

**Evaluation  
of the  
LawLINE Enhancement Project:  
Survey of Advice Callers**

**for**

**LEGAL SERVICES SOCIETY OF B.C.**



**October 15, 2004**

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I would like to thank the 151 advice callers who gave their time and thoughtful consideration in the interviews for this study. One gentleman's contribution was unique and touching, and deserves special acknowledgement. He had given permission to be interviewed and was apparently looking forward to the process. Unfortunately, and unknown to our interviewer, he passed away shortly before her call to set up a time for an interview. When told of his passing, our interviewer was on the point of giving her condolences and stating the obvious, i.e. that the interview was no longer necessary or appropriate. However, the gentleman's wife insisted that he would love to have done the interview and had many things to say about the LawLINE. Based on a short conversation that followed, we then felt we were able faithfully to reflect his responses on a small number of questions.

Thanks also to John Simpson of the Legal Services Society for his extensive work in screening caller permissions to be interviewed and thereby creating the sample base for the survey.

Peggie-Ann Kirk of Focus Consultants did all interviews for the survey and Raincoast Business Centre word-processed this report.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the second of two reports of an evaluation of the LawLINE Enhancement Project (LLEP) of the Legal Services Society (LSS). The first report was completed July 28, 2004. It described patterns and volumes of LawLINE calls, assessed the extent to which the LawLINE is serving the demographic and geographic elements of its target community, described productivity, supervision and quality control issues in the delivery of the LLEP, and assessed aspects of the broader service context in which the LLEP operates.

This report examines the experiences of a sample of callers requesting legal advice, in terms of the nature of their issues, the assistance provided, actions taken by the caller, outcomes and satisfaction.

### ***Methodology***

The methodology for this report consisted of a survey of all callers to the LawLINE who requested and qualified for advice services in the period April 5 to May 10, 2004. The survey did not include cases where the caller received general information, or legal information and referral services, as the purpose of the study was to examine the effect of the enhanced services, specifically legal advice, help with correspondence and documents, calls to third parties and other services delivered during or shortly after a call.

Considerable care was taken to ensure the privacy of the survey respondents, both in the procedures used by LSS to secure permission to be interviewed, and in the procedures by the Focus Consultants interviewer when initially conducting and identifying the interviewee. Interviews took place by telephone between July and September 2004, or approximately three months after the caller's use of the LawLINE service. Of 303 clients targeted for the survey, 151 interviews were completed.

### ***Profile of callers:***

- Two-thirds of callers were female;
- Half of callers were ages 25 – 44;
- 54% were from the Lower Mainland;
- 80% of the calls were handled by six lawyer advisors, 20% by paralegals.

### ***Contacting the LawLINE:***

- 82% of callers reached the LawLINE on their first call, 10% on two calls, and 8% on three or more calls;
- 61% of callers were kept on hold for less than 15 minutes prior to talking to an advisor, another 22% waited 15-30 minutes, and a further 15% were kept waiting for more than half an hour.

### ***LawLINE Advisor's Manner & Attitude***

From the caller's perspective, the LawLINE advisors appear to have done an excellent job in gauging the level of the caller's understanding, and the expectations that can be placed on them. Only 3% of callers felt the advisor talked over their heads, and only 2% felt the advisor expected them to do things that were too difficult. No advisors were felt to have talked down or expected too little of the caller. Two to three percent were felt to have treated the caller un-compassionately or judgmentally.

### ***Instructions and Follow-through by Clients***

- Callers followed through completely on the advisors' instructions in 75% of cases, and partially or completely in 77% of cases.
- Approximately one-third of callers who did not follow through on instructions and referrals were limited by lack of understanding, confidence, resources or adequate health. This suggests that they may have been over-optimistic in assessing how well-calibrated the advisor's advice was to their level of understanding and capacity, as reported above.

### ***Resolution of Problem, Follow-up by LawLINE***

- Approximately three months after calling LawLINE, slightly under half the callers felt their matter was resolved.
- Of the 50% who stated it was not resolved, 40% said their matter was pending. Only 10% said it would simply not be resolved at all.
- In 21% of cases, callers said the advisor made a follow-up call. Another 20% did not receive such a call, but would have found one useful as a means to discuss alternate approaches, to clarify next steps or issues arising from their actions, or to get general reassurance about the path they were following.

### ***Caller Assessment of the LawLINE***

- On a 7-point scale of helpfulness (1=not helpful at all, 7=very helpful) and of how things worked out (1=did not work out at all, 7=worked out very well), the LawLINE's direct services and explanations were rated on average at 5.5 – 5.6.
- The mean assessment for how referrals worked out was lower, at 4.2 on the 7-point scale. Forty-one percent of the ratings experienced dissatisfaction with how the referral worked out (i.e. 1 – 3 on a 7-point scale).
- 30% of callers expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of time they had to wait to speak with an advisor.
- The average rating for overall helpfulness of the LawLINE was 5.8; 81% of callers rated it positively (5 – 7 on the 7-point scale).
- By comparison, the average rating of the favourableness of the outcome was only 4.4 on a 7-point scale, with 56% rating it positively.

- 85% felt the LawLINE made a difference to them, and 89% said they would “probably” or “definitely” call the service again if they had another legal problem.
- Callers also rated highly (between 5.6 and 6.0 on a 7-point scale) a number of impacts related to their feeling of being understood, their confidence, what they could do, how well they could make decisions, and their understanding of the legal system and their problem.
- They rated slightly lower (4.9 – 5.3 on a 7-point scale, with 22-26% negative responses) their ability to resolve their problem or keep it from growing bigger.
- 75% - 90% of callers with self-identified health problems in their families, transportation problems or work/daycare/school scheduling problems said they felt a service like LawLINE is easier for them than a walk-in service would be.

### ***Recommendations***

The following recommendations are based on the findings reported in Section 8.1. These should be viewed in the context of a service that is clearly valued by and meeting important needs of the majority of callers. They are listed in descending order of importance.

#### ***Recommendation #1***

That the LLEP take steps to reduce caller wait time by allocating more staff resources to the service, such that no client need wait more than one-half an hour to reach an advisor. Furthermore, callers should be informed approximately how long their wait will be, using some form of recorded announcement that tracks caller load at any given time.

#### ***Recommendation #2***

That the frequency of follow-up calls to clients be increased by approximately 20% from the existing level. Given the lower rates of follow-through by clients when advisors make a referral, it would seem appropriate that referral cases should receive greater scrutiny. Other considerations are language capacity, complexity of issue, and apparent confidence of the caller.

#### ***Recommendation #3***

That continuing emphasis be placed on advisors projecting a caring and compassionate attitude with clients. This recommendation is not made in a spirit of criticism, insofar as we are not in a position to second-guess the dynamics of individual calls or the character and demeanor of the callers themselves. Furthermore, far more praise than criticism was received about the manner of the advisors. Rather, the recommendation is simply a reminder that it is sometimes as important to quickly and simply acknowledge the stress and/or vulnerability a caller is experiencing as it is to provide legal advice to help resolve their situation.

#### ***Recommendation #4***

That a system of messages providing information about legal problems not be implemented during the time the caller is waiting to talk to the advisor. At a minimum, if such an approach is planned, callers should be given the option of not listening to any messages.



## 1.0 BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

This is the second of two reports of an evaluation of the LawLINE Enhancement Project (LLEP) of the Legal Services Society (LSS). The first report was completed July 28, 2004. It described patterns and volumes of LawLINE calls, assessed the extent to which the LawLINE is serving the demographic and geographic elements of its target community, described productivity, supervision and quality control issues in the delivery of the LLEP, and assessed aspects of the broader service context in which the LLEP operates.

This report examines the experiences of a sample of callers requesting legal advice, in terms of the nature of their issues, the assistance provided, actions taken by the caller, outcomes and satisfaction.

### 1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The LLEP formally began on September 15, 2003. It represents an expansion of the LSS's basic LawLINE program, which was limited to legal information and referral. The expanded program adds services related to legal advice, including:

- The provision of telephone summary legal advice to qualifying low income individuals who do not qualify for help under LSS's current coverage guidelines;
- The provision of telephone legal assistance to community advocates and others who are providing legal assistance to qualifying low income individuals; and
- Working in an integrated and cooperative manner with other LSS programs and other justice service providers.

From September 15, 2003 to September 14, 2004 the Project dealt with a total of 13,022 LawLINE cases, of which 4,787 involved the delivery of legal advice services. Cases consist of legal issues presented by clients during initial calls about the issues, and may include follow up calls to and from clients. All cases must be closed within 14 days after they are opened. However, callers are encouraged to call again if they have another legal problem. As a result, an individual caller may have several cases entered on CommunityServe (the case management system), and cases sometimes involve a number of calls with clients, in addition to research, drafting documents, correspondence and other follow-up work.

The LLEP Policies and Procedures manual defines the three modes of service available through the LawLINE in the following way. The third of these modes is the focus of this report.

- *Information and/or Referral* – a very brief contact with the caller that results in staff providing brief information, possibly including a suggestion about another more appropriate service (internal or external to LSS);
- *Legal Information* – general information about the law to help the caller identify a legal issue and options to address that issue (through phone conversation, reference to hard copy or web-based PLE resources and referrals to Public Legal Resource Centres in LSS Regional Centres, and other resources);
- *Legal Advice* – applying the law to a particular situation or fact pattern, and providing a legal opinion and specific advice about the best course of action.

While legal information and referral services are provided to the general public, LawLINE staff must determine whether a caller meets LSS's financial eligibility guidelines prior to giving legal advice.

There are two levels of legal advice service. Under Legal Advice level one guidelines, staff may provide up to three hours of service such as letters or phone calls to a third party, document review, a written legal opinion or other brief service. Legal Advice level two can involve service up to five hours if the client is granted a disability type exception.

## **1.2 METHODOLOGY**

The methodology for this report consisted of a survey of all callers to the LawLINE who requested and qualified for advice services in the period April 5 to May 10, 2004.

### **1.2.1 Permission and Contact Procedures**

Because the LawLine is a telephone service, it was not possible to collect signed permissions at the time of service to authorize the evaluator to contact the caller for an interview. Given that the calls often involved sensitive issues, it was critical to protect the privacy of the caller. The following procedures were used:

1. When the caller first contacted LawLINE and was waiting to be connected, an automatic message informed the caller that he/she would be asked if he/she would participate in the survey, but that such participation was not mandatory (Appendix 1).
2. The advisor requested the caller's permission to be contacted for the survey. The person was also told they would be sent a follow-up letter confirming their agreement.
3. A follow-up letter was then sent to those callers who had verbally agreed to participate, confirming their willingness to be involved and providing more information (Appendix 2). As shown in the letter the callers were given a further 20 days from the date of the letter to call LSS if they decided not to be involved.
4. After 20 days, a file was constructed consisting of all callers who had not requested to be withdrawn.
5. A sample of cases in this file was reviewed by the Manager, Community Services. He also gave instructions for further review and contact protocols of all files for the evaluation interviewer (Appendix 3). This process was intended to eliminate any cases involving violence or ones where a family law caller lived with the opposing party, and to protect callers from possible interference, loss of privacy or recriminations.

These procedures were developed to protect solicitor-client confidentiality and comply with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA).

### **1.2.2 Contact Results**

Table 1 presents the results of all contact attempts made in the survey. On the one hand, the procedures for screening out certain calls and for protecting the privacy of the respondents appear to have eliminated the potential for embarrassment or danger to callers. On the other hand, they irritated some callers who

**Table 1: Results of sample review and contact attempts**

<b>LawLINE Clients</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>	<b>Sub-Groups</b>
<b>Total legal advice files in sample</b>	344	
<b>Clients not targeted for an interview</b>	41	
Duplicate file (i.e. client used service twice in sample period)		25
Violence indicated in file review		8
Inadequate client identifier information		5 *
Translator service required		3
<b>Total clients targeted</b>	303	
<b>Clients not interviewed</b>	154	
Telephone not in service/wrong number/moved		80 **
Refusals		6 ***
No response after 6 or 7 attempts		66 ****
<b>Interview completed</b>	151	

## Notes:

- Files were drawn for cases dealt with by LawLINE staff between April 4th and May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2004.
- Calls were made from July through mid-September, 2004.
- Calls were made at all times of the day between 9:30 am and 9:00 pm.
- Calls were made 7 days/week.

\* No personal ID recorded in file. Client was therefore not contacted, as interviewer would be unable to confirm the caller's ID (see procedures in Appendix 3).

\*\* 10% of callers (8) had moved, but interviewer could not get new phone numbers without divulging a more specific purpose to the call (see procedures in Appendix 3).

\*\*\* These individuals were annoyed that the interviewer would not divulge the reason for the call.

\*\*\*\* In approximately 85% of these attempts, no contact at all was able to be made, and the interviewer did not leave a message. Some of these clients may have used call display to screen calls.

were suspicious about the reason for the call, and led to a reduced number of completed interviews. It is estimated that a further 40 completed interviews may have been possible had the extra screening and privacy procedures not been required after receiving the verbal approval of the caller and their receipt of the letter from LSS.

All evaluation interviews were conducted by telephone and took place from July through mid-September, 2004. This meant that approximately three months had elapsed between the time the caller contacted LawLINE and the date of the evaluation interview. This period of time was intended to be close enough to the original call so that the caller could remember relevant details, and long enough after it to allow for follow-through on the matter to have taken place.

The actual questionnaire is contained in Appendix 4.

## 2.0 PROFILE OF CALLERS

This section presents information on callers, the nature of the call, and the type of LawLINE advisor. A summary of key data from Tables 2-6 follows, together with qualifying or supplementary data.

- Two-thirds (99/151, 66%) of callers were female (Table 2). This representation is slightly higher in the 19 – 44 age category (72%) than in the 45+ bracket (58%).
- Almost half (74/151, 49%) of callers were in the 25 – 44 age bracket (Table 2). Callers from the Lower Mainland tended to be predominantly younger (65%, 53/82 in the 19 – 44 age bracket) than their non-Lower Mainland counterparts (46%, 32/69).
- 54% (82/151) of callers were from the Lower Mainland (Table 3). While this percentage is almost identical to that reported for all advice callers in the period September 15, 2003 to February 2004, the representation of Vancouver/Sunshine Coast callers is higher in this survey and of Surrey/Fraser Valley callers were lower. The representation from the five non-Lower Mainland regions fairly closely reflects overall LLEP calls for the longer period, but because of the small numbers involved in the survey it cannot be considered reliable.
- There was only minimal file data recorded on the first language, ethnicity (aboriginal/non-aboriginal) or education of the caller, so this data is not presented here.
- The vast majority of callers (93%) phoned in regard to only one case matter during the case selection period (April 5<sup>th</sup> to May 10<sup>th</sup>). Nonetheless, the fact that 7% of callers phoned on a second, distinct matter within those five weeks shows that the LawLINE service generates repeat clients.
- 80% of the calls were handled by six lawyer advisors and 20% by four paralegal advisors.

**Table 2: Demographic profile of callers interviewed**

<b>Demographic Item</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	52	34%
Female	99	66%
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age</b>		
19 – 24	11	7%
25 – 44	74	49%
45 – 64	52	34%
65 +	14	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>99%</b>

Percentages do not necessarily total 100% due to rounding.

**Table 3: Regional profile of callers interviewed**

Region	Frequency	Percentage	Percentage of total advice callers in period Sep 15/03 to Feb 04 *
<b>Lower Mainland</b>			
Vancouver/Sunshine Coast	61	40%	32.3%
Surrey/Fraser Valley	21	14%	22.7%
<b>Outside Lower Mainland</b>			
North	9	6%	10.2%
Vancouver Island	25	17%	14.4%
Okanagan/West Kootenays	15	10%	11.3%
Interior/East Kootenays	8	5%	5.8%
Northwest	10	7%	3.4%
Out of province	2	1%	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100.1%</b>

\* This column is for comparison purposes, and was taken from Table 2, page 7, of the first evaluation report of the LLEP, July 27, 2004.

**Table 4: Profile of caller issues**

Issue Type	Frequency	Percentage
Consumer Rights	18	12%
Criminal Law	7	5%
Debt	18	12%
Employment	10	7%
Family Law	68	45%
Health and Estates	8	5%
Housing	11	7%
Immigration and Refugees	3	2%
Income Security	3	2%
Torts	5	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5: Number of cases per caller**

<b>Number of Cases Involved During Survey Period per Caller</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
One	140	93%
Two	11	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6: Who handled the call**

<b>Person Who Handled Call</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lawyer	121	80%
Paralegal	30	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>

Notes: Ten LawLINE advisors dealt with the calls in this survey. Six of the advisors were lawyers (minimum cases = 5, maximum = 56) and four were paralegals (minimum cases = 2, maximum = 15).

### 3.0 CONTACTING THE LAWLINE

Tables 7 and 8 show two aspects of callers' experiences in trying to reach the LawLINE service. The first is the number of calls that they made in order to get through to the service. As shown in Table 7, a large majority (82%) of those who remembered the number of calls said they were able to get through in one call.

The second aspect of the contact experience was how long the caller had to wait once they were connected to LawLINE. Table 8 shows that 61% of callers were kept on hold for less than 15 minutes (the standard by which LawLINE aims to connect with callers) and another 22% waited for 15 – 30 minutes. However, 15% (20/128) were kept waiting for more than half an hour. Clearly a wait of over 30 minutes is excessive, and one of over 60 minutes (experienced by 11% of callers) should be considered unacceptable by any service.

**Table 7: Number of calls made by caller to LawLINE before getting assistance**

Number of Calls Before Getting Assistance	Frequency	Percentage
One	107	82%
Two	13	10%
Three	9	7%
Four or more	2	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>101%</b>

Notes:

- 20 callers could not remember how many calls they made. They are not included in this table.
- Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

**Table 8: How long caller was kept on hold before being able to talk to a LawLINE advisor**

Length of Time	Number	Percentage
Immediate response	25	20%
Under five minutes	30	23%
6 – 9 minutes	12	9%
10 – 14 minutes	12	9%
15 – 20 minutes	7	5%
21 – 30 minutes	22	17%
31 – 60 minutes	5	4%
61 – 90 minutes	8	6%
91 – 120 minutes	4	3%
Over 2 hours	3	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 4.0 LAWLINE ADVISOR'S MANNER AND ATTITUDE

Although the manner and attitude of a legal advisor is always important for a client, it is especially critical in a telephone service. This is because there is no opportunity for the advisor to read body language or other non-verbal cues of confusion, fear or doubt.

As shown in Table 9, from the callers' perspective, the LawLINE advisors appear to have done an excellent job in gauging the level of the callers' understanding, and the expectations that can be placed on them. Only 3% (4/150) of callers felt the advisor talked over their heads, and none felt that they were talked down to. Similarly, only 2% (3/150) felt the advisors expected them to do things that were too hard, and no advisors treated the callers as if they were incapable of doing anything for themselves.

In the few cases where the advisors pitched their explanations or expectations too high, the advisor was a lawyer rather than a paralegal. However, the low frequency of overall instances and the fact that lawyers responded to 80% of the calls makes the difference statistically insignificant.

In both sections of the table there is a response labeled "none of these". Five of the twelve responses with this label concerning the advisor's method of speaking and explaining were critical of the advisor for not being compassionate or for making the caller feel uncomfortable. Similarly, three of the ten responses concerning the advisor's manner were that the advisor was overly judgmental and not compassionate.

**Table 9: Caller impression of LawLINE advisor's communication style**

Statement	Frequency caller agreed with this statement	Percentage
<b>Method of speaking and explaining:</b>		
Advisor talked over my head, using legal words I didn't understand, and/or talked too fast.	4	3%
Advisor explained things in a way that was just right.	134	89%
Advisor talked down to me.	0	0%
None of these/not sure	12	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Advisor's attitude:</b>		
Advisor expected me to do things that were too hard.	3	2%
Advisor was about right in what he/she thought I could do.	137	91%
Advisor treated me as if I couldn't do anything for myself.	0	0%
None of these/not sure	10	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: N=151, NR=1



## 5.0 SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE ADVISOR, AND FOLLOW-THROUGH BY CALLER

This section describes the general services provided by the advisor, the types of instructions given, the referrals made, and the extent of follow-through by the caller.

### 5.1 GENERAL

Table 10 shows that, in general, the main combination of legal advice services offered by the advisors (as recollected by the caller) are an explanation of how the law works in relation to the caller's problem (97%) and informing the caller where he/she can get more information (72%).

Advisors are able to give up to three hours of service to individuals who qualify financially. As shown in the table, in a small percentage of cases this has involved preparation of correspondence, court documents or the provision of written information on their legal problem area.

**Table 10: Direct services provided by advisor**

Services	Whether Service Provided			
	No	Yes	Total	Non-responses
<b>General advice</b>				
Explained how law works in relation to caller's problem	5 (3%)	142 (97%)	147 (100%)	NR = 4
Sent caller more information	139 (92%)	12 (8%)	151 (100%)	--
Told caller where he/she could get more information	42 (28%)	109 (72%)	151 (100%)	--
<b>Specific additional services</b>				
Sent correspondence or a memo outlining what to do	141 (95%)	8 (5%)	149 (100%)	NR = 2
Drafted court documents for caller	146 (98%)	3 (2%)	149 (100%)	NR = 2
Drafted a letter to the other party for caller	146 (98%)	3 (2%)	149 (100%)	NR = 2
Sent caller a publication about his/her legal problem	132 (89%)	17 (11%)	149 (100%)	NR = 2

## 5.2 SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS AND REFERRALS, AND DEGREE OF FOLLOW-THROUGH BY CALLER

Table 11 describes more specific instructions given by the advisor, and the extent to which the caller followed these instructions. Table 12 does the same for referrals. Table 13 presents callers' reasons for not following through on the advisor's instructions or referrals.

**Table 11: Types of instructions given by advisor; follow-through by caller**

Type of Instruction	Frequency instruction given N=150 NR=1	Percentage of total	Frequency of instances where caller followed instruction	Percentage of cases where client follows through completely
Directed caller to website to help with problem	51	34%	37 *	73%
Instructed caller how to deal with a landlord or a creditor	29	19%	21 **	72%
Explained to caller how to express self in court, how to file or respond to legal action	18	12%	14 *	78%
Instructed caller how to deal with a government agency	10	7%	7 *	70%
Explained to caller how to fill out a form, make a call, write a letter	9	6%	6	67%
Directed caller to a public access computer to gather information on his/her problem	5	3%	2	40%
Reviewed guidelines for applying for welfare, EI or other benefits	2	1%	2	40%

Notes: Percentages involving less than 30 overall cases are not reliable, and should be considered with caution. The derived statistics below are based on a larger number of cases, and are therefore more reliable.

\* In each of these cases, one additional caller said they tried, or partially followed through.

\*\* Three additional callers said they tried, or partially followed through.

### Derived statistics:

Total number of instructions given (of any type): 124

Frequency instructions followed completely: 89

Percentage of instructions followed completely: 72% (89/124)

Frequency instructions followed completely or partially: 95

Percentage followed completely or partially: 77% (95/124)

**Table 12: Types of referral given by advisor; follow-through by caller**

Type of Referral	Frequency of referral N=150 NR=1	Percentage of total	Frequency of instances where caller followed referral completely	Percentage of cases where client followed referral completely
Government agency	42	28%	23	55%
Lawyer referral service or private lawyer	36	24%	20 **	56%
Duty counsel	33	22%	10 *	30%
Free clinic, law student or advocacy group	25	17%	6 ***	24%
Legal Aid	6	4%	3 *	50%
Court registry	5	3%	2	40%
Community worker or advocate	3	2%	2	67%
Legal Information Outreach Worker	1	1%	1	100%
Administrative tribunal	0	0%	NA	NA

Notes: Percentages involving less than 30 overall cases are not reliable, and should be considered with caution. The derived statistics below are based on a larger number of cases, and are therefore more reliable.

\* Two additional callers said they tried, or partially followed through.

\*\* Four additional callers said they tried, or partially followed through.

\*\*\* Six additional callers said they tried, or partially followed through.

Derived statistics:

Total number of referrals given (of any type): 151

Frequency referrals followed completely: 67

Percentage of referrals followed completely: 44% (67/151)

Frequency referrals followed partially or completely: 89

Percentage of referrals followed partially or completely: 55% (83/151)

**Table 13: Reasons for client not following through on advisor’s instructions or on referrals**

Reason for not following through	Frequency not followed through on instructions	Frequency not followed through on referrals	Overall frequency this reason is given	Percentage who gave this reason
<b>Callers’ personal limitations</b>				
1. Client didn’t understand, forgot, was confused	4	8	12	11%
2. Task was too hard; client afraid, discouraged or lacked confidence; needed specific personal help	6	7	13	12%
3. Lack of resources (money, transportation, child care, computer access)	5	3	8	8%
4. Illness, health	1	2	3	3%
<b>Situation changed or caller decided not to pursue</b>				
5. Client changed mind; matter not worth pursuing	5	6	11	10%
6. Situation changed; problem resolved; other side dropped matter	3	17	20	19%
7. Nothing could be done for client	1	2	3	3%
<b>Caller went to other resource</b>				
8. Went to other resource (FJC, lawyer, mediator, website, represented self)	3	14	17	16%
<b>Callers’ efforts frustrated</b>				
9. Client tried; no-one called back; couldn’t get through	--	10	10	9%
<b>Other</b>				
10. Others (not ready to act yet, was inquiring for a friend, lack of eligibility, had already done what was suggested)	1	8	9	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>99%</b>

Notes: Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

Points of significance that arise from these tables and from qualitative comments made by callers include the following:

- 72% of instructions given by advisors were completely followed by callers, and 77% either partially or completely followed (Table 11).
- 44% of referrals suggested by advisors were completely followed by callers, and 55% either partially or completely followed (Table 12).
- Approximately one-third of callers who did not follow through on instructions and referrals were limited by lack of understanding, confidence, resources or adequate health. This suggests that the clients' assessment of how well-calibrated the advisor's advice was to the level of their understanding and capacity, as reported in Section 4.0 and Table 9, might have been slightly optimistic. Another third did not follow through simply because their situation changed, or because the matter did not really seem worth pursuing. One in six callers who did not follow through went to another resource, and one in ten were frustrated in their attempts (all with referrals) and gave up (Table 13).
- There were no statistically significant differences at the .05 level of confidence in the degree of follow-through of instructions or referrals based on any of the variables examined, including Lower Mainland/Outside Lower Mainland, ages 19-44 vs 45 or over, male/female, or lawyer advisor vs paralegal advisor (Tables 11 and 12).

## 6.0 RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM, FOLLOW-UP BY LAWLINE

The notion of resolution of a case is always problematic for two reasons:

- Case issues can be highly complex, and take a long time to reach resolution. The nature of family matters - which comprise 45% of the cases surveyed (Table 4) – particularly defies “conclusion” in many cases. There is therefore always a large number of “pending” cases in any sample.
- In general use, the term “resolution” implicitly suggests a positive outcome. However, resolution of legal matters means that the case has come to a conclusion but, from the standpoint of the LawLINE caller, the outcome may be positive or negative. It is often difficult for an interviewee to consider an issue “resolved” if he/she has lost the case.

Table 14 presents caller feedback on the resolution of their cases. The results and supplementary analysis show that approximately 3 months after the callers phoned the LawLINE:

- Almost half the callers felt their matter was resolved.
- The other 50% stated it was not resolved, but for 40% of these their matter was still pending. Only 10% felt the case would simply not be resolved at all.

There were no statistically significant differences in these responses, based on geographic, age, gender or advisor (lawyer/paralegal) variables.

**Table 14: Whether caller’s problem has been resolved or reached a conclusion**

Whether caller’s problem has been resolved or reached a conclusion	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Not resolved</b>		
No, not at all	17	11%
Pending, too soon to tell	61	40%
<b>Partially or fully resolved</b>		
Only partially	10	7%
Situation changed; matter has been dropped; caller changed mind	10	7%
Yes, matter completely resolved	53	35%
	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>

The results in Table 14 are edited results. That is, several callers made comments such as “lawyer is making an appeal” or “ongoing”; “2-3 week trial set for May 05” or “going to court”, but answered “no, not at all” to the question of whether the problem has been resolved. These types of responses were reclassified as “pending, too soon to tell”, because a process was still underway.

Analysis of the 53 cases where the client stated the matter was completely resolved showed that 77% (41/53) of outcomes were described positively, 8% (4/53) in a neutral manner, and 15% (8/53) in a negative manner (i.e. the caller stated he/she had lost the case or did not get what he/she wanted). Similarly, seven of the ten partial resolutions were described in positive terms at the time of the interview. On the other hand, only two of the ten “situation changed/dropped the matter” cases were described positively, three predominantly negatively, and five appeared as neutral statements.

Given the many cases which are of long duration (i.e. were still pending after three months), it could in theory be important for the advisors to call back to callers to see how they are managing with their cases. Table 15 shows that in two-thirds of cases, no call-back was made, but in one-third of cases the advisor either called back or told the callers that they could call-back.

**Table 15: Whether LawLINE staff called back to see how caller was doing, and whether this would have been helpful**

<b>1. Whether LawLINE staff called caller back</b>	<b>Frequency (N=151, NR=1)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No	101	67%
Yes	31	21%
No, but said caller could call-back	18	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>2. If LawLINE did not call-back, would it have been helpful to have done so?</b>	<b>Frequency (N=101, NR=1)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No, not necessary	64	64%
Yes	29	29%
Don't know	7	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Except for two persons who stated that the call was appreciated but not very essential, all of the individuals who were called back expressed appreciation about the call, and the feeling of reassurance it gave them. Even several callers who were simply given the option of calling back on a direct line emphasized how reassuring it was to have this option.

Furthermore, of those callers who received no call, 64% said such a call would have been unnecessary, but 29% stated that it would have been helpful. When asked what they would have asked the advisor, the response for the 29 callers who would have liked a call-back were:

- Six said they had followed the recommended advice and were unsuccessful, so needed to discuss alternative approaches.
- Six said their case kept generating next steps and new issues, so they would have asked for more information.
- Three wanted to discuss general options.
- Nine would simply have liked some reassurance about what they were doing.

Although it is not clear whether such a call could have been accommodated within the three hour maximum service allowed under the LLEP policies, it is clear that in approximately 20% more overall cases (i.e. 29 out of 150 callers), a call-back would have been perceived as useful to advance the individual's case or to reassure him/her about his/her direction. If added to the 21% of cases in which call-backs are already done, it would suggest that 40% of LLEP calls require a call-back.



## 7.0 CALLERS' ASSESSMENTS OF THE LAWLINE

This section presents assessments by callers of a range of dimensions of the LawLINE service, including assessments of:

- The direct services, instructions and referrals given by the advisor;
- Particular service dimensions;
- The overall service;
- Their case outcomes;
- Overall and particular impacts on the caller him/herself; and
- Impacts on persons with particular barriers.

### 7.1 HELPFULNESS OF DIRECT SERVICES, INSTRUCTIONS AND REFERRALS

Section 5 discussed the frequency of different types of service or advice given by the LawLINE advisors. Tables 16 to 18 in this section present the callers' assessments of these services and advice. In many instances the reliability of the assessments is limited by the small number of respondents for these items. In each table these limitations are noted, and ways of viewing the data with greater reliability are identified. These include breaking out individual range groupings, and aggregating data to provide more reliable mean statistics.

The following are key points derived from these tables or from analysis of qualitative comments about the ratings:

- (Table 16) Explanation of the law is considered very helpful by callers (average rating = 6.0 on the 7-point scale). Being informed of supplementary information was rated less highly but still positively (average rating = 5.3); similarly, being directed to a website (Table 17) was given an average rating of 5.2.
- 19 of the 38 persons directed to a website gave reasons for their rating. Half of these reasons were positive, in that they found the information they were looking for. Half were negative, either because the information was not specific enough to their problem, or because they found the process over-whelming to understand on their own.
- If one compares the overall averages for helpfulness and for how things worked out on Tables 16, 17 and 18, the more direct modes of service as reflected in Tables 16 and 17 are rated at 5.6 and 5.5, while the average rating for how referrals worked out was significantly lower at 4.2 on the 7-point scale. Furthermore, 41% of the ratings of how referrals worked out were on the negative end of the scale (1 – 3).

- Although many callers received useful information or assistance from referrals, the main areas of dissatisfaction were:
  - Inability to qualify for service (e.g. legal and duty counsel, or government benefit);
  - Unwillingness of other party to mediate (e.g. Family Justice Centre);
  - Private lawyer either did not return calls, was too expensive, or was not available in caller’s area;
  - Free clinic or advocacy group not in session or no longer in service.

Most of these reasons for dissatisfaction were beyond the LawLINE advisor’s control, but nonetheless negatively affected the rating. They also suggest that there could be utility in following up referral cases to see if the caller has encountered problems.

**Table 16: Helpfulness of direct services provided by advisor**

Services	Number of callers who received and rated this service	Average rating of service on a 1-7 scale, where 1=not helpful at all, and 7=very helpful	Frequency of ratings in following ranges		
			1 – 3	4	5 - 7
<b>General information or explanation provided by advisor</b>					
Explained how law works in relation to caller’s problem	142	6.0	10	14	118
Sent caller more information	12	6.0	1	2	9
Told caller where he/she could get more information	104	5.3	16	21	67
<b>Specific additional services</b>					
Sent correspondence or a memo outlining what to do	8	6.6	0	1	7
Drafted court documents for caller	2	7.0	0	0	2
Drafted a letter to the other party for caller	7	3.4	4	0	3
Sent caller a publication about his/her legal problem	20	4.8	8	0	12
<b>Total explanations and services provided</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>39 (13%)</b>	<b>38 (13%)</b>	<b>218 (74%)</b>

Note: Average ratings of services where there are less than 20 respondents are not reliable. The actual spread of response, as shown in the three columns to the right, gives a more accurate representation where smaller numbers are involved.

**Table 17: How well the instructions given by advisor worked for the caller**

Type of Instruction	Number of callers who received and followed this instruction, and provided a rating	Number of responses in the following ranges on a 7-point scale, where 1=didn't work well at all, and 7=worked very well		
		1 - 3	4	5 - 7
Directed caller to website to help with problem	38	8	6	24
Instructed caller how to deal with a landlord or creditor	19 (NR=5)	3	2	14
Explained to caller how to express self in court, how to file or respond to legal action	13 (NR=2)	2	1	10
Instructed caller how to deal with a government agency	7 (NR=1)	4	0	3
Explained to caller how to fill out a form, make a call, write a letter	6	0	0	6
Directed caller to a public access computer to gather information on his/her problem	2	0	0	2
Reviewed guidelines for applying for welfare, EI or other benefits	2	0	0	2
<b>Total instructions</b>	<b>87 (100%)</b>	<b>17 (20%)</b>	<b>9 (10%)</b>	<b>61 (70%)</b>

Notes:

1. Average ratings of services where there are less than 20 respondents are not reliable. The actual spread of response, as shown in the three columns to the right, gives a more accurate representation where smaller numbers are involved.
2. NR means no response from other callers who could have provided a rating, but did not.
3. The overall mean assessment for all instructions (87 in all) is 5.5 on the 7-point scale described above.

**Table 18: How well the referrals made by the advisor worked for the caller**

Type of Referral	Number of callers who were given and followed the referral, and provided a rating	Number of responses in the following ranges on a 7-point scale, where 1=didn't work well at all, and 7=worked very well		
		1 – 3	4	5 - 7
Government agency	22 (NR=1)	7	1	14
Lawyer referral service or private lawyer	21 (NR=24)	13	2	6
Duty counsel	11	4	1	6
Free clinic, law student or advocacy group	10 (NR=2)	5	1	4
Legal Aid	4	1	0	3
Court Registry	2	0	1	1
Community worker or advocate	2	0	0	2
Legal Information Outreach Worker	1	0	0	1
<b>Total referrals</b>	<b>73 (100%)</b>	<b>30 (41%)</b>	<b>6 (8%)</b>	<b>37 (51%)</b>

Notes:

1. Average ratings of services where there are less than 20 respondents are not reliable. The actual spread of response, as shown in the three columns to the right, gives a more accurate representation where smaller numbers are involved.
2. NR means no response from other callers who could have provided a rating, but did not.
3. The overall mean assessment for all referrals is 4.2 on the 7-point scale described above.

**7.2 CALLER RATINGS OF LAWLINE MESSAGE AND WAITING (RESPONSE) TIME**

Table 19 reports caller feedback about the initial LawLINE message and the wait-time they experienced. The vast majority of callers rated the understandability of the initial LawLINE recorded instruction very positively. One caller recommended that there be a method whereby callers could leave their name and number and be called back by the LawLINE. Another suggested there be an option whereby callers could skip the message if they have already heard it.

Satisfaction with the response time was polarized, with two-thirds of callers giving basically positive responses, and slightly less than a third reacting negatively. As was shown in Table 8, 32% of callers had to wait for longer than 20 minutes. Although we did not attempt to correlate the ratings with the length of the client's wait, it could be inferred from this data that after 20 minutes of waiting, callers begin to feel the response time is unreasonable.

**Table 19: Caller ratings of message and response time**

Item rated	Number of respondents	Average rating of service on a 7-point scale	Number & percentage of responses in the following ranges of a 7-point scale		
			1 – 3	4	5 – 7
Understandability of instructions on recorded LawLINE message 1 = very difficult 7 = very easy	138 (NR=13)	6.8	4 (3%)	0 (0%)	134 (97%)
Satisfaction with response time 1 = very dissatisfied 7 = very satisfied	132 (NR=19)	5.0	40 (30%)	5 (4%)	87 (66%)
How helpful it would be to hear a recorded message about the legal problem while waiting. 1 = not helpful at all 7 = very helpful	136 (NR=15)	3.0	79 (15%)	20 (15%)	37 (27%)

Note: NR means no response from other callers who could have provided a rating, but did not.

The majority of callers felt it would not be useful to hear a recorded message about their legal problem while waiting to connect with an advisor. The two main reasons for not wanting one were:

- It could be extremely frustrating, irritating, annoying or confusing to listen to;
- The caller’s issue was so specific that it could not be adequately addressed.

Those who were in favour of the idea frequently stated that “any information is good,” and a few felt a recorded message might obviate the need to talk to an advisor because of the relative simplicity of their problem.

Some who were opposed to further messages said they prefer the soothing quality of music, while others favoured a message because they were irritated by music. Another small group emphasized that a recorded message should be optional rather than automatic.

### 7.3 OVERALL RATINGS OF LAWLINE SERVICE AND OF OUTCOME

Table 20 shows that a large majority (81%) rated the overall LawLINE service positively (between 5 and 7 on a 7-point scale); the mean rating was 5.8. Some perspective on this mean response is that it is the same as the mean satisfaction rating for the Enhanced Family Duty Counsel service at Robson Street.

A much smaller majority (56%) of callers whose case had reached a conclusion rated their case outcome positively; the mean rating on a 7-point scale was 4.4. This lesser degree of positiveness is in part to be expected, insofar as it is dependent on the actions of other actors and on the merit of the case itself. Both of these factors are beyond the control of the LawLINE advisor. Responses were closely tied to whether the caller got what he/she wanted.

**Table 20: Caller ratings of overall LawLINE service and outcome of case**

Item rated	Number of respondents	Average rating of service on a 7-point scale	Number & percentage of responses in the following ranges of a 7-point scale		
			1 – 3	4	5 – 7
Helpfulness of the overall LawLINE service to caller 1 = not helpful at all 7 = very helpful	150 (NR=1)	5.8	17 (12%)	11 (7%)	122 (81%)
(Only where an outcome has been reached) How favourable the outcome was 1 = not positive at all 7 = very positive	70 (NR=2)	4.4	26 (36%)	5 (7%)	39 (56%)

Note: NR means no response from other callers who could have provided a rating, but did not.

Two other overarching indicators of caller satisfaction with the LawLINE service are shown in Table 21. Both the reported results reflect substantial appreciation of and support for the service. Eighty-five percent of the survey respondents said calling the LawLINE service made a difference to them. There were three primary ways in which it made a difference:

- A half of the callers said it gave them understanding, knowledge, confirmation of a position and/or options that were critical to them.
- Approximately a quarter of callers emphasized the strong emotional difference the service made to their lives. This was expressed in such phrases as “set my mind at ease”, “felt supported”, “felt secure – I trusted their advice”, “felt good to have someone listen and acknowledge the problem”, “was lost and frustrated on my own”, “gave me courage to fight”, “felt validated”.
- Another quarter appreciated that they received a “sense of direction”, “options”, “first steps to take”, and/or “how to proceed”. This response also included specific referrals which made a difference to the caller.

The vast majority (89%) said they would probably or definitely use the service again if they had another legal problem. No caller said they definitely would not call the LawLINE.

**Table 21: Whether calling LawLINE made a difference to caller**

Issue	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1. Whether calling the LawLINE made a difference to caller.	No	21	14%
	Yes	128	85%
	Don't know	2	1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>
2. If caller had another legal problem, whether they would likely call the LawLINE again.	Definitely not	0	0%
	Probably not	9	6%
	Not sure	7	5%
	Probably yes	12	8%
	Definitely yes	122	81%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150 *</b>	<b>100%</b>

Notes: \* NR=1

#### 7.4 KNOWLEDGE AND CONFIDENCE OUTCOMES FOR CALLER

Table 22 reinforces the findings presented in the previous section. It lists client ratings on a series of statements, presented in descending order of positiveness. The first two – the sense of being understood and the development of confidence - underscore the importance of the emotional impact of receiving this type of assistance. The third and fourth – being able to do more or make better decisions – reflect the sense of having a direction, discussed in Section 7.3. The fifth and sixth relate simply to knowledge of the legal system and of their problem. All six of these items received high average ratings, and close to or over 80% of respondents gave ratings of 5 to 7 to the statement.

The last two items relate to the harder tasks of resolving and/or containing their problems. Although these tasks are more beyond the control of the LawLINE advisor, they still show respectable average ratings.

**Table 22: Knowledge and confidence outcomes for caller, as a result of calling LawLINE**

Statement	Number of respondents who answered this statement	Average caller rating on a 7-point scale, where 1=don't agree at all, & 7=strongly agree	Number & percentage of responses in the following ranges of the 7-point scale		
			1 – 3	4	5 – 7
<b>As a result of my contact with the LawLINE . . .</b>					
I feel somebody understood the problem I was having.	144 (NR=7)	6.0	14 (9%)	7 (5%)	123 (85%)
I feel more confident that I will be able to handle a problem like this in the future.	140 (NR=11)	5.8	20 (14%)	6 (4%)	114 (81%)
I feel I was able to do more than I could have done on my own.	143 (NR=8)	5.7	20 (14%)	8 (6%)	115 (81%)
I was able to make better decisions.	140 (NR=11)	5.7	13 (9%)	16 (11%)	111 (79%)
I was able to understand the legal system better.	144 (NR=7)	5.6	21 (14%)	13 (9%)	110 (76%)
I was able to understand my problem better.	144 (NR=7)	5.6	17 (11%)	12 (8%)	115 (80%)
I was able to take steps to resolve my legal problem.	130 (NR=21)	5.3	29 (22%)	7 (5%)	94 (72%)
I feel I was able to keep the problem from growing into something bigger.	105 (NR=46)	4.9	27 (26%)	11 (10%)	67 (63%)

## Notes:

1. NR = did not respond to this statement.
2. Percentages do not necessarily total 100% due to rounding.

**7.5 IMPACT OF LAWLINE ON PERSONS WITH SPECIFIC BARRIERS**

Callers in the survey were asked if they or a household member had any of the barriers identified in Table 23. Although the question was optional, the vast majority of respondents were willing to respond. The frequency rate of the disabilities ranged from 2% to 36% of respondents.



**Table 23: Impact of LawLINE on persons with specific barriers**

Description of Barrier	Number of callers responding to question	Frequency and percentage who said "yes"	Whether service like LawLINE makes it easier, harder or about the same as a walk-in service to get help with your legal problem when you are faced with this type of barrier		
			Easier	Harder	About the same
1. Does someone in your household have a disability or serious health problem?	142 (NR=9)	51 (36%)	38 (75%)	6 (12%)	7 (14%)
2. Do you have problems with transportation, like not having a car, having a car that breaks down a lot or having limited bus service?	143 (NR=8)	39 (27%)	35 (90%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)
3. Do you have problems reading or speaking English that make it harder for you to fill out forms or do paperwork?	142 (NR=9)	3 (2%)	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	--
4. Do you have work, daycare or school scheduling issues that make it hard to attend to a legal problem?	143 (NR=8)	47 (33%)	38 (83%)	1 (2%)	7 (15%)
5. Do you have other things happening in your life that make it hard to deal with the legal problem, like being afraid of another person such as an ex-partner, current partner or household member?	137 (NR=14)	22 (16%)	14 (70%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)

Notes:

1. The percentages in the right hand columns for questions #3 and #5 are not reliable because of the small overall number of cases.
2. Percentages do not necessarily total 100% due to rounding.

Callers with the identified barrier were then asked whether a service like LawLINE makes it easier, harder or about the same as a walk-in service to get help with a legal problem. Although two types of barriers were not represented in sufficient numbers to provide reliable data, 75% or more of those with health, transportation or work/daycare/school scheduling problems felt the LawLINE was an easier type of service to use, and no more than 12% found it harder to use. Thus, considering that the costs of delivering a comparable walk-in service might well exceed those of LLEP, it is noteworthy that the benefits of access for this particular sub-group of callers are perceived to be superior to those of a walk-in service.

## 8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarizes the main conclusions of the client survey, and presents recommendations both directly from callers and from an overall analysis of results.

### 8.1 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The primary conclusions based on an analysis of the survey data are summarized below. Where appropriate, comparisons are made with client survey responses from a larger and more detailed study of five hotline services in the United States undertaken in 2001 and published in 2002 (referred to as HOAS in the text that follows).\*

#### *Waiting Time*

- 32% of callers waited more than 20 minutes before getting through to an advisor.
- 30% of callers were dissatisfied with the LLEP's response time.

#### *Advisor's Manner and Attitude*

- In general, from the callers' perspective, the LawLINE advisors have done an excellent job in gauging the level of the callers' understanding, and the expectations that can be placed on them. In the HOAS, expectations were "about right" in 86% of cases (p.54) versus 91% in this study.
- A very small percentage of clients (between 2-3%) complained of the advisor being uncompassionate, judgmental, or otherwise making the caller uncomfortable. The comparable figure for this type of complaint in the HOAS was 2% (p.56).

#### *Caller Follow-Through on Instructions and Referrals*

- Callers completely followed through on instructions in 72% of cases, and partially or completely in 77% of cases. Thus they did not follow through in 23 – 28% of cases. In HOAS' summary of case outcomes as determined by a lawyer panel, excluding indeterminate cases, the comparable figure was that in 29% of cases the client did not act (p.34). Although the method of assessment differs in the two studies, the results are remarkably similar. It should be noted that client follow-through on referrals (a much smaller base of callers than those who received instruction) in the LLEP study is only 44% for complete follow-through, and 53% for partial or complete follow-through. The HOAS did not have a comparable figure, although it noted that there was minimal follow-through by clients who were referred to a private lawyer (p.50).
- One-third of callers did not follow through on instructions because of lack of understanding, confidence, resources or health. The rough equivalent of this category in the HOAS was 50% of clients (p.50). The LLEP caller response suggests that their estimation of how well the advisors gauged their understanding and capacities was overly optimistic.

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\* The Hotline Outcomes Measurement Study, Final Report, Phase III: Full-Scale Telephone Survey (Center for Policy Research: Denver, 2002). This is referred to as the HOAS.

### ***Case Resolution and LawLINE Follow-up***

- Almost half the callers felt their matter was partially or fully resolved, or their situation had changed and did not need further resolution; the other 58% stated it was not resolved, but 40% of those cases were still pending. In the HOAS, 43% of clients felt that their matter was fully or partially resolved or their situation had changed (p.30).
- 21% of callers said LawLINE staff called back to follow-up with the client. Another 20% of overall callers did not receive a call-back, but felt it would have been useful. The HOAS, through an analysis of factors affecting favourable outcomes, recommended more frequent use of follow-up calls in selected cases (p.69).

### ***Callers' Assessment of the LawLINE***

- The helpfulness of the overall direct information and services was assessed positively by 74% of callers, and negatively by only 13%.
- Advisors' instructions were seen to work well by approximately 70% of callers, but referrals by only 54% of callers.
- The helpfulness of the overall LawLINE service was assessed positively by 81% of callers.
- The outcome was assessed positively by 56% of callers for whom an outcome had been reached. The HOAS analysis of favourableness was done by lawyer review of files and client comments. If one deletes pending cases from their analysis, their assessment would be that 46% of outcomes were favourable (p.36).
- 89% of callers said they would probably or definitely phone LawLINE again if they had another legal problem. 77% of the HOAS clients made these response (p.55).
- 85% of callers said the LawLINE service made a difference to them, because it gave them understanding or knowledge, a sense of reassurance and support, and a sense of direction.
- Impacts in terms of knowledge and confidence for callers were rated highly by approximately 80% of LawLINE callers. Impacts in terms of taking steps to resolve the legal problem and keeping it from getting bigger were rated lower, but nonetheless positively by 60 - 70% of callers.
- 75% or more of callers with health, transportation or work/daycare/school scheduling problems felt that LawLINE would be an easier type of service to use than a walk-in service.

## **8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **8.2.1 By Callers**

Callers were asked to make recommendations for ways to improve the LawLINE service. These recommendations should be seen in relation to the very positive results reported in the previous section. In total, 81 recommendations were made. They are listed below with the frequency of mention in brackets:

- Reduce wait time (33), including related suggestions to add more advisors, put on more lines, expand to evening service or advise callers how long they would have to wait.

- Provide more service in certain areas (12), e.g. estates, co-op laws, human rights, civil actions.
- Develop a more empathetic advisor manner with callers (10).
- Develop better lists of resources to which clients can reliably be referred (5), including telephone numbers which are toll-free, lists of local lawyers, alternative resources if a legal aid application is unsuccessful, reliable library tools that can be borrowed.
- Develop the capacity for callers to leave messages, rather than wait for long periods (4).
- Make advertising more visible (4), especially with an improved Yellow Page ad that makes clear that callers can get advice.
- Increase follow-up calls to callers (3).
- Expand LawLINK (3), e.g. by including case scenarios and providing a list of all forms that can be accessed.
- Allow for continuity of advisor on subsequent calls (2).
- Miscellaneous individual comments (3).

### **8.2.2 Recommendations Based on Findings**

The following recommendations are based on the findings reported in Section 8.1. These should be viewed in the context of a service that is clearly valued by and meeting important needs of the majority of callers. They are listed in descending order of importance.

#### ***Recommendation #1***

That the LLEP take steps to reduce caller wait time by allocating more staff resources to the service, such that no client need wait more than one-half an hour to reach an advisor. Furthermore, callers should be informed approximately how long their wait will be, using some form of recorded announcement that tracks caller load at any given time.

#### ***Recommendation #2***

That the frequency of follow-up calls to clients be increased by approximately 20% from the existing level. Given the lower rates of follow-through by clients when advisors make a referral, it would seem appropriate that referral cases should receive greater scrutiny. Other considerations are language capacity, complexity of issue, and apparent confidence of the caller.

#### ***Recommendation #3***

That continuing emphasis be placed on advisors projecting a caring and compassionate attitude with clients. This recommendation is not made in a spirit of criticism, insofar as we are not in a position to second-guess the dynamics of individual calls or the character and demeanor of the callers themselves. Furthermore, far more praise than criticism was received about the manner of the advisors. Rather, the recommendation is simply a reminder that it is sometimes as important to quickly and simply acknowledge the stress and/or vulnerability a caller is experiencing as it is to provide legal advice to help resolve their situation.

#### ***Recommendation #4***

That a system of messages providing information about legal problems not be implemented during the time the caller is waiting to talk to the advisor. At a minimum, if such an approach is planned, callers should be given the option of not listening to any messages.

## **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix 1: Automatic Recorded Message Informing Callers About the Evaluation Survey**

Welcome to the LawLINE. We can give you general information about the law. We may also be able to give you some legal advice about a court case or other legal matter that you are involved in.

We ask all callers for their name and phone number. If we can give you legal advice, we will ask you for some information about your income to assess if you meet our financial guidelines. All caller information is kept strictly confidential.

**LawLINE is a pilot project that is scheduled to run until March 1005. As part of our project evaluation, we want to find out how people use help from LawLINE to resolve their legal problems. To assist us, we have hired a research group to follow up with callers.**

**We are asking for your help in this study. If you agree, we may give the research group your name, phone number, and a copy of all of our written records of your case. Someone from the group may call you back in a few weeks to talk to you.**

**The researchers will keep all information about your case strictly confidential. They will not show it to anyone outside the study. They will only use the information you provide in a way which does not let people know your name.**

**You don't have to participate in the survey if you don't want to. Whether you do or not, it won't have any effect on us giving you help in the future. The LawLINE staff member who answers your call today will ask if you wish to participate in this survey.**

We will now connect you with the next available LawLINE lawyer or paralegal.

As there may be some delay before you are connected we ask for your patience in staying on the line.

Please note that this call may be monitored for quality assurance purposes.



## **Appendix 2: Follow-up Letter to Callers Who Had Verbally Agreed to Participate in the Evaluation**

(On Legal Services Society letterhead)

May 17, 2004

### **PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL**

#### **Re: The LawLINE Evaluation Project**

This letter is sent to the attention of the Addressee. You recently agreed to help us assess our LawLINE (legal advice hotline) project. We promised to send you a letter to confirm what we told you about the project.

#### Background

LawLINE is a pilot project of LSS that runs until March 2005. We want to find out if the LawLINE pilot project helps people to resolve their legal problems so we are doing an evaluation, including a survey of callers.

We hired a research group to follow up with callers to see how they used the advice and how their cases turned out. We will give the researchers your name, phone number, and a copy of all of our written records of your case. Someone from the group will call you back in a few weeks to talk to you.

The researchers will keep all information about your case confidential and will not show it to anyone outside the study. They will return all records to LSS when the study is over. We will only use the information you provide in an anonymous way, after taking out any information that could identify you.

#### Participation

You don't have to participate in the survey if you don't want to. It won't affect your ability to get help from us again if you have another legal problem. If you don't want to participate, you can:

- leave a message at (604) 601-6114 with your name and telephone number. If you live outside the Lower Mainland, call Enquiry B.C. at (604) 660-2421 and ask to be put through to the Legal Services Society at this same number. You won't be charged for making a long distance call;
- or write to us at the address on this letter.

If we don't hear from you within 20 days of the date on this letter, we will understand that you still want to participate in the project and will give your records to the researchers.

Thank you very much for taking the time to help us with this project. With your help, we will find out how LawLINE is helping people to understand the law and resolve their legal problems.

Yours truly,  
**Legal Services Society**

John Simpson  
**Manager, Community Services**

### Appendix 3: Rules for Review of Files and Contacting Callers

The following is an amalgamation of two sets of rules concerning review of files and contacting of LawLINE clients.

1. The interviewer should carefully review each case, including all notes, before contacting a caller.
2. Even though all callers agreed to participate in the survey, **caution is always necessary** when contacting them, due to concerns about family violence in particular and confidentiality of information in general.
3. Where there is an indication of violence in a family home or family relationship in the case notes, the interviewer should not contact the caller. We cannot cull all of these cases out by generating a report as the information may be in text form in the notes, so the interviewer will have to read the notes first.
4. Where there is no indication of family violence, but it is a family matter, the interviewer should still be very cautious about following the procedure for contacting the caller. A situation that may have involved no violence at the time of the call may have become violent subsequently. The opposing party could still be in the house, or have returned.
5. If case notes indicate that a family law caller lived with the opposing party (sometimes referred to as o/p in the case notes) at the time of the call, do not contact the caller.
6. Even when the case does not involve family law, there are situations where another person in the household is an opposing party or has a different legal interest, and this will be apparent from the notes. Caution should be exercised when calling in these situations, though this does not mean that the person cannot be contacted.
7. Some phone numbers given by callers are described in the notes field under the phone number as being for work, or for a relative/friend, or confidential. Some phone numbers are for family members or friends who do not have the legal problem themselves, but are calling to try to get help for someone else. Do not call these numbers as you could find yourself in an awkward situation if the person with the legal problem answers the phone, as you can't discuss the case with them – only with the person who made the call to LawLINE.
8. When calling a LawLINE caller, ask to speak to Mr/Ms X. You cannot go beyond saying that you are “calling about a survey” – for example, to remind the person that s/he agreed to participate or called LawLINE – without first confirming identity. You can't say this because it will give away confidential information that the caller has previously been in touch with LSS. You cannot explain the reason for your call to a suspicious person who wants to know why you are calling, without confirming identity first. This includes someone who is not the LawLINE caller but won't put that person on the line without first getting more information from you.
9. Once you have someone on the line who says s/he is the LawLINE caller, you should say only that you are calling “on behalf of LSS” to conduct a survey and need to confirm that you are speaking to the right person. Identity can be confirmed by asking callers to provide personal information contained in the client profile (e.g. what is your birthdate? BC driver's license? SIN?, etc.) The interviewer will need to record for us what piece of personal information was used for this question, and the fact that the correct answer was given by the caller.

10. If there is any reason to think that the caller might be at risk (e.g. where a family violence issue is raised in notes), it may or may not be appropriate to carry on with an interview. Presumably callers agreed to be surveyed, so had the opportunity to decide against it if they thought it would put them at risk. However, you don't know if the situation has changed since then. Caution should be exercised and you should ask for personal ID that is likely to be only on the person of the caller, e.g. in their wallet or purse. The best ID for this purpose is a BC driver's license as a spouse or near relative is unlikely to know it by heart.
11. If you get the sense that perhaps the wrong person has answered the phone and is pretending to be the LawLINE caller, make an excuse such as "I am sorry, we appear to have contacted you by mistake" and terminate the call and keep a record of that encounter, and which caller it related to.
12. Once you have confirmed identity you can proceed to remind the caller that s/he agreed to participate in a survey (referencing the date of the call, message they heard, consent given to LawLINE staff, and the follow-up letter they were sent confirming the survey). And at that point, the caller can opt in/out of the survey.

## Appendix 4: LawLINE Evaluation: Advice Caller Questionnaire

### Background

1. Evaluation # \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Participant ID # \_\_\_\_\_
3. Advice Caller Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Information that will be used to identify caller: m.m.n. \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_  
S.I.N. \_\_\_\_\_ Driver's Licence: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Special precautions: \_\_\_\_\_

### Call Record

	DATE	TIME	RESULT OF CALL
			1. No number; 2. Wrong number; 3. Advice caller not home, call-back (date); 4. Refusal; 5. Appt. for (date); 6. No show for interview; 7. Completed interview.
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

### Introduction

1. Introduce self. Confirm that you are speaking to the advice caller as per procedures outlined in John's June 24<sup>th</sup> email. You are calling on behalf of the Legal Services Society to conduct a survey of callers who used the LawLINE service between April 5<sup>th</sup> and May 14<sup>th</sup> of this year. Explain that LSS sent them a letter in May about the survey, and to contact LSS if they didn't wish to participate, so our assumption is that they are willing to do so.
2. If caller seems confused or requests more information, explain purpose of evaluation:
  - Being done with sample of clients;
  - To get candid feedback, positive and negative about their experiences and satisfaction with the service, to find out what they did with the service, to find out what they did with the information they received, and with what results.
3. Confirm confidentiality.
  - No names or identifying comments used.
4. Determine if they are willing to do an interview (approximately 20 minutes) if this is a suitable time, or book appointment for another date.

**FILE DATA**

- 1.0 Evaluation # \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.0 Number of Cases Involved
1. One
  2. Two
  3. Three
- 3.0 Name of LawLINE worker:
- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Roxanna Aune       | 7. Manjeet Channa |
| 2. Sherilynn Thompson | 8. Janna Cumming  |
| 3. Roberta Wong       | 9. Tannis Boxer   |
| 4. Alison Ward        | 10. Bruno Drucker |
| 5. Jim Russell        | 11. Lisa Jung     |
| 6. Linda Thiessen     | 12. Allan Parker  |
- 4.0 Region
- |                             |                           |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Vancouver/Sunshine Coast | 5. Okanagan/West Kootenay |
| 2. Surrey/Fraser Valley     | 6. Interior/East Kootenay |
| 3. North                    | 7. North West             |
| 4. Vancouver Island         | 8. Out of Province        |
- 5.0 First Language
1. English
  2. Non-English
- 6.0 Ethnicity
1. Aboriginal
  2. Non-Aboriginal
- 7.0 Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_
- d/ m/ y
- 8.0 Age
1. 19 – 24
  2. 25 – 44
  3. 45 – 64
  4. 65+
- 9.0 Gender
1. Male
  2. Female



## INTERVIEW

1. The Legal Services Society LawLINE records indicate that you called about a \_\_\_\_\_ problem. Can you tell me briefly the main things you hoped to find out when you called?

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2. What did the LawLINE worker explain to you and/or suggest that you do?

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3. Did he/she (If obvious from #2, just record without asking, and then ask follow-up) . . .

	No	Response		If Yes, How Helpful Was This						
		Yes	Don't Know	Not helpful at all		Neither helpful nor unhelpful			Very helpful	
				↓			↓			↓
	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
a) Explain how the law works in regard to your problem?	1	2	3	Reason _____						
b) Send you more information?	1	2	3	Reason _____						
c) Tell you where you could get more information?	1	2	3	Reason _____						

4. Did the LawLINE worker explain to you how to do certain things? For example, did he/she . . .

Item (Note to interviewer: if response to item is obvious from answer to question #2, complete the response in column #2 on your own without asking, and proceed to questions in the next column, or to the next item.)	Response 1=No 2=Yes	(If Yes) Did you do what he/she suggested?  1=No 2=Partially; Tried 3=Yes	(If Yes) How did this work for you? (Scale 1-7) 1= Not well at all 7=Very Well Note: if too soon to tell, leave rating blank and write "too soon" under reason.	(If No or Partially) 1=Didn't understand, forgot, confused 2=Too hard, afraid, discouraged, no confidence 3=Changed mind, not worth it 4=Situation changed, problem resolved, other side dropped it 5=Nothing could be done for me 6=Tried, no one called back, couldn't get through 7= Resources (money, transportation, lack of childcare) 8=Illness, health 9=Other (describe)
a) Direct you to a website to help you with a problem, using your own or somebody's computer?	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____ _____ _____
b) Suggest you use a public access computer somewhere in your community to access a website?	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____ _____ _____
c) Tell you how to deal with your landlord, or a creditor?	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____ _____ _____
d) Tell you how to deal with a government agency?	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____ _____ _____
e) Tell you how to express yourself in court, or how to file or respond to a legal action?	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____ _____ _____
f) Help you to fill out a form, make a call or write a letter?	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____ _____ _____
g) Review guidelines for qualifying or applying for welfare, employment insurance, or other benefits	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____ _____ _____



5. Did the LawLINE worker refer you to a legal, government or community service for help? For example . . .

Item (Note to interviewer: if response to item is obvious from answer to question #2, complete the responses in column #2 on your own and proceed to questions in columns 3-5, or to the next item.)	Response 1=No 2=yes	(If Yes) Did you do what he/she suggested?  1=No 2=Partially; Tried 3=Yes	(If Yes) How did this work for you? (Scale 1-7) 1= Not well at all 7=Very Well Note: if too soon to tell, leave rating blank and write "too soon" under reason.	(If No) 1=Didn't understand, forgot, confused 2=Too hard, afraid, discouraged, no confidence 3=Changed mind, not worth it 4=Situation changed, problem resolved, other side dropped it 5=Nothing could be done for me 6=Tried, no one called back, couldn't get through 7= Resources (money, transportation, lack of childcare) 8=Illness, health 9=Other (describe)
a) Duty Counsel	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____
b) Legal Aid (intake or tariff problems)	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____
c) Websites: LawLINK, LSS, Family Law Website, other (specify: _____)	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____
d) Legal Information Outreach Worker	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____
e) Government Agency (specify: _____)	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____
f) Court Registry	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____
g) Administrative Tribunal (specify: _____)	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____
h) Lawyer Referral Service or a Private Lawyer	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____
i) Community Worker/ Advocate (e.g. welfare, _____ worker)	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____
j) A Free Clinic, Law Student or advocacy Group	_____	_____	Reason for rating: _____	_____

6. What has happened with your legal problem since you called the LawLINE?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. For better or worse, would you say your problem has been resolved or has reached a conclusion?

- 1. No, not at all.
- 2. Only partly.
- 3. Situation changed, dropped the matter, changed my mind.
- 4. Don't know, too soon to tell.
- 5. Yes, completely.

7.1 (If answer is #2 , 3 or 5) On a scale of 1 to 7, how favourable (or positive) would you say this outcome is? Rating \_\_\_\_\_

7.2 Reason \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7.3 (Regardless of answer to question 7 or 7.1) Did calling the LawLINE make a difference to you?

- 1. No.
- 2. Yes.
- 3. DK

7.4 If yes, in what way?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Going back to your first attempt to contact the service, how many calls to the LawLINE did it take to get assistance on this matter (i.e. to get through to a LawLINE worker)?

- 1. One
- 2. Two
- 3. Three
- 4. Four or more
- 5. Can't remember

9. How easy to understand were the instructions in the recorded LawLINE message?  
(scale of 1=very difficult; 7=very easy) \_\_\_\_\_

9.1 (Regardless of response) What could be done to make the instructions easier to understand?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. How long were you kept on hold before you were able to talk to a LawLINE worker? (If more than one call, add: "on the call when you actually spoke to the worker".)
1. Immediate response
  2. Under 5 minutes
  3. 5 – 9 minutes
  4. 10 – 14 minutes
  5. 15 - 20 minutes
  6. 30 minutes or more
11. How satisfied were you with this response time?  
(On a scale of 1 – 7; 1 = very dissatisfied; 7 = very satisfied) Rating: \_\_\_\_\_
12. How helpful would it have been to hear recorded messages about your legal problem while you are waiting for a worker to talk to you?  
(Scale of 1-not helpful at all; 7=very helpful) \_\_\_\_\_
- 12.1 Reason for response
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
13. Which of the following statements best describes the way the LawLINE worker talked to you?
1. He/she talked over my head, using legal words I didn't understand, and/or talked too fast.
  2. He/she explained things in a way that was just right.
  3. He/she talked down to me.
  4. None of these/not sure (describe other response if offered): \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
14. Which statement best describes the LawLINE worker's attitude?
1. He/she expected me to do things that were too hard.
  2. He/she was about right in what he/she thought I could do.
  3. He/she treated me as if I couldn't do anything for myself.
  4. None of these/not sure (describe other response if offered): \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

15. Did the LawLINE worker ...

Item (Note to interviewer: if response to item is known from the file review or from an earlier question, complete response in column #2 without asking, and proceed to questions in columns #3 and #4)	Response 1=No 2=Yes	If "yes" To what degree did this written information help you? (Scale 1-7) 1=Didn't help at all 7=Helped a lot Note: if too soon to tell, leave rating blank and mark "too soon" under reason.	If "no" How much do you feel it could have helped you if you had received this type of assistance? (Scale 1-7) 1=Wouldn't have helped very much, or not very necessary 7=Would have helped a lot, was very necessary
a) send you correspondence or a memo outlining what to do?	_____	Rating: _____ Reason for rating: _____	Rating: _____ Reason for rating: _____
b) draft court documents for you?	_____	Rating: _____ Reason for rating: _____	Rating: _____ Reason for rating: _____
c) draft a letter to the other party for you?	_____	Rating: _____ Reason for rating: _____	Rating: _____ Reason for rating: _____
d) send you a publication about your legal problem?	_____	Rating: _____ Reason for rating: _____	Rating: _____ Reason for rating: _____

16. Did anyone from LawLINE call you back to see how you were doing, or to see if you needed more help with your problem?

- 1. No
- 2. Yes

16.1 (If yes) What difference did this make to you in helping to resolve your problem?

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16.2 (If no) Would it have helped you to receive such a call?

- 1. No
- 2. Yes
- 3. DK

16.1 (If yes to Q. 16.2) What would you have asked the worker?

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17. Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 = you don't agree at all, and 7 = strongly agree.

STATEMENT	RATING
As a result of my contact with the LawLINE:	
17.1 I was able to understand the legal system better.	
17.2 I was able to understand my problem better.	
17.3 I was able to make better decisions after talking to the LawLINE.	
17.4 I feel somebody understood the problem I was having.	
17.5 I feel I was able to keep the problem from growing into something bigger.	
17.6 I feel I was able to do more than I could have done on my own.	
17.7 I was able to take steps to resolve my legal problem	
17.8 I feel more confident that I will be able to handle a problem like this in the future.	

18. On a scale of 1 to 7, (where 1 = not helpful at all, and 7 = very helpful), overall, how helpful was the LawLINE to you? Rating: \_\_\_\_\_
19. If you had another legal problem, would you likely call the LawLINE again?
1. Definitely not/never again.
  2. Probably not.
  3. Not sure
  4. Probably yes.
  5. Definitely yes.

20. What changes or additions would you recommend to make the LawLINE better?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

21. Finally, we are interested in finding out if people face barriers that affect how they use our services. You don't have to answer these questions – they are personal – but we would appreciate it if you could help us with some or all of them. Your answers will help Legal Services design our services better.

Question:	Answer: 1=No 2=Yes 3=Not sure 4=Refused	If "yes" Does a telephone service like LawLINE make it easier, harder, or about the same as a walk-in service to get help with your legal problem when you are faced with this type of barrier? 1=Easier 2=Harder 3=About the same
a) Does someone in your household have a disability or serious health problem?	_____	Answer: _____ Reason: _____
b) Do you have problems with transportation, like not having a car, having a car that breaks down a lot or having limited bus service?	_____	Answer: _____ Reason: _____
c) Do you have problems reading or speaking English that make it hard for you to fill out forms or do paperwork?	_____	Answer: _____ Reason: _____
d) Do you have work, daycare or school scheduling issues that make it hard to attend to a legal problem?	_____	Answer: _____ Reason: _____
e) Do you have other things happening in your life that make it hard to deal with the legal problem, like feeling worried about the problem or being afraid of another person such as an ex-partner, current partner or household member?	_____	Answer: _____ Reason: _____ _____

These are all the questions I have. Thanks for taking the time to give me this feedback.

22. (Incidental Notes): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_