



RISE WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICES

One-Year Evaluation Report

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Highlights

Legal services provided to women

Between Sept 2017 and August 2018, Rise worked with clients on 417 matters. This included work on 291 matters *opened* during this time and 126 client matters opened previously. Student clinicians worked on 331 client matters. In addition, 36 women received summary advice through clinics run by lawyers volunteering with Rise. Another 35 women received remote access summary advice. And 15 clients participated in a Wills project – receiving advice and/or drafted wills as a result.

In the latter part of the year, the Triaging Case Manager also provided assistance and referrals to 88 women who did not proceed further as Rise clients. As well, there were women who came to Rise whose legal needs were beyond the scope of Rise’s areas of focus. During this year, this included women looking for assistance with needs other than family law matters.

More detailed information on client needs is available for **women who worked with Rise on the 417 legal matters between Sept 2017 and August 2018.**

The percentages reported below represent a minimum (“at least”) – as the information may only be available when it is relevant to a client’s legal matter(s).

What legal needs did they have?

- Most needed legal services for family law matters affecting their children. For example, 48% needed help with custody/access/ parenting time matters and 48% with child support matters.
- These women also needed legal services for other matters which would contribute to their financial self-sufficiency, including property division (30%) and spousal support (27%).
- At least 23% had accessed prior legal services. These included clients who had run out of money to pay for a lawyer or exhausted their legal aid coverage accessing prior services. At least 22% had applied for legal aid before/during their contact with Rise.
- At least one-third had ongoing court proceedings – about half of them at the Provincial Court and half at the Supreme Court.
- Their needs were highly diverse – from initial considerations about how to separate from a partner, to changes required in existing (multiple) court orders necessitated by changes in their lives and those of their children.

Who was needing services?

- Most women receiving Rise services during this year were BC parents with children under 19 years of age – about two-in-five self-identified as solo parents.
- At least 79% were living below LICO or were economically disadvantaged (below 165% of LICO).
- Clients often self-identified as members of at-risk groups – were experiencing family violence issues, immigrants, Indigenous, living with a disability and/or LGBTQ. (No one self-identified as trans or as a sex-worker.)

What was influencing their access to justice?

- Clients had heard about Rise primarily from other legal or social service providers.
- Access to Rise's services was influenced by its welcoming environment, location, waitlist, financial costs related to transportation/parking and the forms which needed to be filled out.
- Many of these women were self-representing, including those who self-represented with Rise's services.

To what extent did Rise meet their legal needs?

- Clients primarily received summary advice and limited retainers from Rise. (Rise has discontinued signing full representation retainers due to the need to keep files moving through the clinic, though Rise does go to court on a certain issue as part of limited retainer.)
- Of the 417 matters which did proceed to Rise programs during the one year timeframe, at least 40% were resolved at intake or clients received a referral or summary advice (only). At least 47% clients received or were receiving limited retainer services related to these matters. Data on the services provided on the remaining 13% of the matters were not available.
- Surveyed clients who had finished receiving Rise services generally agreed they had *increased their understanding of their legal options for dealing with their family law matter* (79% of 38 clients). A majority of surveyed clients who had finished receiving Rise services were *satisfied overall with these services* (71% of 41 clients), would *return to Rise if they needed legal help in the future* (82% of 38 clients) or would *refer others to Rise* (79% of 38 clients). Satisfied clients may have been more likely to respond to these exit surveys.

- The primary service outcome for the 89 closed limited retainer files was document drafting (36%), followed by summary advice/education/advocacy (14%) and information packages (8%). Of the 89 closed limited retainer files, 9% were completely finished – resolved outside of court (6%) or after court hearing (3%). The primary legal outcome for these closed limited retainer files were:
 - Increased child access/parenting time = 11%
 - Increased child support = 9%
 - Divorce = 7%

- Forty-five percent of the 20 limited retainer clients surveyed, felt Rise had helped them achieve a better outcome very much or somewhat. Twenty-five percent agreed their financial situation had improved as a result of any of these matters being resolved. These clients rated Rise’s access and environment most highly. A majority also agreed that their student clinician or lawyer had listened to them, explained the legal process, helped them understand their options and was knowledgeable/competent. Fifteen clients interviewed one-on-one expressed a deep appreciation for Rise services, while also commenting on their mixed experiences with timeliness, service continuity and student clinicians.

- The total project cost per client was:
 - \$1,144 per client matter = \$477,000 / 417 client matters
 - \$2,409 per limited retainer matter = \$477,000 / 198 limited retainer (non-summary advice) matters

Students employed and mentored

- Between Sept 2017 and August 2018, 15 UBC law students gained experience practising legal, community lawyer, ethics and practice management skills according to their supervisors’ evaluations.

- Ten of these students completed surveys about their experiences at Rise. They mentioned their best experiences were being able to help clients and their positive reactions. What they would most like to be improved was some of the administrative processes and training received.

- Nine of the 10 students completing exit surveys agreed they were *as or more likely to practice family law* than when they started. All 10 students completing exit surveys agreed they were *as or more likely to do pro bono work* in the future. Several noted it continued or increased their previous interest in this work.

Rise connected with other community members

- Rise developed and maintained relationships with community members and other agencies between Sept 2017 and August 2018. This included with its Board members, Community Advisory Committee members, trainers/teachers, donors as well as others involved in voluntary capacities.
- Rise also works in connection with other social and legal service providers. Rise refers potential clients to these providers. And Rise's own clients often first hear about Rise from them.

Conclusions and Possible Actions

This one-year evaluation found that all aspects of the Rise theory of change and logic model were operating as intended to some extent between Sept 2017 and August 2018. Women received assistance, accessed legal services and learned about their legal rights and responsibilities. There was also evidence for earlier and more comprehensive resolution to their legal problems in a few cases. In certain cases the legal matters being addressed would contribute to improving their financial situations. Students and community outputs and short-term outcomes were also experienced.

Actions for Rise to consider moving forward include to:

- Continue to provide the current range of services in a timely manner – from referrals/assistance to summary advice and limited retainers (including court support). Investigate additional options for enhancing services for more complex clients. Work to enhance service continuity and the professionalism of student clinicians.
- Continue to refine Rise's infrastructure/processes e.g., through triaging and remote services delivery, requiring students to have taken family law, strategic planning, professional development and performance feedback activities.
- Extend Rise's scope of services e.g., more lawyers (including articling/early-career) and volunteers, increased language capacity, legal services beyond family law and through work on reforming family law practice.
- Access additional, sustainable, funding.

1.0 Rise Women's Legal Centre

Rise Women's Legal Centre is a community legal centre, based in Vancouver, British Columbia, serving all individuals who self-identify as women. Its objectives are:

- (1) To improve access to justice by providing a range of unbundled family law services to low income women in BC.
- (2) To provide family law training and support for students interested in practicing in this field after graduation.
- (3) To work cooperatively and effectively with other women-serving organizations within the community, in order to provide women with the widest range of available legal and non-legal services and avoid duplicating services.

Rise offers legal services by appointment only in the area of family law. Services range from summary advice at initial client appointments, to limited retainer services to help clients prepare for their court proceedings, to courtroom appearances for selected Provincial Court matters. Legal services are provided by upper year student clinicians from the Peter A Allard School of Law, at the University of British Columbia, and legal services are generally available only during academic terms.

To supplement the student clinic, Rise also runs a small External Summary Advice (EAS) program, which provides clients an hour of summary advice from a qualified volunteer family lawyer.

From August 2017 through August 2018, Rise received funding from the Law Foundation of BC to implement a Remote Services project to experiment with the use of technology in legal services. Rise received some supplementary funding from the Face the World Foundation to include work on protocols for a Virtual Legal Clinic to provide summary advice by video conference to women staying in transition homes in 2018, and from the Health & Sciences Association to train volunteer lawyers to use videoconferencing technology in a safe and secure manner.

In 2018, Rise also secured funding from the Law Foundations of British Columbia and Ontario for an Intake and Triage Project and Family Law Incubator Project. The Triage Project is run by a Case Manager with expertise in legal education and a background in social work. Critically, the Case Manager has been made a designated paralegal and commissioner for swearing oaths and is improving Rise's ability to assist clients during transition periods between terms. She is also supervising a social work practice student, thereby extending non-legal supports at Rise.

A logic model captures the intended outcomes of the Centre in relation to its activities, dividing them into short, medium and long-term outcomes. A theory of change and logic model for Rise are presented in the Appendix.

2.0 Legal Services Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is for Rise to be able to:

- meet its reporting requirements and
- refine its operations using feedback on client and stakeholder experiences.

The evaluation covers services provided by Rise between September 1, 2018 (start of Term 5) and August 31, 2018 (end of Term 7). It was conducted between August 2017 and October 2018.

It uses information gathered from:

- Clio case management database extracts for 387 clients and 417 matters – clients or matters with files open and/or closed in Terms 5, 6 and 7 (to August 31, 2018)
- Triaging data for Term 7 for 202 clients – including 116 clients whose matters received only information and referrals at the Triage Stage.
- Program documents and emails including the project’s grant application and progress reports
- 48 client exit surveys completed by:
 - 30 of 67 (45%) student clinic limited retainer clients. These 67 clients were those receiving limited retainer services from student clinicians, whose files closed in Terms 5, 6 and 7 and for whom contact information could be provided to the evaluation. The total number of closed student clinic files with limited retainers during this timeframe was 89. The 30 responding clients completed one of two types of surveys – 20 clients completed full surveys and 10 completed “one-question” surveys asking only about overall satisfaction.
 - 7 of 36 (19%) external summary advice clients. The total number of closed external summary advice files during the one-year evaluation timeframe was 36. Surveys were received through September 2018.
 - 11 of 37 (30%) remote services clients. All 37 clients receiving remote services were invited to do the survey. However, the total number of remote services files during the one-year evaluation timeframe was 35. It is not possible to confirm whether the 11 clients responding to the survey all received services within the one-year time frame but they have all been included in this report.
 - *None of the Exit surveys completed by three Wills clinic clients were for clients during the one year evaluation timeframe. While the total number of files open for wills during this time was 15, all three of the surveys were completed prior to the evaluation’s one-year timeframe.*

- Lawyer surveys for 12 of 36 (33%) external summary advice clients. The total number of closed external summary advice files during the one-year evaluation timeframe was 36. Surveys were received through September 2018.
- Stakeholder surveys completed by 28 of 49 (57%) Rise stakeholders in July 2018. Responding stakeholders included 5 Board members, 5 Community Advisory Committee members, 6 trainers/teachers, 4 donors as well as others involved in voluntary capacities including the provision of legal support and fundraising. Many stakeholders were involved with Rise in multiple ways. Most (22) had been involved with Rise for at least two years.
- Student evaluation forms completed by Rise lawyers for all 15 students working during Terms 5, 6 and 7.
- Student exit surveys completed by 10 of the 15 students working during Terms 5, 6 and 7.
- Student alumni follow up surveys completed by 18 of the 30 students working during Terms 1 to 6 in August 2018.
- 15 one-on-one interviews and 2 focus groups (8 participants) with clients in September/October 2018.

Because the Centre is new and the evaluation had a one year timeframe, the evaluation process did not expect to be able to identify the success of the long-term intended impacts. Even medium outcomes were hard to capture in time for some reporting deadlines as often these are identifiable only six months to a year or more after services are received. As well, medium-term outcomes were also more likely to be affected by factors outside the Centre's sphere of influence. However, as it was a full-year initiative, we were able to apply a range of tools to capture data on the short-term outcomes and began to see the likely success of medium-term outcomes as well.

This report presents findings on improving clients' access to justice in Section 3. The following section presents findings on client experiences. Section 5 covers Rise's costs and coverage. Section 6 presents student experience findings. Section 7 covers knowledge transfer activities. Section 8 describes the evaluations strengths and limitations. Section 9 discusses the evaluation findings. Section 10 presents the one-year evaluation's conclusions and possible actions.

This report may be shared with other lawyers and organizations who are seeking to improve access to justice in BC. As well, the lessons learned by Rise will be incorporated into its student curriculum and ongoing activities.

3.0 Improving Population Access to Justice

Rise worked with **387 women and 417 client matters¹** between **September 2017 and August 2018**. This timeframe comprised Terms 5, 6 and 7 at Rise. Files opened by term and program are presented in the exhibit below. Forty-one percent (171) of these matters continued to be open as of August 31, 2018.

	Files Open between Sept 2017 and Aug 2018	%
Term File Was Opened		
Term 1 (May to Aug 2016)	13	3%
Term 2 (Sep to Dec 2016)	29	7%
Term 3 (Jan to Apr 2017)	33	8%
Term 4 (May to Aug 2017)	51	12%
Term 5 (Sept to Dec 2017)	78	19%
Term 6 (Jan to Apr 2018)	88	21%
Term 7 (May to Aug 2018)	125	30%
Total	417	100%
Term File Was Closed		
Term 5 (Sept to Dec 2017)	58	14%
Term 6 (Jan to Apr 2018)	73	18%
Term 7 (May to Aug 2018)	115	28%
Not closed as of Aug 31, 2018	171	41%
Total	417	100%
Program		
Student Clinician	331	79%
Summary Advice (External)	36	9%
Remote Access	35	8%
Wills	15	4%
Total	417	100%

The client data percentages reported below represent a minimum (“at least”) – as the information may only be available when it is relevant to a client’s legal matter(s).

¹ Including 10 women who Rise worked with on two or more client matters during this time. Information on clients associated with a further 20 matters is not included in the Rise database.

In Term 7, a new Triaging Case Manager worked with 116 women who did not proceed further as Rise clients. These 116 women are not included in the client numbers above. Ten of these women were determined not to be eligible for Rise services (e.g., as they already had a lawyer or did not live in BC) or did not respond to enquiries made by the Case Manager.

The remaining **106 women received the following services from the Triaging Case Manager:**

- **Assistance (10)** – help with applying for legal aid or information provided e.g., on how to find a mediator
- **Referral to a (future) Rise program (18)** - the Student Clinic (10), Remote Services (3) or External Summary Advice (5)
- **Referrals to other services (78)** including low bono services, APB, CLAS, LSLAP, VLMFSS, BWSS, FMEP, FSGVictoria

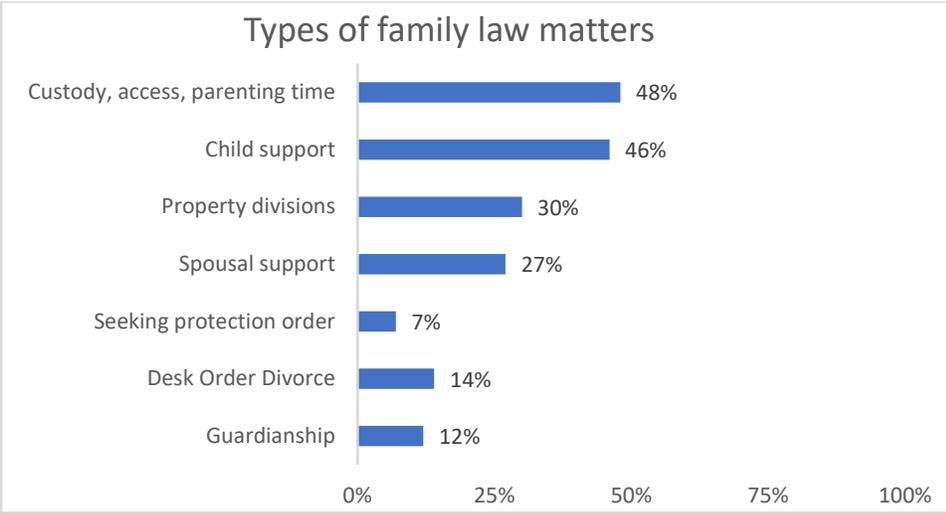
3.1 Prevalence of legal problems

Clients working with Rise between Sept 2017 and Aug 2018 accessed legal services for matters of family law, child protection, immigration and wills during this year.

Most of these women needed legal services for family law matters affecting their children. A few needed help with more than one matter during this time.

At least 48% of the 417 matters during this year related to custody/access/parenting time and 46% were child support matters. Women also needed legal services for other matters which would contribute to their *financial self-sufficiency*, including property division (30%) and spousal support (27%). At least 7% of the matters were seeking protection orders for women or their children. However, at least 40% of these matters were with clients experiencing *family violence* issues.

Exhibit 1 – Types of Family Law Matters



Base = 417 Rise clients (multiple responses possible)

Examples of Client Needs

<i>Client needs advice on how to leave verbally and emotionally abusive partner</i>
<i>Client wants a divorce, spousal support, child support and parenting time with children</i>
<i>Client needs help in changing an order respecting parenting time and possibly child/spousal support.</i>
<i>Existing separation agreement, although it may need redrafting for clarity. CL seeks uncontested divorce order.</i>
<i>Client is seeking extension of protection order or conduct order and help preparing pleadings/mediation brief for separation agreement re: parenting.</i>
<i>Client seeking sole guardianship, child support, and spousal support from ex outside the country</i>
<i>Seeking assistance with BCSC process and JCC. Issues related to spousal support and property division.</i>
<i>Spouse wants to relocate child out of the country; client opposes this; parties are in mediation; OP is threatening to bring an application to take child out of country.</i>

3.2 Response to legal needs

At least 23% of the matters were with clients had accessed prior legal services for their legal needs – including free and paid legal services – before coming to Rise. These included clients who had exhausted their legal aid coverage accessing prior services. At least 22% of the matters were with clients who had applied for legal aid before or during their contact with Rise.

At least 30% of the matters had ongoing court proceedings – about half of these were Provincial Court and half were Supreme Court proceedings. At least 9% had an upcoming court date.

3.3 Fair and equitable access to justice

Most women receiving Rise services were parents with children under 19 years of age. About two-in-five self-identified as solo parents.

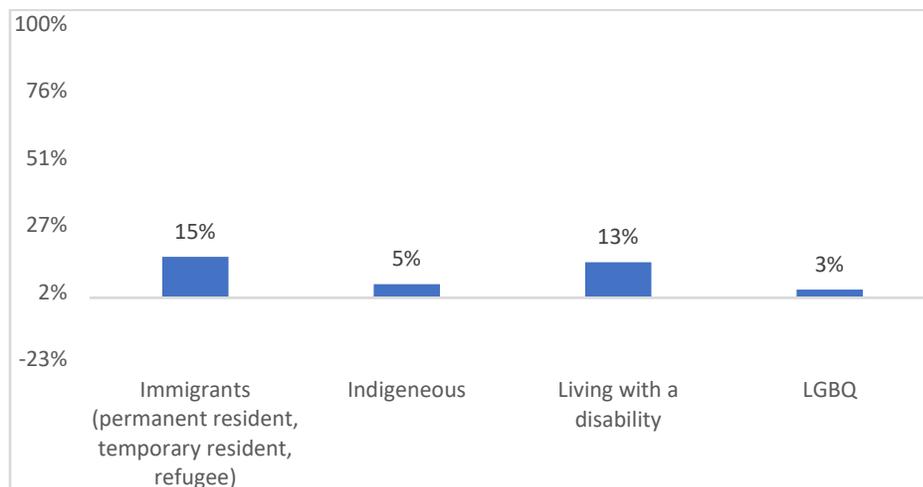
At least 79% were living below LICO or were economically disadvantaged (below 165% of LICO). Thirteen percent had incomes 165% of LICO or above. (Income level was unknown for 8%.) At least 13% were on government assistance.

Many of these women were members of at-risk groups. At least 40% were experiencing family violence issues (as reported above). As well, 33% self-identified as members of one or more other at-risk groups:

- Immigrants (15%)
- Indigenous (5%)
- Living with a disability (13%)
- LGBQ (3%).

(NB: none self-identified as trans or as a sex worker)

Exhibit 2 – Members of At-Risk Groups



Base = 387 Rise clients (multiple responses possible)

4.0 Improving User Experience of Access to Justice

4.1 User experience of obstacles to access to justice

Most often clients had heard about Rise through other legal or social service providers. Family and friends were next most common, followed by online and media sources.

Access to Rise's services was influenced by its welcoming environment, location, waitlist, financial costs related to transportation/parking and the forms which needed to be filled out.

Rise intends to facilitate access by its convenient location, affordability, front desk service and evening hours twice a month.

The 15 interviewed clients reported no issues or barriers with accessibility. They consistently described their initial contacts as having a friendly tone. Personal safety protocols were discussed with each woman; no one suggested feeling unsafe at Rise, however there were concerns raised in terms of personal safety outside of Rise. Interview and focus group clients commented on their deep appreciation of the services and the need for them. Focus group clients also commented on the need for translation and help with understanding the Canadian legal system among newcomers as well as cultural differences in attitudes and expectations around divorce.

Student clinic limited retainer clients surveyed rated Rise's access and environment positively. They were asked specifically if there were any barriers or accessibility issues which made it difficult to access legal services at Rise. Seven of the 20 responding clients said no and six said yes e.g., location/transportation/working remotely (4), financial related to transportation/parking (2), forms to fill out and timeliness.

These student clinic limited retainer clients were also asked what they would have done *without assistance from Rise*. **Fourteen of the 20 responding clients said they would have represented themselves** (including two who noted that they self-represented even with Rise's services). Two would have hired a lawyer and two would not have pursued the issue. Five responding clients would have tried to find other assistance. A few clients mentioned they would have taken more than one action.

4.2 Quality of user experience of the justice system

Of the 417 matters which did proceed to Rise programs during the one year timeframe, at least 40% (166) were resolved at intake or clients received a referral or summary advice (only) about them for a variety of reasons including:

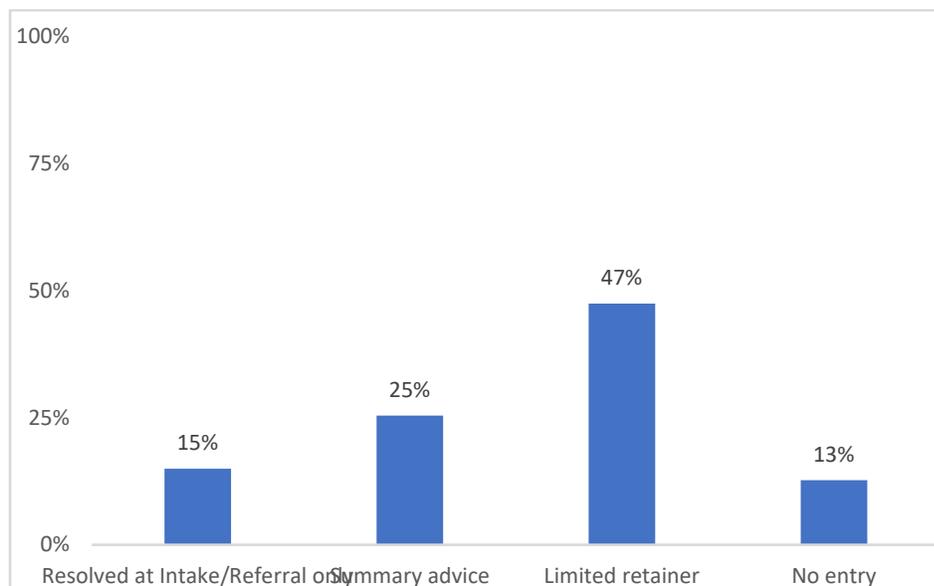
- clients being able to access other legal services (private lawyers, LSS lawyers or would qualify for legal aid); and,
- clients only wanting summary legal advice.

At least 47% (198) clients received or were receiving limited retainer services related to these matters, including:

- Drafting of documents for court (113)
- Opinion or information packages (66)
- Representation in Provincial or Supreme Court (17)
- Other e.g., with correspondence or a will (2)

Data on the services provided on the remaining 13% (53) of the matters were not available.

Exhibit 3 – Primary Service Provided



Base = 417 Rise clients (primary response only)

Increased Understanding of Matter and Options

Surveyed clients who had finished receiving Rise services generally agreed they had increased their understanding of their legal options for dealing with their family law matter (79% of 38 clients). Surveyed clients with files which closed during the evaluation's one year timeframe included Student Clinic clients with limited retainers, External Summary Advice program clients and Remote Services project clients.

Student Clinic - A majority of the 20 surveyed student clinic limited retainer clients (with closed files) agreed the assistance they received from Rise had:

- helped them with understanding the legal process for dealing with their family law matter (16 responses)
- their options for addressing their legal issues (14).
- provided them with information about their legal rights and entitlements they did not have before coming to Rise (14)
- helped them to make choices about how to deal with their family law matter (12),
- increased their confidence in dealing with it (11) and/or
- allowed them to clearly present their positions to the opposing party and/or their lawyer (11).

External Summary Advice - Surveyed clients were asked whether they had left with a *better idea of their legal options for dealing with their family law matter*. All seven responding clients agreed that they had. In particular, they commented that they were given all the details they needed, shown how easy it is to use the support calculator and given next steps.

All seven external summary advice clients agreed they received the help they wanted. They commented that they received the information they needed as well as forms and an understanding of next steps.

The EAS Lawyers reported that all 12 of their clients left with a better understanding of the legal process and their options for dealing with their family law matter. This included increased client understanding of legal issues such as divorce, spousal support, division of family assets, child access, custody, support and protection.

Remote Services - Surveyed clients were asked whether they had a *better idea of their legal options for dealing with their family law matter* after working with the program lawyer. Nine of the eleven responding clients agreed that this worked for them fully (3) or partly (6). Those responding “partly” noted that they received information from their meeting with the Program Lawyer, but that this served to reinforce how few options they had. Two responding client disagreed that they had a better idea of their legal options but did not provide feedback on why.

The Program Lawyer reported that all clients left with a better understanding of the legal process and their options for dealing with their family law matter – either fully (28) or partly (9). This included increased client understanding of specific legal issues e.g., child/spousal support, court procedures, division of property, separation agreement, order enforcement, the FLA,

Supreme and Provincial court differences and next steps. It also included the results of the unbundled legal services provided.

Overall Satisfaction, Intent to Reuse and Refer

A majority of surveyed clients who had finished receiving Rise services were satisfied overall with these services (71% of 41 clients), would return to Rise if they needed legal help in the future (82% of 38 clients) or would refer others to Rise (79% of 38 clients). Satisfied clients may have been more likely to respond to these exit surveys.

Surveyed clients with files which closed during the evaluation's one year timeframe included Student Clinic clients with limited retainers, External Summary Advice program clients and Remote Services project clients.

Student Clinic - Surveyed student clinic limited retainer clients were somewhat satisfied with the services they received. Fourteen of the 20 clients surveyed agreed they would go to Rise if they needed legal help in the future while one provided neutral responses on this question. As well, 15 would refer others to Rise (one neutral).

Sixty percent of 30 clients surveyed agreed they were very or somewhat satisfied with their experience with Rise Women's Legal Centre. Ten percent were neutral and 30% were very or somewhat dissatisfied with their experience. Clients were satisfied when the services they received helped them. They were dissatisfied with the amount of time it took to receive services after their application and when they did not receive the help they needed.

External Summary Advice – Six of the seven clients surveyed agreed they would go to Rise if they needed legal help in the future while one provided a neutral response on this question. As well, all seven would refer others to Rise. Similarly, all seven clients agreed they were satisfied overall with the quality of the services they received from Rise.

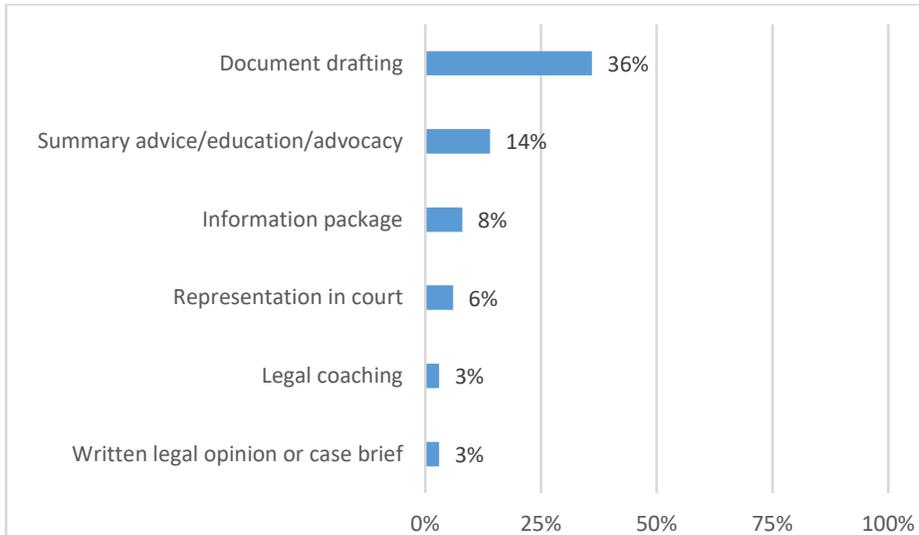
Remote Services - Seven of the eleven clients surveyed agreed they would go to Rise if they needed legal help in the future while three provided neutral responses on this question. As well, eight would refer others to Rise (two neutral). Four clients with closed files were asked if they were satisfied overall with the quality of services they received from Rise. These four clients agreed they were satisfied overall with the quality of these services.

4.3 Effectiveness of justice system in addressing user legal problems

Of the 198 matters with limited retainer files during the year, one-half (89) were still open as of August 31, 2018 and the other half (89) were closed.

The primary service outcome for these 89 closed limited retainer files was document drafting (36%), followed by summary advice/education/advocacy (14%) and information packages (8%).

Exhibit 4 – Primary Service Outcome – Limited Retainers



Base = 89 Rise clients with closed limited retainers (primary response only)

Of the 89 closed limited retainer files, 9% were completely finished – resolved outside of court (6%) or after court hearing (3%). Twelve percent had met the terms of the retainer. Forty percent had no resolution or the resolution was still pending when they were closed. And the situation had changed so that the issue was dropped on three percent. The degree of completion for the remaining 35% of the files was not available. When it comes to resolution of matters it can be noted that this is in part due to Rise’s provision of unbundled services - as this means that, by definition, Rise is only working on particular tasks, not taking the file to completion.

The 20 surveyed student clinic limited retainer clients reported that the status of the legal issues they came to Rise about, at the time they were surveyed, was:

- All issues have been resolved = 30%
- Some issues have been resolved or settled, but others still need to be addressed = 25%
- No issues are yet resolved = 40%
- Other = 5%

Clients commented that their legal issues had been resolved due to the documents prepared and court orders obtained. They commented that their legal issues had not been resolved due to opposing party challenges/lack of legal representation, the lack of time/hours available for help, the need to still work on some issues/matters, because they lacked representation in court and/or because new issues had come up.

For the 11 clients with some or all of their legal issues resolved, the survey asked how helpful the information/assistance they received from Rise was in resolving these issues either in or out of court. Of these 11 clients, 8 found the information/assistance to have been very or somewhat helpful. They commented on how the documents helped them, their confidence was increased and/or they had what they needed to go forward. Two were neutral on the information/assistance provided, and one client had found it not very or not at all helpful. They commented on the information provided as coming too late, some of it being incorrect and receiving inconsistent information (different information from difference clinicians).

These surveyed clients were also asked whether or not they were able to avoid going to court as a result of the help received from Rise. Two clients responded yes and six clients responded no.

Thirteen of these surveyed clients commented on where they could have used more help. They mentioned:

- More court representation or support (6)
- More timely help (earlier) (4)
- Better outcomes (2)
- Overall (1) and more knowledge/guided student clinicians (1)

The 15 clients interviewed said that the services from Rise helped advance their cases, get them started or had a value in moving their family law case forward. A few said their cases remain unresolved. Four women reported hiring their own lawyer to resolve their case and two accessed other legal agencies to continue with their legal matters. All of the women in one of the focus groups described the relief they felt in finding legal support. Rise helped support *“decoding legal garble.”* The importance of understanding your legal rights and the process was very empowering for the group. This group also talked about the importance of additional supports so that women do not become further isolated. It was suggested that some form of referrals to support services, mentorship or shared experiences may be helpful.

4.4 Justice outcomes for the users

The primary legal outcome for the 89 closed limited retainer files were:

- **Increased child access/parenting time = 11%**
- **Increased child support = 9%**
- **Divorce = 7%**
- Decreased child access/parenting time = 3%
- Increased spousal support = 2%
- Property division = 2%
- Protection order obtained = 2%
- Not applicable or unknown = 63%

The 20 surveyed student clinic limited retainer clients were asked whether they felt that Rise had helped them achieve a better legal outcome than they would have achieved otherwise. **Forty-five percent of these 20 clients, felt Rise had helped them achieve a better outcome very much or somewhat**, 30% were neutral and 25% felt it had helped not much or not at all with achieving a better outcome. As noted above, in delivering unbundled services, Rise assists with particular tasks rather than all issues in a file.

Twenty-five percent agreed their financial situation had improved as a result of any of these matters being resolved. These included clients who mentioned they were now receiving more settled, consistent or new child support.

4.5 Appropriateness of the justice process

Surveyed clients were also asked about the appropriateness of various aspects of Rise’s services.

They rated Rise’s access and environment most highly. A majority also agreed that their student clinician or lawyer had listened to them, explained the legal process, helped them understand their options and was knowledgeable/competent.

	Student Clinic – Limited Retainer Clients	External Summary Advice Clients	Remote Services Clients
Total Surveyed	20	7	11
I was greeted promptly and politely at Rise’s office	18	7	
Rise is a safe space for women	17	7	
I was treated with respect	17	7	10
The application process was straightforward	17	6	10
It was easy to reach someone at Rise by phone or email		6	

	Student Clinic – Limited Retainer Clients	External Summary Advice Clients	Remote Services Clients
My student clinician/lawyer:			
Made an effort to find answers to all my legal questions.	14		
Helped me understand what my options were.	13	7	5
Explained how the legal process works with respect to my issue.	15	7	6
Listened to me and took the time to understand my legal issue.	15	7	9
Always asked me for instructions before taking action on my case.	12		
Kept me well informed about the progress of my case.	8		
Was knowledgeable and competent.	12	7	8
I was able to get in touch with my student clinician without difficulty (not including transition periods between terms).	9		
I am confident in the legal advice received from my clinician/lawyer.		7	6

According to the 15 clients interviewed one-on-one, initial wait times were frustrating and challenging - and particularly difficult for those women impacted by gender-based violence. **While interviewees expressed a deep appreciation for Rise services, they also commented on their mixed experiences with service continuity and student clinicians.** Some women reported getting clear information from the students and many did not. Some women expressed disappointment with the skill and competency of the students. The short semester timelines were frustrating and difficult for clients due to having to repeat their “stories”, resulting in emotional stress. There appeared to be a lack of communication about the legal process and what to expect and this often created more anxiety and lack of confidence in how cases were being managed.

A graphic depiction on focus group reflections on past service delivery by Maggie Miland visually depicts some of the comments expressed by the women in this focus group.



In May 2018, an experienced advocate joined the team and began to triage the files by sending women to other community organizations where appropriate; identifying clients who would qualify for legal aid and helping them apply/appeal; connecting women with higher incomes to low bono counsel, and making sure that the clients coming into the student program are appropriate for students. This was an important shift in the triage process and there are numerous other ideas put forward by the women interviewed that may help tighten up the triage and continuity issues experienced. These women also mentioned the need for counselling supports, more knowledge about duty counsel and the role they play as well as more in-court assistance.

Appropriateness of Service Delivery from a Stakeholder Perspective

Twenty-four of the 28 stakeholders surveyed commented on the impacts or outcomes Rise's provision of free and low-cost legal services has had for clients. They mentioned that Rise has:

- Provided legal support/services/access (15)
- Assisted women psychologically and financially (11)
- Achieved a resolution/meets an essential need (3)
- Educated and empowered women (1)

Twenty-five of these stakeholders commented on what Rise has done best in terms of serving clients. They mentioned that Rise has:

- Filled a gap in legal services in BC by providing access to legal services (16)
- Provided excellent legal information, advice and services to women – including marginalized women and those who do not have legal representation, in a professional manner (14)
- Provided students with skills and/or experience (6)
- Advocated (1)

Twelve stakeholders commented on practices which hadn't worked as well such as:

- Scope limitations (9) e.g., waitlist, gap in services when there are no students, conflicts, need for more services
- Other (3) e.g., too wide a range of services, wills/clinics in other locations, student recruitment

Twenty stakeholders commented on one or more practices Rise had already improved, such as:

- Practices/procedures/policies/plans (11) e.g., for student training/practice, working with clients, organizational (accounting)
- Intake/screening process (5)
- Service delivery/understanding of client needs (4)
- Funding sustainability (3)
- Community engagement (2)
- Organizational structure (1)

5.0 Improving Costs

The total Rise budget over the one year was estimated to be \$477,000 from multiple sources.

This budget covered hours spent with clients/on legal matters as well as time spent on administration, student learning, speaking and collaborative activities, etc.

The total project cost per client was:

- **\$1,144 per client matter = \$477,000 / 417 client matters**
- **\$2,409 per limited retainer matter = \$477,000 / 198 limited retainer (non-summary advice) matters.**

6.0 Students Employed and Mentored

In total, 15 UBC law students worked at Rise between Sept 2017 and Aug 2018:

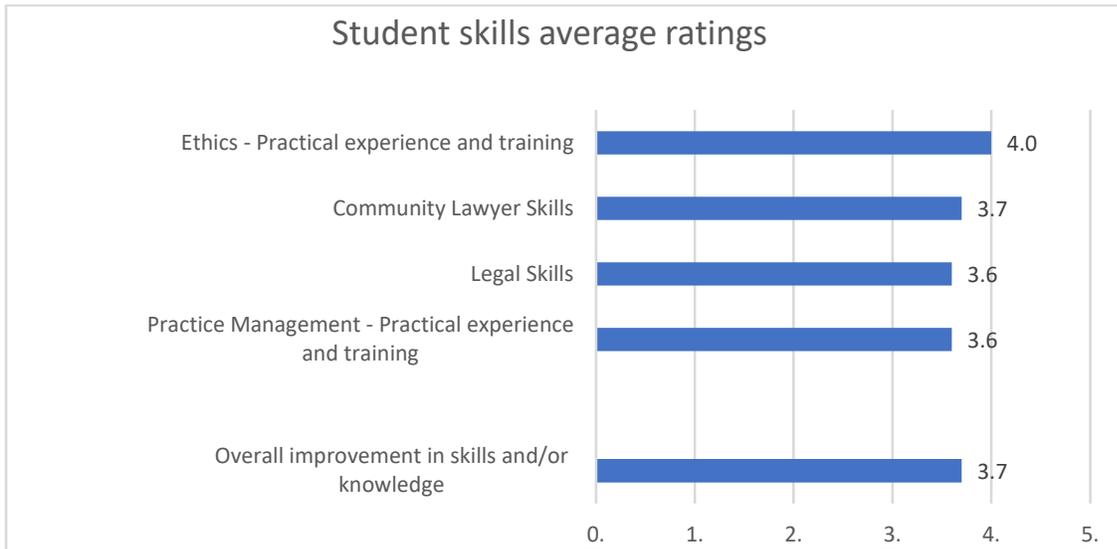
- four in Term 5 – Sept to Dec 2017
- six in Term 6 – Jan to Apr 2018
- five in Term 7 – May to Aug 2018

6.1 Students gained experience practising their skills

All 15 of these law students gained experience practising legal, community lawyer, ethics and practice management skills according to their supervisors' evaluations. Seventeen of the 18 sub-skills in these areas were also used by all 15 students (the one sub-skill area not used was representing clients in Supreme Court). Average ratings were highest for ethics and community lawyer skills. Average ratings were lowest for practice management skills.

While most students came into the Centre with relatively high levels of each skill set, each student *applied or improved their skills and/or knowledge about substantive law and the practice of law* according to their supervisors' evaluations.

Exhibit 5 – Student Skills Average Ratings



Note: Ratings for sub-skills by area presented in the Appendix.

Ten of the 15 students completed exit surveys. All 10 of these students agreed their *skills and/or knowledge about substantive law and the practice of law improved* by this experience.

“By writing legal opinions and giving advice to clients, the law I learned in class was solidified. I also learned many new things such as how to draft legal documents like affidavits and NoFCs. The orientation month also helped me understand how our law courts operate.” – Law Student (2018)

When asked about their best experiences at Rise, students mentioned when they were able to help clients and their positive reactions, being co-involved in the decision-making files not just processing others’ decisions, the legal experiences they had including at hearings and working on documents, as well as learning from experienced lawyers.

When asked about their worst experiences at Rise or about what could be improved, students mentioned opportunities for improving administrative processes and areas for additional training. They were also interested in additional feedback on their work and caseload management challenges and examples of when they were not able to help clients on files not just processing others’ decisions, the legal experiences they had including at hearings and working on documents, as well as learning from experienced lawyers.

options were. Surveyed clients agreed less often that their student clinicians were knowledgeable and that they kept them well informed about the progress of their case.

6.2 Students intend to practice family law and do pro bono work in the future

Seven of the 10 students completing exit surveys agreed they were *more likely to practice family law* than when they started. In addition, 2 noted it continued their previous interest in this work. They reported being encouraged to practice family law by their personal interests, their interactions with clients and the potential for them to have a positive meaningful impact on someone's life. They reported being discouraged to practice family law by a lack of articling opportunities, the intense emotional demands and the potential to have a big negative impact on someone's life.

Ten of the 18 student alumni who completed follow up surveys were working in family law – either fully (7) or partly (3). The remainder were working in civil litigation, labour law, administrative law, aboriginal law or business.

“This clinical experience confirmed my impression that family law is an interesting, challenging and complex area. I am more likely to practice family law than when I started.” – Law Student (2017)

Three students completing exit surveys agreed they were *more likely to do pro bono work* in the future. Seven noted it continued their previous interest in this work.

Eleven of the 18 student alumni who completed follow up surveys were doing pro bono work – either fully (5) or partly (5). A few others reported they were not yet signed up or had not yet had a pro bono opportunity come up.

“...I volunteered [with other organizations] prior to Rise. From those, I had a fair understanding of how difficult it was for people to have access to justice. However, hearing the supervising lawyers discuss it, reading about legal aid cuts and meeting clients at Rise, really brought home the issue. I will do pro bono work in the future. – Law Student (2018)

Twelve of the 18 student alumni respondents said their externship at Rise had an impact on their ability to find and/or succeed in their articles – either very much (7) or quite a lot (5). Lessons they learned at Rise that are currently serving them in their legal careers included: how to work with clients, how to interact with other lawyers, familiarity with court documents and practices, lessons from the training in family violence and better time management.

Sixteen of these students reported they left Rise with a greater awareness of community resources – either very much (6) or quite a lot (10).

Rise was an incredible experience and has made articling a much smoother transition. Meeting other lawyers and working with the lawyers at Rise helped me, as a student, feel a part of the legal community and feel a shared sense of responsibility to give back. I do think the hours required are a lot and is not always acknowledged. – Law Student Alumni

My term at Rise was enormously helpful in setting me up to be prepared to start articles. More than that, it gave me a vision of how law can be practised and why family law is important and worthwhile that has sustained me when I have felt frustrated and disillusioned with practising law. I am very grateful for the experience and all the support and guidance from the staff of Rise. – Law Student Alumni

Overall, I enjoyed my experience with the Rise externship and have expressed this enjoyment with others alongside the truth that the externship is serious and hard work. Nothing worth it has ever been easy, and I have so much respect for our supervising lawyers who continue to guide and work in this clinic and in this practice area. – Law Student Alumni

7.0 Connecting With Community

Rise developed and maintained relationships with community members and other agencies between Sept 2017 and August 2018.

Rise stakeholders were surveyed in July 2018. Most (22) of the 28 stakeholders surveyed had been involved with Rise for at least two years. **Responding stakeholders enjoyed diverse relationships with Rise.** They included five Board members, five Community Advisory Committee members, six trainers/teachers, four donors as well as others involved in voluntary capacities including the provision of legal support and fundraising. Many stakeholders were involved with Rise in multiple ways.

Rise also works in connection with other social and legal service providers. Rise refers potential clients to these providers. And Rise’s own clients often first hear about Rise from them.

Stakeholders were also asked whether Rise makes efficient use of existing social and legal resources in providing service and how Rise could improve in this area. Six stakeholders agreed Rise makes sufficient use of existing resources. Suggestions for improvements included more collaborations with social and legal resources (4), referrals to other services (2) and more funding (2).

8.0 Strengths and Limitations of the Evaluation

8.1 Strengths

The evaluation gathered information systematically across sources and time periods. The logic model, Access to Justice framework and evaluation questions were used to create an analytical framework for the research such that:

- the same measures were gathered for each Term in a consistent manner – and could be aggregated for a one-year total measures;
- findings were directly related to the centre’s theory of change, program logic and reporting requirements; and,
- this approach also supported triangulation of findings using mixed methods. For example, the same concepts of were used across all of the client-related data collection activities (case data, client and other surveys, document review) and the results integrated in this report.

8.2 Limitations

Only partial information is included on some of the evaluation measures:

- Some of the client data in the Clio client database is only available when it is relevant to a client’s legal matter. It is not available for all clients, but serves to confirm client experiences for a minimum sub-set of Rise clients.
- Only some clients responded to survey invitations. Clients receiving limited retainer services, external summary advice and remote services were sent survey invitations after their files were closed. Only 48 clients responded to the 140 survey invitations. In addition, 22 clients who received limited retainer services were not contacted for surveys for other reasons.

The evaluation has a one-year timeline and focuses on short-term and medium-term outcomes. It is not possible for an evaluation process to be able to identify the success of the long-term intended impacts within this timeframe. Even the medium outcomes were hard to capture in this timeframe. As well, medium-term outcomes are more likely to be affected by factors outside Rise’s sphere of influence. However, a range of tools to capture data on the short-term outcomes were applied and an indication of the likely success of medium-term outcomes achieved.

9.0 Discussion of Findings

There is enormous need for Rise's legal services. Between Sept 2017 and August 2018, almost 500 women came to Rise looking for services. Most often they became aware of Rise via other social or legal organizations. With many of the women initially waitlisted, some women had to move on without Rise's help and by the time others finally got an appointment with Rise there may have been little time left to help them. As well, there were women who came to Rise whose legal needs were beyond the scope of Rise's areas of focus. The clients who did receive Rise services were predominantly members of its intended client groups (BC parents, economically disadvantaged, with experience of family violence, etc.)

This need for services is greater than Rise's ability to provide them. The Student Clinician focus on unbundled services as well as the External Summary Advice, Remote Access and Triaging Projects increased the extent of the services Rise could provide to women during the one year period. Nevertheless, a majority of clients received limited levels of service.

While Rise was able to assist clients with "next steps" – they were unable to assist them with all of the legal services needed to resolve their matters. Student clinicians provided information and advice, drafted documents and legal opinions or briefs, provided legal coaching and represented clients in court. Other advocates gave summary advice. The Triaging Case Manager also provided assistance and referrals. However, only about 10% of closed limited retainer files had resolved all issues or had legal outcomes (increased child access/parenting time, child support, divorce etc.) at the time they were closed.

File complexity continues to be a concern for Rise. While unbundling services may work well for clients with simpler needs, for those with more complex needs – Rise's intended client population – they may be insufficient. However, effective work on complex files is challenged by the volume of files, the hours available to work on them, changeover in student clinicians and their levels of experience.

Students practiced law skills and gained experience, especially in the area of family law. Most students responding to exit surveys reported being as, or more, likely to do family law and pro bono work in the future. About one-half of the 18 student alumni surveyed reported they were currently working in the area of family law or doing pro bono work.

Rise also maintained and grew relationships with many other organizations in the community.

10.0 Conclusion and Possible Actions

This one-year evaluation found that all aspects of the Rise theory of change and logic model were operating as intended to some extent. Women received assistance, accessed legal services and learned about their legal rights and responsibilities. There was also evidence for earlier and more comprehensive resolution to their legal problems in a few cases. In certain cases the legal matters being addressed would contribute to improving their financial situations. Students and community outputs and short-term outcomes were also experienced.

Actions for Rise to consider moving forward include to:

- **Continue to provide the current range of services in a timely manner** – from referrals/assistance to summary advice and limited retainers (including court support). Investigate additional options for enhancing services for more complex clients. Work to enhance service continuity and the professionalism of student clinicians.
- **Continue to refine Rise’s infrastructure/processes** e.g., through triaging and remote services delivery, requiring students to have taken family law, strategic planning, professional development and performance feedback activities.
- **Extend Rise’s scope of services** e.g., more lawyers (including articling/early-career) and volunteers, increased language capacity, legal services beyond family law and through work on reforming family law practice.
- **Access additional, sustainable, funding.**

Client Comments

<i>I have actually referred Rise to some friends whose mother was presented with divorce papers by her spouse and I said not to sign anything until she had legal advice and told her about Rise.</i>
<i>Highly recommended and very happy women have this resource!!! Extremely helpful and i feel very fortunate that i was able to benefit from this organization. Keep on doing what you're doing!!! Many women are in need!!!</i>
<i>May take the timeline of documents preparation into consideration, but I can understand Rise women has a lot inquiries</i>
<i>The more time that went on the more I lost my confidence in pursuing my parenting time. I wish it would have gotten started right away</i>
<i>They weren't able to help me.</i>
<i>If they could extend the area of assistance.</i>
<i>I was not legally represented by anyone at rise and I did not get a court appearance representation. Those two things could have helped me if I had access to this help. Not sure if it was because an appeal is hard to do, and time consuming, or if it was because I was from outside Vancouver, but I do think Court appearance could have helped me a lot.</i>
<i>I believe the people at Rise did their best to try to help me it is just frustrating to go through that and then basically have to start all over. Not Rise's fault though.</i>
<i>I was happy with the legal advice I received from Rise. If there wasn't a gap in semesters I probably would have continued there.</i>
<i>Because I had multiple student clinicians I could not honestly answer the last few questions. Some clinicians were very good with communication, others had very poor skills (quite demeaning). I think this kind of service works best with smaller cases that can be dealt with in a small amount of time. It was very frustrating to wait for a new clinician and sometimes start from the beginning.</i>
<i>You guys are doing an amazing job offering these services to vulnerable women. I will 100% recommend Rise to anyone I know needing a safe place to go and receive advice and help without judgement.</i>
<i>I thought my case was fairly straightforward and was told that they couldn't help me. Because of that, I'm forced to walk away from all joint assets of my marriage and negotiate parenting time that we've had in place for years. Status quo. The reason is that I can't represent myself in Supreme Court. I'm very disappointed that it wasn't conveyed to me prior to the application that they couldn't help in a straightforward case.</i>
<i>I am very grateful your service exists. Thank you</i>
<i>Many thanks for your awesome job!!!</i>

Source: Limited Retainer Closed Files Survey

Appendix A – Rise Theory of Change and Logic Model

Theory of Change:

Providing legal services to individual women will help them resolve their legal problems and ease the systemic problem of unequal access to justice.

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
<i>what activities the Centre undertakes</i>	<i>what is produced through those activities</i>	<i>the changes or benefits that result from the outputs</i>		
Provide legal services to women	<p>Women receive assistance including: referrals, summary advice, limited retainer and representation services</p> <p>Women receive assistance with matters in family law, child protection law, and other areas of law as identified</p>	<p>Women access legal advice and representation</p> <p>Women learn about their legal rights and responsibilities</p> <p>Women receive earlier and more comprehensive resolution to their (legal) problems</p>	<p>More women access legal services</p> <p>More women resolve their legal problems</p>	<p>Better access to justice for women</p> <p>Better social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities</p>
Train and mentor law students in family law, community lawyering, identifying systemic issues and other areas	<p>Students receive experience working with lawyers and clients at the Centre</p>	<p>Students improve their skills in family law, community law and with systemic issues</p> <p>Students continue/increase their interest in practicing in these areas</p>	<p>More students are encouraged to practice family law and to serve marginalized, under-served and low-income clients in their future legal practices</p>	<p>More graduates working with marginalized populations, serving low income clients and/or practicing family law 3 to 5 years after graduation (or externship)</p>
<p>Communicate with other organizations</p> <p>- on services being provided</p> <p>- to share best practices for women-centred legal clinics, community lawyering and improving access to justice in family law</p>	<p>Information on services being provided shared with other organizations serving similar clients</p> <p>Best practices shared within the Centre and externally through lectures, workshops, articles/publications and meetings with stakeholders</p>	<p>Centre staff, other lawyers and communities learn about best practices in these areas</p>	<p>Duplicate services avoided/ better integration of services provided</p> <p>Centre staff, other lawyers and communities increase their use of these best practices</p>	<p>Better outcomes for women, families and communities</p>

Appendix B – Student Data - Sub-Skills Average Ratings

<i>Scale used = (Low) 1 2 3 4 5 (High) and n/a</i>	Average
1. Ethics – Practical experience and training in ethics	4.0
· demonstrates courtesy and professionalism in all dealings with clients and opposing parties	4.4
· recognizes circumstances that give rise to ethical problems and responds appropriately	3.7
2. Practice Management – Practical experience and training in practice management	3.6
· effective client communication, development and relations	3.7
· appropriate timekeeping, record keeping and file maintenance	3.3
· teamwork and good relations with co-workers and office staff	4.2
· prioritizing deadlines and workload	3.3
3. Legal Skills	3.6
· conducting interviews of clients using appropriate questioning techniques, explaining the legal situation clearly and accurately and ensuring there is a mutual understanding with clients regarding retainers, fees and instructions	3.6
· analyzing clients' problems based on the law, the facts and the clients' circumstances, developing, assessing and recommending options for resolution and preparing a plan for implementation	3.5
· legal research, including identifying issues, selecting resources and recording, analyzing, applying and communicating research results	3.4
· writing legal opinions and other communications in a clear, well-organized and succinct manner	3.8
· drafting legal documents (such as affidavits and applications) that are well-organized, clear, succinct and that meet the intended purpose	3.7
· representing clients effectively, including preparing, presenting and arguing in Provincial Court	3.6
· representing clients effectively, including preparing, presenting and arguing in Supreme Court	n/a
· preparing for and negotiating on behalf of a client, documenting a settlement or providing independent legal advice to a client	3.7
4. Community Lawyer Skills	3.7
· nuanced understanding of family violence	3.7
· able to effectively communicate client voice	3.6
· sensitive to client needs	3.9
· able to relate individual client problems to larger system issues	3.7
5. Overall improvement in skills and/or knowledge about substantive law and practice of law during the externship	3.7