
NEWS RELEASE

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Access to Justice BC

A2JBC launches *Transform the Family Justice System Collaborative*

VANCOUVER – Leaders from across the BC justice system, health and other sectors, adults, and young people with lived experience gathered today, in person at the Vancouver Law Courts and virtually across BC, to celebrate the launch of the *Transform the Family Justice System Collaborative*. The Honourable Robert Bauman, Chief Justice of BC, and the Honourable David Eby, QC, Attorney General of BC, among others, spoke to the invited guests.

The TFJS Collaborative is a multi-sectoral effort, led by [Access to Justice BC](#), to transform the family justice system by focusing on family well-being. It seeks to address collaboratively the public health crisis of the immediate, long-term, and intergenerational impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

ACEs include childhood traumas such as parental separation, witnessing intimate partner violence, abuse, and neglect, having a family member with mental illness or substance abuse issues, or and incarceration of a family member. All these ACEs feature in the family justice system, and in many situations, the traditional adversarial court process escalates conflict and exacerbates the impacts of ACEs.

Applying what is known from the brain science of ACEs and resilience, the Collaborative seeks to reduce toxic stress; strengthen core life skills and capacity to manage conflict and stress; strengthen support for families; maximize holistic approaches to family wellbeing; and reduce personal, justice sector, economic and social costs.

Indigenous peoples in BC are disproportionately impacted by this public health issue and the Collaborative is committed to inclusion of Indigenous peoples in its processes, and to the integration of Indigenous law and perspectives into the redesign of family justice in BC.

The work of the Collaborative is to align and coordinate complementary efforts, across and beyond the justice sector, directed at redesigning the family justice system so that children, youth, and families are in the centre, and are a part of the redesign process.

Doctors of BC and the Law Society of BC are joining this effort and exploring opportunities for intersectoral allyship between BC's doctors and lawyers to raise awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and to work together to promote the well-being of their patients and clients.

As the work of the Collaborative proceeds, we should begin to see:

- People thinking differently about the family justice system and family well-being.
- Those working with families involved in the justice system being better informed about ACEs and resilience.

- Different people and different sectors involved in making changes to support families experiencing family justice issues.
- A greater focus on strategy and measurable progress, and on the system as a system.

Chief Justice Robert Bauman –

“This shift to focusing on achieving family well-being means putting families, rather than courts, at the centre, a holistic approach that will change the way we do things. While courts will continue to play a vital role for families, families’ legal issues are often secondary to their social, relationship, parenting, and financial issues. So, for the TFJS Collaborative to succeed, it needs to be a multi-sector initiative.”

Attorney General David Eby –

“It’s not an easy thing to change how the justice system operates, and I am greatly encouraged by the strong support across the board for the Collaborative’s efforts to transform family justice. We have to focus on overall family well-being, and that’s why it’s great to see health system leaders standing with us today. Together, we need to make sure the system works for the people who most need its help.”

Doctors of BC President Dr. Ramneek Dosanjh –

“Both doctors and lawyers can support children and families who are going through high-conflict separation and divorce. Doctors and lawyers have a vital role to play by being aware of ACEs and incorporating trauma-informed methods into their practice.”

Learn More:

Learn about Access to Justice BC - <https://accesstojusticebc.ca/>

Learn about the TFJS Collaborative - <https://accesstojusticebc.ca/family-justice-collaborative/>

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