informed by Aboriginal peoples	On Track	<p>Consultation is underway with First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal communities and organizations.</p> <p>Aboriginal organizations and communities have been invited to participate in the on-line public consultation from January 21– February 18, 2013 to provide input into the three-year provincial plan to address domestic violence.</p>

**Ministry of Health and Ministry of Children and Family Development**

**Objective: To increase the focus on family-oriented and family-sensitive practice in the adult mental health system to ensure the care and protection of children and family members.**

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS	STATUS	COMMENTS
Consult with key leaders within Ministry of Health, Health Authorities, Ministry of Children and Family Development and Delegated Aboriginal Agencies regarding development of an engagement strategy in order to ensure their involvement and commitment to the implementation of the relevant key actions	On Track	Work began with Ministries of Children and Family Development and Health in January 2013; coordinating work on key actions include establishment of a provincial steering committee, provincial advisory committee and a resource development and evaluation subcommittee.
Connect with those with lived experience of mental illness, problematic substance use and/or domestic violence to identify family-oriented and family-sensitive approaches	On Track	<p>Families are partners in health care through the Patient Journey Mapping which is a collaborative partnership between multiple health care disciplines and patients with lived experience, and focuses on how the care is received by patients.</p> <p>Families will share their perspectives through Patient Journey Mapping and Health Talk in the Spring of 2013.</p>
Present to, consult with and where necessary, develop committees that have a mandate to support and influence practice through Health Authorities, Ministry of Children and Family Development and Delegated Aboriginal Agencies' to determine effective family-oriented and family-sensitive approaches to identifying, screening, referrals and information sharing across the systems to address the safety needs of children in identified families.	On Track	Consultations and presentations have occurred through existing structures such as the Mental Health and Substance Use Planning Councils and the Integrated Primary Community Care Committee and the Ministry of Children and Family Development Executive Directors of Service Committee. Ministries of Children and Family Development and Health provide regional and provincial executive leadership to local pilot and community implementation committees that meet weekly to monthly depending on priorities.
Identify best practices for screening referrals and family-oriented and family-sensitive approaches to address safety needs of children	On Track	A review of all best practice models such as existing protocols, practice tools, and processes for social workers and health care professionals is nearly complete and a literature review is being done.

**Ministry of Health and Ministry of Children and Family Development**

**Objective: To increase the focus on family-oriented and family-sensitive practice in the adult mental health system to ensure the care and protection of children and family members.**

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS	STATUS	COMMENTS
Integrate harm reduction and early intervention trauma-informed approaches into practices	On Track	<p>The 2008 Ministry of Health Family Physician Guide addressing depression, anxiety disorders, early psychosis intervention and substance use is being updated through Impact BC* to include screening and assessment tools for eating disorders, child and adolescent depression, anxiety and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; alcohol drinking guidelines, trauma-informed practice and family friendly approaches.</p> <p>The revisions to the Family Physician Guide and the British Columbia Handbook for Action on Child Abuse are scheduled for approval in Spring 2013.</p>
Identify roles and responsibilities of system partners	On Track	<p>Members of the Provincial Steering Committee and Advisory Committee and the Provincial Project Manager are in place and the recruitment for Community Pilot Managers for phase one has been completed in the pilot communities.</p> <p>The Provincial Project Manager and Community Pilot Managers and their teams met on January 23, 2013 to discuss roles and responsibilities and a governance model was agreed upon.</p> <p>The terms of reference will be developed in Spring 2013.</p>
Develop protocols, including policies, identification tools, risk assessments, information sharing and referral processes as required	On Track	<p>A toolkit of protocols, tools and processes is being developed by the Resource Development and Evaluation Subcommittee in consultation with the two pilot communities. Subcommittee members include government and community partners.</p>



**Ministry of Health and Ministry of Children and Family Development**

**Objective: To increase the focus on family-oriented and family-sensitive practice in the adult mental health system to ensure the care and protection of children and family members.**

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS	STATUS	COMMENTS
<p>Identify prototype locations for project within two British Columbia communities (one urban and one rural) for phase one, to pilot and evaluate protocols. This will include emergency room/hospital, primary care and relevant Health Authority and Ministry of Children and Family Development/Delegated Aboriginal Agencies community level services, and relevant victim-serving agencies</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>In Fall 2012, a Provincial Steering Committee was formed to provide overall direction to the provincial action plan.</p> <p>The committee includes senior Ministry of Children and Family Development, Ministry of Health, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Interior Health Authority staff and the project manager.</p> <p>Two communities, Vernon (rural) and Richmond (urban), have been identified as the prototype locations for the pilots.</p> <p>The first planning meeting was held on January 23, 2013.</p>
<p>Implement multi-disciplinary training for local community, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Delegated Aboriginal Agency and hospital staff starting in the prototype sites</p>	<p>On Track</p>	<p>Relevant training materials relating to domestic violence safety, parent mental illness and problematic substance use have been identified to share knowledge and information between Health Authorities, Ministry of Children and Family Development and Delegated Aboriginal Agencies and community agencies.</p> <p>Training will be implemented in pilot communities with participation from community-based organizations in Spring 2013.</p>

## Legislation and Policy

Objective: To ensure effective legislation and coordinated policies across government in response to domestic violence.		
IMMEDIATE ACTIONS	STATUS	COMMENTS
<b>Ministry of Children and Family Development</b>		
Consider amendments to the <i>Child, Family and Community Service Act</i> to provide social workers with direction in assessing the safety of children exposed to domestic violence. Community anti-violence professionals and partners will be consulted	On Track	Under consideration.
Review and update Child Protection and Child and Youth Mental Health policies, standards and practice guidelines as necessary to reflect collaborative and supportive approaches	On Track	Ministry of Children and Family Development is incrementally incorporating trauma informed practice into policy as it is developed or revised. Child and Youth Mental Health trauma informed practice policy is currently under development.  The Child and Youth Mental Health Trauma Informed Practice Policy is expected to be completed by the end of March 2013.
Develop and implement clear case management standards and policies for front-line staff including a case transfer process when families move	Complete	A new practice directive on Case Transfer & Joint Case Management under the <i>Child, Family and Community Service Act</i> was implemented on November 5, 2012.
Develop a monitoring and case consultation mechanism in the Provincial Director of Child Welfare's office to provide support and direction to regional staff on high-risk cases involving domestic violence	Complete	A new practice directive, Clinical Consultation and Support in Complex High Risk Child Protection Cases, has been developed and is available to all child welfare staff via link within the Integrated Case Management User Guide as of September 21, 2012.

Ministry of Justice		
Change the court rules to support the <i>Family Law Act</i>	Complete	Changes to the court rules to support the <i>Family Law Act</i> were announced June 19, 2012.
Develop resource materials to support the legal community and public in preparing for the transition to the <i>Family Law Act</i>	On Track	<p>The Ministry of Justice worked with the Public Legal Education Institute to develop legal education materials for the public. The Ministry also reviewed information and education materials developed by the Legal Services Society. The Legal Services Society provides a comprehensive family law website, materials and training modules and their website is a key resource for the public.</p> <p>The Ministry has developed resources to assist in educating the legal community and public about the changes and to help the transition from the <i>Family Relations Act</i> to the <i>Family Law Act</i>.** Continuing Legal Education is using these materials to inform the development of practice manuals on the Family Law Act. Continuing Legal Education has also released their <i>Family Law Act Transition Guide</i>.</p>
Introduce an enhanced flagging system in the computer system (JUSTIN) to improve identification of files involving child victims for the purpose of proactive case management	Complete	<p>An enhanced flagging system in JUSTIN has been created to improve identification of files involving child victims for the purpose of proactive case management.</p> <p>This came into effect in July 2012.</p>

**Ministry of Social Development**

Develop and update policies regarding clients fleeing domestic violence and consolidate all domestic violence related policies so they are clear and available to both staff and clients

Complete

Domestic violence policies have been developed, updated and consolidated so they are clear and available to both staff and clients.

As of December 3, 2012 Persons Fleeing Abuse overview is available on the Online Resources.

[http://www.gov.bc.ca/meia/online\\_resource/application/fleeabuse/](http://www.gov.bc.ca/meia/online_resource/application/fleeabuse/)

## Services, Supports and Processes

Ministry of Justice		
Objective: To ensure services, supports and processes are responsive to the needs of individuals, children, women and families affected by domestic violence.		
IMMEDIATE ACTIONS	STATUS	COMMENTS
Determine next steps regarding domestic violence courts upon review of the BC Justice Reform Initiative report	On Track	Part 2 of the Ministry of Justice White Paper*** is to be released in February of 2013 and includes a commitment by government to work with the judiciary and other justice system participants to explore the establishment of a framework for domestic violence courts.

## Awareness and Training

Objective: To promote a consistent and in-depth understanding across systems on the complex dynamics of domestic violence and best approaches to supporting women, children and families dealing with domestic violence.		
IMMEDIATE ACTIONS	STATUS	COMMENTS
<b>Ministry of Children and Family Development</b>		
Establish domestic violence leads in each of the Ministry of Children and Family Development service delivery areas to provide consultation, training and coordination support to front line and management staff	Complete	Domestic violence leads have been identified in each of the Ministry of Children and Family Development's 13 service delivery areas to provide consultation, training and coordination support to front-line and management staff.  Domestic violence leads will also have linkages to the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence.
Develop training curriculum for Ministry of Children and Family Development social workers and supervisors, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies social workers and supervisors on legislation, standards, policies and best practices regarding domestic violence	On Track	Ministry of Children and Family Development, in partnership with Open Schools BC, is reviewing the on-line Domestic Violence Safety Planning Training program to determine its suitability for fully delegated child protection staff in the province. The training is scheduled to be implemented in the Winter of 2013.  In addition, in-person domestic violence training curriculum for Ministry of Children and Family Development social workers and supervisors, Delegated Aboriginal Agency social workers and supervisors is under development and scheduled for implementation in the Fall of 2013.

<p>Deliver child and youth mental health specific training in Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy; training should include consideration of the impact of domestic violence on children, youth and families</p>	<p>On Track</p>	<p>Two sessions of Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy that incorporates domestic violence for child and youth mental health clinicians have been delivered in November and December of 2012 to approximately 60 staff. Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is an area of core training for CYMH staff and training will be offered annually to incrementally train all clinicians.</p>
<p><b>Ministry of Education</b></p>		
<p>Deliver training (October 2012-June 2013) on recognizing and responding to domestic violence to approximately 4,000 school personnel and community partners with a focus on school administrators, teachers and support staff (20% of the training spots will be dedicated to community partners who work with students)</p>	<p>On Track</p>	<p>Training on recognizing and responding to domestic violence is being delivered as part of the Preventing Bullying and Ensuring a Positive Safe School Culture training initiative to school personnel and community partners with a focus on school administrators, teachers and support staff with 20% of training spots dedicated to community partners who work with students.</p> <p>Level 1 training, (Preventing Bullying and Ensuring a Positive Safe School Culture), has been delivered to more than 1000 educators as of the end of January 2013.</p> <p>Level 2 training, (Introduction to Threat Risk Assessment), has been delivered to over 800 educators and community partners as of the end of January 2013.</p> <p>Training for the remainder of staff will continue through 2013.</p>

**Ministry of Justice**

Provide domestic violence training at the November 2012 Crown counsel conference

Complete

Training on Victim Safety Planning specific to the learning in the Representative for Children and Youth report, *Honouring Kaitlynne, Max and Cordon: Make Their Voices Heard Now* (2012) was provided at the November 2012 Crown counsel conference. This training provided an overview about victim safety planning and practical tips and resources, focusing on the practical application of safety planning in Crown counsel's daily work. Similar webinar training will be provided in early 2013 for Crown counsel who were unable to attend the session at the Crown counsel conference.



<p>Collaborate with organizations such as Justice Institute of British Columbia and the Continuing Legal Education Society of British Columbia to support the development of training on the <i>Family Law Act</i> for lawyers and other family practitioners including family justice counsellors</p>	<p>On Track</p>	<p>Significant training is occurring through the Justice Institute of BC and Continuing Legal Education Society and other organizations on the <i>Family Law Act</i>.</p> <p>Family justice counsellors have received training on dynamics and impacts of domestic violence and on the <i>Family Law Act</i>. Training is delivered regularly to new staff, along with updated workshops approximately every 2-3 years.</p> <p>Family mediators, parenting coordinators and arbitrators are required by the <i>Family Law Act</i> to receive training on the legislation and are required under the <i>Family Law Regulations</i> to meet minimum training and practice standards, including a minimum of 14 hours of family violence training. Training is currently available through the Continuing Legal Education Society and the Justice Institute of British Columbia.</p> <p>The Ministry of Justice also collaborated with the BC Law Society to develop minimum practice standards for lawyers acting as family law mediators, parenting coordinators and arbitrators to ensure all family dispute resolution professionals meet consistent standards, including 14 hours of family violence training. The Law Society has strongly recommended to all lawyers who practice any family law that they take 14 hours of family violence training, even if they are not dispute resolution professionals.</p> <p>All lawyers, mediators, parenting coordinators and arbitrators dealing with family law issues are obligated under the <i>Family Law Act</i> to screen for family violence to ensure that families are directed to safe and appropriate processes to resolve their family law disputes.</p>
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<p>Develop legal education materials for the public with the Public Legal Education Institute and the Legal Services Society on the <i>Family Law Act</i></p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>The Ministry of Justice worked with the Public Legal Education Institute to develop legal education materials for the public. The Ministry also reviewed information and education materials developed by the Legal Services Society. The Legal Services Society provides a comprehensive family law website, materials and training modules and their website is a key resource for the public.</p> <p>The Ministry has also developed resources to assist in educating the legal community and public about the changes and to help the transition from the <i>Family Relations Act</i> to the <i>Family Law Act</i>. Continuing Legal Education is using these materials to inform the development of practice manuals on the Family Law Act. Continuing Legal Education has also released their <i>Family Law Act Transition Guide</i>.</p> <p>The Provincial Office of Domestic Violence established a cross-ministry implementation working group on the new <i>Family Law Act</i> Protection Orders in January 2013. This group meets regularly to support the development of practice directives, information bulletins, and updates to resource handbooks and training programs for front-line staff.</p>
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<p>Develop and present webinar training specific to the findings in the Representative for Children and Youth's report, <i>Honouring Kaitlynn, Max and Cordon: Make Their Voices Heard Now</i> (2012) for Crown counsel</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Training for Crown counsel on the enhanced resources and training materials were made available in the fall of 2012 on the Crown website. Included in the webinar site is the practical impact of the amendments to the <i>Criminal Code</i> and <i>Canada Evidence Act</i> regarding vulnerable victims and witness which provides Crown counsel with training that assists them in the prosecution of domestic violence cases.</p> <p>Criminal Justice Branch has established Resource Counsel who has expertise in the areas of spousal violence and victims and vulnerable witnesses who can provide assistance and advice to Crown counsel on practice issues pertaining to these issues.</p>
<p>Implement online training to 2,500 support workers in victim services, violence against women and transition house programs on domestic violence safety planning</p>	<p>On Track</p>	<p>The Domestic Violence Safety Planning Online Training was implemented in June 2012. This training continues to be promoted to contracted service providers and a training bulletin was released in fall 2012 that highlighted the availability of seats.</p>
<p><b>Ministry of Social Development</b></p>		
<p>Identify training materials and resources for staff on the dynamics of domestic violence</p>	<p>On Track</p>	<p>Ministry of Social Development, in partnership with the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence and Open School BC, is reviewing the on-line Domestic Violence Safety Planning Training program to determine its suitability for frontline staff in the province.</p>

**Ministry of Children and Family Development**

**Objective: To enhance the capacity of Ministry of Children and Family Development and Delegated Aboriginal Agencies supervisors to provide clinical supervision to child welfare workers to improve the capacity of front line staff to protect and support children and families impacted by domestic violence.**

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS	STATUS	COMMENTS
Host regional supervisor forums to discuss the Representative for Children and Youth's report and recommendations in order to promote continuous learning and professional development.	On Track	Ministry of Children and Family Development Regional Supervisor forums have occurred with Supervisors, Executive Directors and Directors of Practice.  Four live meetings have been organized and a total of 37 participants (of approximately 350) have attended from across the province. More live meetings are being scheduled to be completed by Spring 2013..

\* More information regarding Impact BC can be found at:

<http://www.impactbc.ca/about>

\*\*More information regarding the March 18, 2013 implementation of the *Family Law Act* can be found at:

<http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/legislation/family-law/index.htm>

\*\*\*The Ministry of Justice's *White Paper, Part Two (February 2013)* can be found at:

<http://www.justicebc.ca/shared/pdfs/WhitePaperTwo.pdf>

