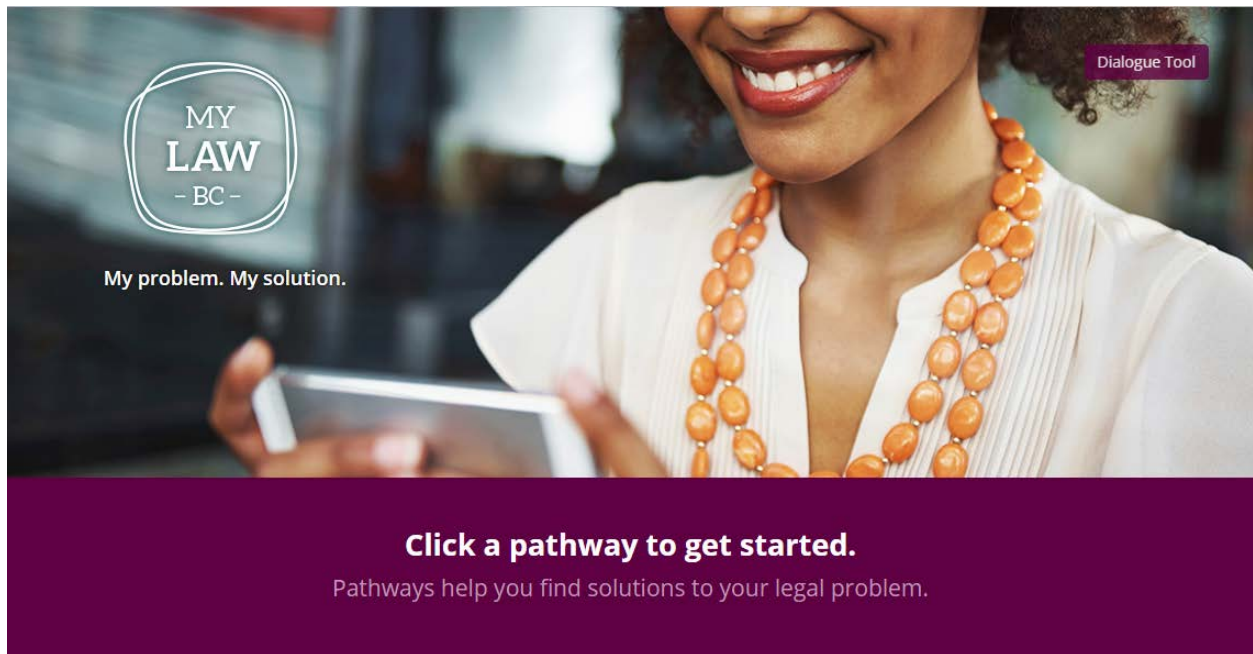


MyLawBC

Communication Kit



Click a pathway to get started.

Pathways help you find solutions to your legal problem.



**Legal
Services
Society**

British Columbia
www.legalaid.bc.ca

February 2017

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Using the kit

The Communication Kit is intended for advocates, community workers, and others who are presenting information about MyLawBC. It's meant to make your life easier. With this kit, you can quickly create presentations about MyLawBC and speak with confidence about the site.

The kit pre-packages the information you may need to talk about MyLawBC. It's intended to be modular. Just use whichever sections are appropriate for your presentation and disregard the rest.

The kit starts with background information about the MyLawBC project. It covers the site's guided pathways and action plans, delves into each of the topics covered, and outlines the resources users will receive from the site. Then it outlines what the Dialogue Tool does and how to use it. Next, it talks about the other services linked to from the site and the promotional materials available. Finally, it wraps up with a summary of recent improvements to MyLawBC, what's coming next, and which areas of the site we'd like you to feature in your presentations. Most of the kit is addressed directly to site users.

If you have questions about MyLawBC or this kit, please contact Candice Lee, Project Manager for MyLawBC, at candice.lee@lss.bc.ca. If you want to share this file with others, there's a link to it on the [MyLawBC About us page](#).

What is MyLawBC?

MyLawBC is an innovative new online platform from the Legal Services Society (LSS). This interactive website engages users to help them find solutions to common legal problems. Users can follow **guided pathways** that diagnose their legal problem, and then identify the next steps needed and resources and services available to help them resolve their legal issue.

Research shows that although there's a lot of legal information available online, users often find the volume overwhelming and have a hard time figuring out whether they can trust the information they find. MyLawBC addresses this issue by curating the information to give users just what they need, when they need it. Searching for legal information online can feel like getting off a plane in a city you don't know, where they speak a language you don't understand. MyLawBC is the friend waiting for you as you get off the plane.

MyLawBC is different from other websites, both in its approach to getting users to the information they need, and in how it presents that information. The guided pathway approach sets out a series of questions that users answer to help diagnose their legal issue. After they make their way through the pathway, they get an action plan that gives clear step-by-step instructions and materials that empower them to resolve their issue.

MyLawBC also contains other interactive tools like the Dialogue Tool, which can be used by couples to create a legally valid separation agreement.

Project history and background

The MyLawBC project started in 2014 and launched in May of 2016.

Over the course of the project, LSS consulted with justice system stakeholders including lawyers, mediators, legal information organizations, members of the public, service providers, and many others.

To create MyLawBC, LSS teamed up with two organizations: HiiL and Modria. The Hague Institute for the Internationalisation of Law (HiiL) is a research and advisory institute in the Netherlands. Together with the Dutch Legal Aid Board, they developed a site called Rechtwijzer (which roughly translates as law pointer), which was the inspiration for MyLawBC. Modria is a California tech firm that creates online dispute resolution software, some of which is used by MyLawBC.

Guided pathways

Guided pathways are a way for the site to diagnose a legal problem and lead the user to their next steps. As they use the site, they are asked a series of questions about themselves and their legal problem. MyLawBC uses their answers to determine the information and resources they receive when they reach the end of the pathway. This approach helps users navigate a complicated legal system to end up with only the information they need to resolve their problem.

Key notes about pathways:

- Personal information is safe. None of the users' answers in pathways are saved after they leave the site.
- Pathways must be completed in one sitting. They're designed to be short. Users need to set a dedicated amount of time to completing a pathway. Time estimates are available at the start of each pathway.
- Key resources that can help users make their way through the pathway are listed in the sidebar.
- See the [frequently asked questions](#) for more help.

Presentation notes:

- The best way to explain guided pathways is to show them in use. Choose a pathway and work your way through it with the audience.
- Use the Previous question buttons to go back and show your audience how the questions you get are based on previous answers.

Action plans

After the user completes their pathway, they get an action plan. This action plan is customized to their situation based on the answers they gave in the pathway. Action plans lay out the steps they need to

take to resolve their legal problem. They focus on giving them *only* the information they need, *when* they need it.

Action plans don't just provide legal information. Users will also find practical information and tools that can help with other problems related to their legal issue; for example, sample letters and forms, tips on negotiating, information about financial help and services, etc.

Action plans are composed of five parts. These are separated into tabs at the top of the page:

- 1 **Summary:** summarizes the important decisions the user made during the pathway. Users must check the list of bulleted items to make sure they're correct. If they aren't, they can use the back button to go back and correct their answers.
- 2 **Read first:** important background information the user needs before they proceed.
- 3 **Do now:** a clear set of immediate steps they can take to start resolving their problem.
- 4 **Do next:** next steps, which may be longer term.
- 5 **Get more help:** a list of resources and in-person services that can help users along the way.

Notes about action plans:

- Action plans can be downloaded as PDFs. Since answers are not saved by MyLawBC, this is the user's only record. We recommend that users download their action plan for future reference. If they don't, they'll have to go through the pathway again.
- MyLawBC provides only a short list of what we have determined to be the most useful resources. This list is restricted so we don't overwhelm the user with too many options.

Presentation notes:

- You can show how the resources and information in the action plan are related to the answers you gave in the pathway. For example, you may have said you were renting a home, in which case the endpoint will contain information about the Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre.
- If you aren't presenting the website live, make sure you download an action plan ahead of time to show the audience what they look like.

What MyLawBC covers

MyLawBC has eight pathways covering a range of topics that include:

- divorce and separation,
- abuse and family violence,
- foreclosure, and
- wills and personal planning.

Each of these pathways are detailed below. At the end of each pathway, users get an action plan (here's a sample [I've been served with a court document action plan](#)).

The MyLawBC pathway topics were chosen in consultation with justice system stakeholders.

Separation, divorce & family matters

Make a separation plan (20 minutes)

What it does: This pathway looks at the user's legal issues and their relationship with their spouse, then helps them figure out the best way for the two of them to work through those issues. It teaches them about the different ways they can work together through the separation process, and the tools and resources available to help them along the way.

The take-away: A better understanding of the law around separation, and knowledge of the tools available to help.

Key notes about/resources in this pathway:

- This pathway will ask questions about the user's relationship that aren't legal in nature. This may initially seem strange, but these questions are intended to make them think about their relationship before they answer important legal questions. They also help MyLawBC determine what resources and materials they might need.
- This pathway focuses on staying out of court. It directs users to information about how to resolve issues out of court and why they may prefer to settle things this way.
- [Coping with Separation Handbook](#): a booklet to help users deal with the emotional aspects of separation or divorce, how to talk to their friends and family about what's happening, how to help their children cope, and more.
- **Negotiation Kit**: an online booklet tailored to the user's particular situation (17 different versions available, depending on their situation). This booklet can help users:
 - learn tips and tricks about negotiation to prepare them for the separation process,
 - understand their rights and responsibilities before they start negotiating,
 - use our checklists to help ensure successful discussions, and
 - find out who can help.
- [All About Mediation](#): an infographic poster that explains what mediation is, why users might want to use it to solve their differences instead of going to court, and where to find a mediator.

- [How Can We Resolve Our Family Law Issues?](#) an infographic with information about how to resolve family issues with or without going to court.

Get family orders (15 minutes)

What it does: If users can't resolve their issues out of court, this pathway will help them get a court order to settle their family law case. It will help them choose which court to go to and decide whether they need **interim** (temporary) or final orders. This pathway will give them the best available resources for their situation. It provides links to online self-help guides that walk them through the court process, and refers them to in-person legal help.

The take-away: An action plan that will lay out the steps necessary to get a court order.

Key notes about/resources in this pathway:

- [All About Mediation](#): an infographic that explains what mediation is, why users might want to use it to solve their differences instead of going to court, and where to find a mediator.
- Links to relevant fact sheets and self-help guides about the court process.

I've been served with a court document (15 minutes)

What it does: If the user has been served with (given) court documents in a family law case, this pathway will help them figure out what to do next. It will lead them to the best available resources for their particular situation, such as an online self-help guide to walk them through the court process or an in-person service to give them legal advice or help them fill out court forms.

The take-away: An action plan that tells users how to respond to a court order.

Key notes about/resources in this pathway:

- [All About Mediation](#): an infographic that explains what mediation is, why users might want to use it to solve their differences instead of going to court, and where to find a mediator.
- [Coping with Separation Handbook](#): a booklet to help users deal with the emotional aspects of separation or divorce, how to talk to their friends and family about what's happening, how to help their children cope, and more.
- **Negotiation Kit**: an online booklet tailored to the user's particular situation (17 different versions available, depending on their situation). This booklet can help users:
 - learn tips and tricks about negotiation to prepare them for the separation process,
 - understand their rights and responsibilities before they start negotiating,
 - use our checklists to help ensure successful discussions, and
 - find out who can help.

Abuse and family violence

Make a safety plan (25 minutes)

What it does: This pathway helps the user think about their relationship with their intimate partner and consider their safety risks. It teaches them about the different types of abuse, and addresses how they can stay safe and get the help they need if they're in an abusive relationship. At the end, the pathway gives them an action plan to get help with safety concerns, legal needs, and other issues specific to their situation.

The take-away: A better understanding of relationship abuse and a safety plan to help the user and their children stay safe.

Key notes about/resources in this pathway:

- Separation and divorce proceedings are common trigger points for relationship violence.
- We worked closely with women's groups to develop this pathway.
- The pathway has a **quick escape** button that will quickly hide the site from prying eyes.
- **Safety plan checklist:** tailored to specific situations, this checklist can help users create a safety plan to keep them and their children safe, whether they stay or leave the abusive relationship.
- Links to important organizations that can help users, such as VictimLinkBC.

Missed mortgage payments

Find out if you can keep your home (10 – 20 minutes)

What it does: Helps the user orient themselves in the foreclosure process and gives them information that may help them keep their home. This pathway has important information for people who are at risk of foreclosure as well as those already being foreclosed on.

The take-away: An understanding of the legal process of foreclosure and possible next steps.

Key notes about/resources in this pathway:

- **Sample demand letter** that a lender's lawyer might send.
- **Checklist** to remind users about what to say when they talk with their lender.
- Information about possible sources of income (e.g., workers' compensation, employment insurance, etc.) and credit counseling.
- **Sample responses and affidavits** to help demystify the foreclosure process.

Wills and personal planning

Make a will (20 minutes)

What it does: Helps users make a simple will that reflects their wishes and fits their situation. If the user's situation is complicated, they'll still get basic information about what they need in their will and where to get help.

Your take-away: The user will learn about the important decisions they need to consider when making a will, and, if a simple will fits their needs, they get an easy-to-use form they can complete to have a legal will.

Key notes about/resources in this pathway:

- There are 22 different will forms available and the pathway guides the user to the appropriate one.
- The forms are in Microsoft Word. Some of the fields are populated for users as they fill in the form. Here's one of the [will templates](#) (click "Enable editing" to see what it will look like to users).
- Explanatory video clips about the will templates appear on the [Wills & personal planning](#) and [Pathway FAQ](#) pages (in the FAQ about wills), and with each of the 22 will forms.
- Because MyLawBC gives users a separate Word form to fill in, their personal information is secure.
- Unlike other services, these wills are completely **free**.
- The sidebar **Check your situation** will show users whether this pathway will provide a will for their situation before they start.
- There's an optional **worksheet** in the sidebar of all pages that users can use to record decisions they make for later use when filling out their will.
- Currently the site doesn't allow for codicils (amendments). If users want to change their will using this pathway, they'll have to create a new version.

Plan for the future (20 minutes)

What it does: This pathway helps the user identify the legal documents they need to plan decision making for when they can't act independently. Most often, this involves choosing someone who will act on their behalf. This pathway introduces all the different documents and helps users choose the correct ones.

Your take away: The user will learn about the documents they need for their specific situation and get links to them and/or to information that will help them complete those documents.

Key notes about/resources in this pathway:

- We worked closely with Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre and Registry to create this pathway.
- Most of the documents we link to are on the Nidus website.

Getting help

For more about pathways and how they work, see the [Pathway FAQ](#), which also contain specific information about the Make a will pathway. See the links to all the [Frequently asked questions](#) (pathways and Dialogue Tool) and [Support](#) in the footer. More questions will be added in future.

The Dialogue Tool

MyLawBC isn't just guided pathways; it also contains the Dialogue Tool, an innovative new online platform that helps couples write a fair and lasting separation agreement that addresses their family's needs.

With this tool, the user and their spouse can work together to create a separation agreement. They each set out their initial thoughts on what they want and then get a chance to compare them. From there, MyLawBC uses their initial ideas to create a template of a separation agreement. The user negotiates with their spouse in an online chat to fill in the finer details of this agreement. Along the way, they're provided with all the information they need to make informed decisions.

Key notes:

- In this part of the site (unlike the pathways), users must create an account. This process takes a significant investment of time, and their information is saved on a secure server.
- Users' information is stored on Canadian computers under secure protection.
- While the Dialogue Tool is ideal for people who can work together, it can also be a useful tool in other situations as well. It can be used to work through all but the toughest sticking points to save users time before they go to see a mediator or lawyer.
- The Dialogue Tool can also be used by only one person. To activate this, the user must contact LSS after they create their account.
- See the [frequently asked questions](#) for more help.

Review your situation

What it does: This is a pathway that helps users determine whether the Dialogue Tool is the right way for them to create a separation agreement.

The take-away: At the end of the pathway, the user finds out if the Dialogue Tool is appropriate for their situation. If it isn't, they'll be directed to other resources.

Key notes:

- If the user has completed the Make a separation plan pathway, many of the questions in the Review your situation pathway will look familiar. They don't need to do both pathways before starting the Dialogue Tool.

Intake

Intake is the first step of the Dialogue Tool. In this section, the user answers a series of questions about themselves and provide their first thoughts on what needs to go into their separation agreement. These questions could be about who keeps the house, where the kids will stay during the holidays, child or spousal support, and more.

After the user completes this section, they'll be asked to invite their spouse to participate in the Dialogue Tool. MyLawBC will send the spouse an email inviting them to join in the process.

Negotiation

In the Negotiation section, users work with their spouses to create a fair and lasting separation agreement.

MyLawBC takes both spouses' answers from the intake section and creates a template of a separation agreement. The user works with their spouse to fill in this template. When they're finished, they'll have a separation agreement.

Key notes:

- Both spouses can see all the answers they gave and compare them to see how close they are on issues.
- Both spouses get resources along the way that will help them make informed decisions. Among these are a sample agreement and examples of solutions that other people have arrived at about their issues (which may be similar to the users').

Final agreement

Once the user is finished with their agreement they can download a completed copy (as a PDF). Then MyLawBC will tell them what they can do to finalize their agreement.

Getting help

A number of tools are provided to help users get started with the Dialogue Tool. All of these tools are available both in the Dialogue Tool and on the landing page.

- [Dialogue Tool FAQ](#): answers frequently asked questions and includes a [sample separation agreement](#) and a link to the [orientation video](#). See also links to all the [FAQ](#) (Pathways and Dialogue Tool) and [Support](#) in the footer.
- [Dialogue Tool Guide](#): provides an in-depth walk-through on how to use the Dialogue Tool
- [Overview of the Dialogue Tool](#): a short orientation video that walks users through the features of the Dialogue Tool.
- [Get help with your agreement](#): a list of in-person dispute resolution services that can help users work through any areas of disagreement they may find while creating their agreement.

Publications

You can find [all LSS publications](#) on MyLawBC. LSS distributes tens of thousands of free publications every year that cover a range of legal issues. Anyone can download free PDFs of all publications or order free print copies through [Crown Publications](#).

MyLawBC also contains information on ordering publications in bulk for those who wish to order more than one at a time, plus detailed information about how to order, availability, and reading levels.

Donations

LSS is a nonprofit and a registered charity. On the homepage of MyLawBC, in the guided pathway endpoints, and throughout the Dialogue Tool, you'll see a yellow Donate button that takes you to our page on the [Canada Helps website](#), where users can make a donation. Donations will help us expand MyLawBC to develop new pathways and more materials to help people in need of access to justice.

Donate



How to send us feedback and questions

MyLawBC is a new project and a new way of doing things for LSS. We welcome all feedback about the site so we can continue to improve the way it serves the public and add to our [frequently asked questions](#). Please send us feedback using the form at mylawbc.com/info/feedback.php. Or use the Give us your feedback buttons in the guided pathway endpoints, and throughout the Dialogue Tool.

Give us your feedback 

Promotional materials

LSS has a range of promotional materials available for getting the word out about MyLawBC. The language in these is intended to be conversational, warm, reassuring, informal, and direct. The emphasis throughout is on empowering people to work together through their legal problem. Items are thematic with the site wherever possible (e.g., the *My problem, my solution* posters and notepads), and use fun, playful, catchy phrases and images. The general swag includes items that people are less likely to toss or forget (i.e., unique or useful items). Here are the materials available and how they're each meant to be used.

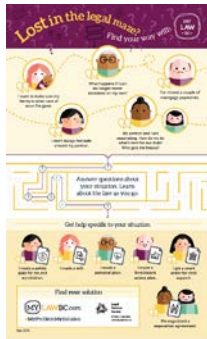
My problem, my solution poster series

The five MyLawBC posters each contain a key tagline, plus social media hashtags and information about the site in general and/or about particular pathways. Hashtags (#) are used on social media as a way of

grouping discussion on a certain topic. When talking about MyLawBC on social media, please consider using the hashtags provided on the promotional materials.

Meant for the general public, to be handed out at conferences and workshops. The infographic (Lost in the legal maze?) can be used in combination with the maze pen.

Lost in the legal maze infographic



General purpose



Foreclosure



Wills



Separation agreements



Notepads



Using the same images and text as four of the posters above (general purpose, foreclosure, separation agreements, and wills), the notepads are intended as a lightweight, practical item for conference and workshop attendees to use and take away with them.

You can hand out the entire notepad, or just tear off a single sheet and use that as a handout if recipients are unwilling to take the entire pad. If you speak to an individual in depth about something in particular on the site, you could also write on the notepad yourself to help the person remember your conversation.

Family law infographics



All About Mediation: An infographic poster that explains what mediation is, why you might want to use it to solve your differences instead of going to court, and where to find a mediator. Can be handed out at workshops on family law.



How Can We Resolve Our Family Law Issues? An infographic poster that sets out information about how to resolve your family issues with or without going to court. Can be handed out at workshops on family law.

Booklet



Coping with Separation Handbook: A booklet to help couples deal with the emotional aspects of separation or divorce, how to talk to their friends and family about what's happening, how to help the children cope, and more. Can be handed out at conferences and workshops on family law.

Info card



A fold-over wallet card that contains information similar to what's on the infographic poster. Meant to be used in situations where space or carrying capacity is limited and/or other promotional items are unavailable.

General swag



Maze puzzle pen: This is the main promotional piece for the site in general with the key tagline “Lost in the legal maze?” on one side and the MyLawBC website address on the other. Inside each pen is a maze with little metal balls, challenging you to get the balls from the top to the bottom of the pen and back again. Meant to get people in general talking about the site. To be handed out freely (we have lots!) at conferences and presentations for people to take away and help spread the word in their communities.



Stress balls: General promotion for the site, with the key tagline “Lost in the legal maze?” on one side and the website logo and address on the other. Meant to get people in general talking about the site. To be handed out at labs/user testing sessions for people to take away and help spread the word in their communities. Could be given out with notepads.



Grocery totes: Promotion for the site in general, with the key tagline “Lost in the legal maze?” on one side and the LSS logo on the other. Meant to get people in general talking about the site. To be handed out at conferences and presentations for people to take away and help spread the word in their communities.



Water bottles: General promotion for the site, with the key tagline “Lost in the legal maze?” and the MyLawBC logo and web address on one side and the LSS logo on the other. To be used as thank-you gifts and prizes at user testing and presentations.

How to order

You can order promotional posters, wallet cards, and notepads (but not the general swag) through our [Publications page](#) or directly from [Crown Publications](#).

To order any other promotional materials (the general swag), please email distribution@lss.bc.ca.

Testimonials and usage

MyLawBC was launched in May 2016. From the launch through the end of 2016:

- more than 8,500 people visited the site,
- over 5,500 pathways were started,
- the wills pathway helped more than 1,600 people,
- almost 1,500 people learned about getting a separation plan, and
- 71 couples used the Dialogue Tool to work together on a separation agreement.

We continue to track our statistics and work on promoting the site. (We'll update these statistics twice a year.) Here are some reactions we've received:

From the Kelowna intermediaries' conference:

This is the best legal information website I've ever seen.

Everyone I spoke to said that it was easy to use and very clear. They loved it! One person from a transition house said that they would be using the family violence pathway with their clients.

The site is really useful, especially for areas of law that are unfamiliar.

From the Law Courts Centre:

I love the non-judgmental tone!

From Relate (a consortium member in London, England, using the Rechtwijzer platform):

Firstly, many congratulations on the launch of MyLawBC. We have taken a look (hope that's ok) and are very impressed with how you and your team have refined the Rechtwijzer platform. The improvements you have made are also very much in line with the priorities that have come from our testing of the Relate Rechtwijzer prototype over the past few months.

...As we prepare for our launch it has become a particular priority for us to ensure that our users are safe when working online. We have been working with high conflict couples as part of our user testing. It has highlighted the need for us to do more to explain Domestic Violence and Abuse to our users and enable them to self-assess in the first instance what is happening in their relationship. We really like the way you have addressed this.

...Can we work with some of the questions and question architecture you have developed?

From Professor Roger Smith, OBE, expert in international aspects of legal aid, human rights and access to justice, UK:

... I thought it raises the bar for every advice site in the world. That is what I always like about the Rechtwijzer but the impact was hidden because the thing is in Dutch. I think yours looks clean and clear and is interactive. Job well done.

From the Justice Education Society:

It's looking great! I have clicked through and now have a Safety Plan This site will help British Columbians address their legal issues.

What's new

MyLawBC is an evolving project that is constantly growing and changing. Here are some of the newer features you might consider highlighting when giving your presentations:

- **Links** to our [FAQ](#) and [Support](#) pages appear in the footers of all pages.
- **Give us your feedback buttons** appear in the footers of the guided pathway endpoints and throughout the Dialogue Tool.
- **Wills templates** in the Wills pathway: user-friendly files in MS Word that users can download and complete online.
- **[Making your will orientation video](#)** to help people use the will templates are integrated into the Making a will pathway.
- **Quick Exit button** in the Abuse and family violence pathway: allows time for users to leave the page quickly and avoid possible confrontation with an abuser seeing them use the site.
- **New/Improved features for the Dialogue Tool**
 - **Orientation videos** are integrated into the tool. They can help users learn about the process:
 - [Getting started with the Dialogue Tool](#)
 - [Using the Dialogue Tool](#)
 - [Dialogue Tool overview](#)
 - **Separate chats** — each chat is now tied to the topic of discussion. Before, there was one unified chat area for the entire agreement, but now the messages about parenting are separated from the messages about who keeps the house.
 - **Alerts page** — a new Alerts page shows users a list of all the changes that have happened to the agreement and displays a red dot to alert them to new changes. Click the bell at the top of the screen to see this page.



Presentation suggestions

Here are some presentation activities that we've used successfully in the past:

- Ask the audience to come up with a family law, family violence, wills and personal planning, or foreclosure scenario that you then use MyLawBC to resolve. (You could have them break out into groups to brainstorm the scenario first.)
- Explain to the audience what a guided pathway is. Ask them to spend five minutes jotting down what questions/answers *they* would put into a guided pathway for making a separation plan. Then show them that guided pathway on MyLawBC. This also works well in one-on-one or small group situations.