



## Overview

### Description ...

The workshops include several family law topics, each set out as a 2-3 hour class that explains the procedures and rules for navigating the family justice system in relation to matters such as uncontested divorces and child support variation.

### Content ...

The workshops include a series of modules which have been set out as professional Power Point presentations. Each month a different workshop topic would be offered in each judicial district dealing with a specific family law proceeding such as divorce petitions, applications for custody, access and/or support, as well as motions to vary existing orders or agreements.

There are also a few “core modules” which would be presented at each class because they provide relevant information that would be useful to everyone involved in a family law proceeding - including how and where to obtain legal advice or information, find a commissioner of oaths, and so on.

### Purpose ...

The purpose of these workshops is to offer general information on court procedures and rules for uncontested divorces, custody and access applications, child support applications and variation of custody, access and/or support. The workshops are not intended as a vehicle for providing individuals with legal advice. Participants asking for advice on their specific situations will be told to consult a lawyer.

## **Target Audience ...**

Participants in the workshops will be individuals who have already made the decision to use self-help options for some, or all, of their family law matters. Increasing the competencies of people with less complex family issues is one small way of enhancing access to the justice system. We hope to recruit participation of such individuals at the courthouse and other appropriate venues, via posters/pamphlets with details on the topics, class schedules and registration information. Efforts will be made to screen out and make appropriate referrals for individuals with complex, high conflict issues.

## **Do these workshops promote self-representation?**

No; not at all. However, we recognize that the floodgates have been opened and in many Family Division courts nearly 40% of the litigants are unrepresented. The majority of these individuals cannot afford a lawyer or do not qualify for legal aid. A few have chosen to handle their own family law actions. When this happens, it impacts everyone in the justice process as it increases time and costs for the party who is represented, as well as the courts. Regardless of the underlying reasons for self-representation, the complexity of court forms and procedures and the lack of guidance through the process typically results in incomplete forms, inappropriate affidavits, missed deadlines, omissions related to swearing and serving documents, and utter confusion around presenting a case in court. Since the complexity of people's legal problems can vary greatly, so too do their needs and appropriate remedies.

## **Sponsorship ...**

The curriculum for these workshops was created by **Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick** (PLEIS-NB) with financial assistance from Justice Canada. The content has been reviewed by family law practitioners.

*The development of the workshops series and delivery across the Province is funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario / Access to Justice Fund.*

## **Presenters ...**

PLEIS-NB is recruiting family law lawyers, as well as pro bono law students, to conduct classes. These workshops will most likely be held in the evening. They will last about 2-3 hours. Presenters will receive the following support from PLEIS-NB:

- Training on the use of the workshop modules to deliver classes
- Flash drive with Power Point presentations for all core modules and topical modules. The PPT modules include hyperlinks to online fillable, annotated family law forms.
- Contract with terms of reference for becoming an instructor
- Evaluation forms for participants to complete
- Presenter's evaluation form
- Videos for use in some of the classes
- Package of family law resources and handouts for participants
- Other resources as required such as display copies of self help guides

**Please consider completing the registration form and helping to make this initiative a success!**