Society of Calgary's Court and Legal

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On behalf of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary

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Introduction

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary (EFry) provides diverse programming to individuals in the community who are involved in the justice system. This includes court supports and legal advocacy, outreach for women who are currently or have been incarcerated, Indigenous programming, and a twelve-week emotional wellness program. EFry's outreach, court programs, and legal advocacy programs support individuals appearing in court and facing legal challenges through providing legal information, advocacy, and access to resources in the community. Volunteers and staff are on the court floors in Calgary, Airdrie, Didsbury, Cochrane, Canmore, and Okotoks, while also providing support to those living in Morley.

EFry court programming provides legal information on court procedures, processes, and options, as well as resources for vulnerable populations in Calgary and throughout Southern Regional courts (Airdrie, Canmore, Cochrane, Didsbury, and Okotoks). The evaluation of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary's outreach, court, and legal advocacy programs serves to ensure that the services provided to service users are valuable and meaningful to the population they serve. As EFry provides a service that impacts Calgary's vulnerable populations, this comprehensive analysis of existing programs identifies how existing services can better meet the needs of the population being served.

This program evaluation aims to answer the following research question: in what ways are The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary's outreach, court, and legal advocacy programs supporting service users and how can they be improved to better meet service user's needs? This study seeks to identify existing strengths of the programs and ways in which the needs of service users can be better met through employing both process and output evaluation measures. The process measures indicate whether or not each of the court and legal advocacy programs are reaching the target population; satisfaction of service users, staff, and partners; elements of the programs that are working well; and challenges that are faced. These measures inform improvements for each of the programs, as well as elements of the programs that are working well and should be retained. Output measurements identify if the intended results of the programs are being reached and if the number of service users being served by each program are sufficient.

Ultimately, this report aims to identify success for both staff implementing and participants using programs and to discover the factors within the supports and programs that are catalysts for healing.

Background

In order to ensure that non-profit organization provide services that are valuable and meaningful to the population they serve, program evaluations are essential to identify existing strengths and weaknesses. By evaluating The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary's court programs, areas for improvement can be identified to strengthen the existing services.

As EFry is providing a service that impacts Calgary's vulnerable populations, conducting a comprehensive analysis of existing court programs will identify how existing services can better meet the needs of the population being served. Continuous improvement of EFry programming enables the agency to better meet service users' needs, while also lessening burdens on the other agencies and systems operating within the courts.

EFry is committed to ongoing evaluation of existing programing to facilitate continuous improvement of supports provided to service users. This enables EFry to regularly evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of existing programs and provides the tools necessary to ensure that programs are meeting the needs of the individuals being supported. This evaluation is one of several that focuses on a specific program operated by EFry. This document will be used to inform future programming and strategic direction of court programming.

Methods

Data Collection

The primary research method employed in this study was a survey questionnaire. Questionnaires were administered at the Calgary Courthouse and several regional courthouses: Airdrie, Canmore, Cochrane, and Okotoks. Three versions of the questionnaire were developed to capture the input of three categories of stakeholder: EFry staff/volunteers, other agency partner staff, and service-users surveyed at the Calgary Courthouse as well as several regional courthouses.

In addition to the completion of surveys, personal observations were made by the researchers to determine how EFry's processes are working and to identify strengths and weaknesses in how the programs are operating. At each courthouse, the researchers took note of numerous EFry court program characteristics such as placement of EFry staff/volunteers, visibility of EFry signage, and how EFry representatives collaborate with representatives from other organizations in the courthouses.

Existing statistics and evaluation results collected by The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary are evaluated using both qualitative and quantitative measures, alongside questionnaires that will be administered with service users, staff, volunteers, and partners. Further, statistics from Statistics Canada, Calgary Police Service, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the Alberta Justice and Solicitor General is examined to identify how external factors affect the services provided by The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary.

Participation Criteria

EFry staff and volunteers must have been involved in EFry court programming for at least six months at the time of assessment to ensure that they have a comprehensive understanding of the program(s) they are part of and to ensure that the feedback they are providing is representative of their experiences.

Service users were eligible to participate if they had a meaningful interaction with an EFry representative, such as receiving information and/or resources pertaining to their legal matter(s). Written consent was also necessary for service-user data to be included in the study. A blank copy of the consent form was available upon request if the individual desired one for their own records. The questionnaire also required that the individual had a firm grasp of the English language since the researchers did not have the capacity to administer it in multiple languages. However, the option to complete the questionnaire with the help of a researcher was offered to individuals who did not want to complete the questionnaire on their own for reasons such as low literacy level or convenience.

Partner agencies/systems were eligible to participate if they had partnered with EFry for at least one month at the time of assessment. This was to ensure that individuals representing different agencies had a comprehensive understanding of the partnership and worthwhile feedback to provide.

All individuals were required to be able to provide informed consent. They were provided with copies of their written consent forms for their records.

Data Analysis

The primary outcome variables measured in this study are how the EFry programs are meeting the needs of service users, staff, volunteers, and partner agencies/systems and ways in which services can be improved to better accommodate participants' needs. This was measured by asking participants about different elements of the programs and whether they are meeting their needs. This was followed up by asking participants to identify ways in which EFry services could be changed to better meet their needs.

Secondary outcomes variables measured in this study include

1) Barriers that service users face when attending court and ways that they could be better supported;
2) Difficulties that staff/volunteers face when providing support;
3) Success of partnerships with other agencies/systems; and,
4) Ways in which existing partnerships can be strengthened.

Following data collection and data entry, data was analyzed using the statistical analysis software SPSS. Quantitative analysis consisted of examining frequencies and distributions of participants' responses to identify participants' overall satisfaction with aspects of EFry court and legal advocacy programs.

Results

Contextual Data Analysis Scan

Statistics Canada Results

External data was analyzed to contextualize the services provided by EFry. This will allow overall trends to be identified to highlight how this may affect service provision.

Table 1. Adult custody admissions to correctional services by Indigenous identity in Alberta, 2017/2018[1]

	Total number of individuals	Number of individuals with an Indigenous identity	Percentage of individuals with an Indigenous identity
Total, custodial admissions	42,493	17,614	**41%**
Sentenced	16,716	6,758	**40%**
Remand	23,914	10,319	**43%**
Other custodial statuses	1,863	537	**29%**

Table 2. Adult admissions to community services by Indigenous identity in Alberta, 2017/2018[2]

	Total number of individuals	Number of individuals with an Indigenous identity	Percentage of individuals with an Indigenous identity
Total, community admissions	31,169	8,932	**29%**
Total, probation and conditional sentences	9,548	2,640	**28%**
Other community programs	21,621	6,292	**29%**

Data from Statistics Canada that in 2016, approximately 7% of Alberta's population identified as Indigenous.[3] However, tables 3 and 4 both identify that Indigenous individuals compose a large proportion of adult admissions to custody and community services such as probation and conditional sentences. In 2007/2008, Indigenous admissions accounted for 36% of admissions to adult custody, which has since increased to 41% in 2017/2018.[4] As Indigenous populations are overrepresented in the justice system, this suggests that a large portion of service users being supported by EFry court programming are Indigenous. Thus, it is particularly important that staff and volunteers are knowledgeable about Indigenous programming within and outside EFry to ensure that they are able to provide appropriate supports and referrals to service users attending court.

[1] Statistics Canada. Table 35-10-0016-01. Adult custody admissions to correctional services by Aboriginal identity.
[2] Statistics Canada. Table 35-10-0020-01. Adult admissions to community services by Aboriginal identity.
[3] Statistics Canada. 2017. Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001. Ottawa, Ontario. Data products, 2016 Census.
[4] Statistics Canada. Admissions to adult custody, by Aboriginal identity, jurisdiction, 2007/2008 and 2017/2018.

When examining the average daily counts of adults in correctional services in Alberta, there was a 6% change in correctional services between 2016/2017 and 2017/2018.[5] When examining the average daily counts of youth in correctional services, there was a -11% change in the rate from 2016/2017 to 2017/2018 in Alberta.[6] If this trend continues, youth programming within EFry may see a decline in numbers. This supports the focus that EFry places on quality versus quantity. Rather than encouraging staff and volunteers to support as many individuals as quickly as possible, this data suggests that EFry should continue to focus on providing high quality, in-depth supports to all service users on caseloads.

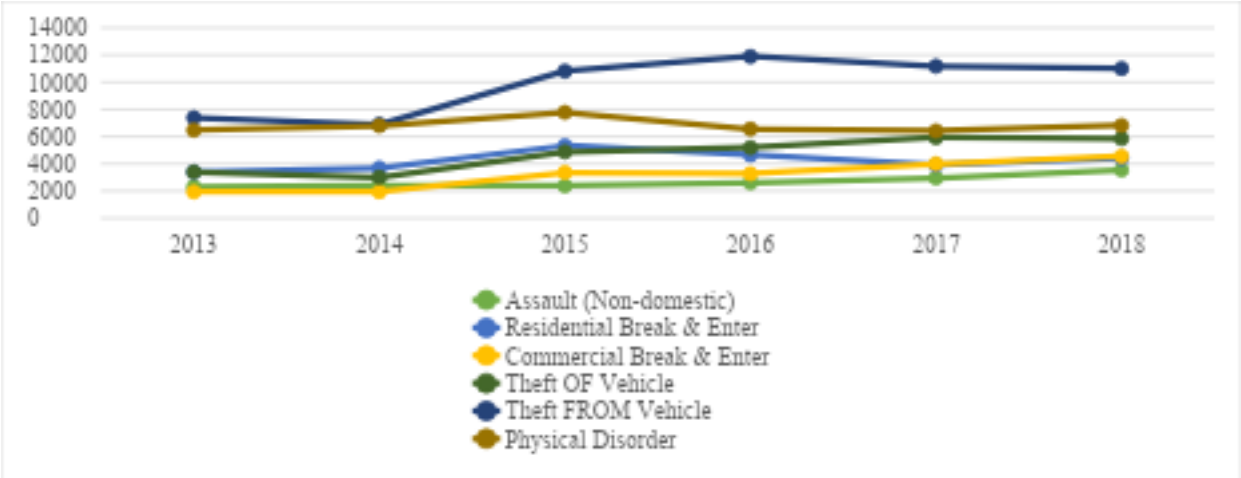
In 2015, Calgary had the highest crime severity index increase; however, this declined by 6% in the following year.[7] This is suggested to be due largely to fewer robbery and break and enter charges. This may change the types of charges that service users are dealing with, and thus, staff and volunteers should be well-versed in how to address diverse court matters.

Calgary Police Service Results

The following examines crime data reported by Calgary Police Service between 2013 and 2018.[8] Crimes that were reported more than 1,500 times annually (excluding social disorder tickets) were included in figure 1. Those that were reported less than 1,500 times annually are included in the following figure. As social disorder tickets are much more frequently reported than other categories of crime, the results are presented separately in figure 3 for ease of examination. This data identifies into how crime frequencies have changed over a period of five years in Calgary.

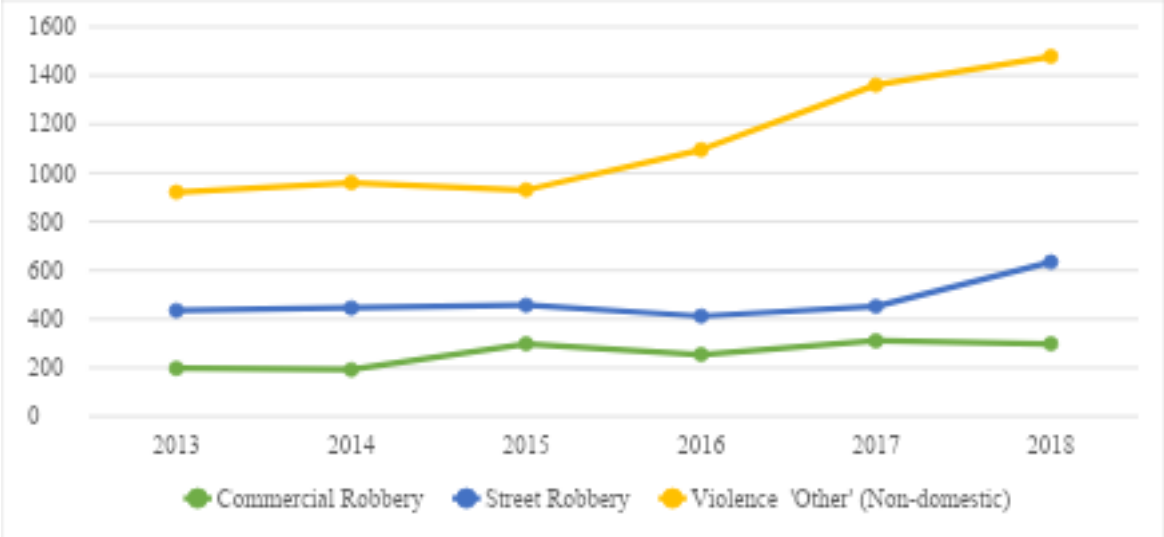
Figure 1. Commonly Reported Crimes in Calgary, 2013-2018

[5] Statistics Canada. Average daily counts of adults in correctional services, by type of supervision and jurisdiction, 2017/2018.
[6] Statistics Canada. Average daily counts of youth in correctional services, by type of supervision and jurisdiction, 2017/2018.
[7] Keighley, K. (2017). *Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2016.* Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada. Retrieved from https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/54842-eng.pdf?st=CFRQaEwZ
[8] Calgary Police statistical reports. Retrieved from https://www.calgary.ca/cps/Pages/Statistics/Calgary-Police-statistical-reports.aspx



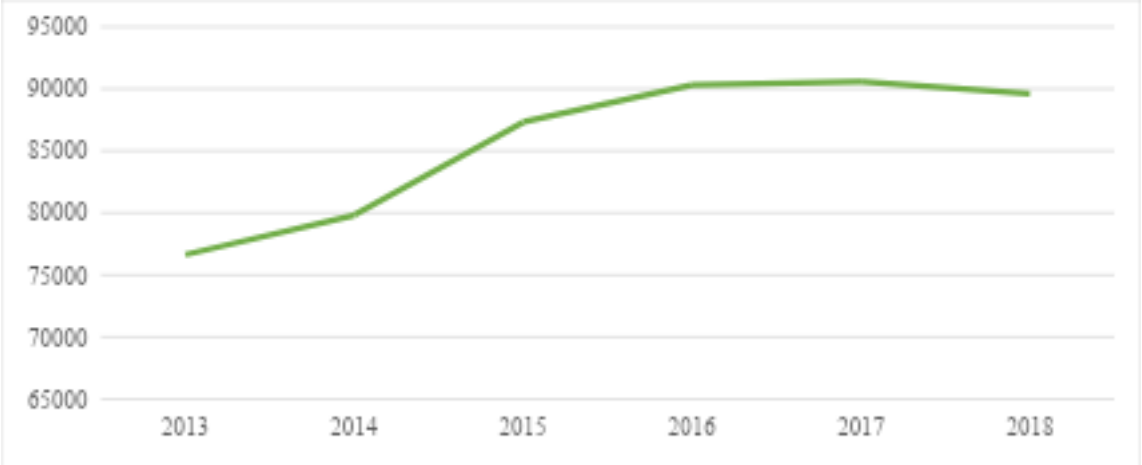
Thefts from vehicles, thefts of vehicles and commercial break and enters all increased notably in 2015. Non-domestic assaults did not change drastically annually between 2013 and 2018; instead, there was a slight increase each year, which may be due to the population changes in Calgary overtime. Physical disorder crimes decreased in both 2016 and 2017; however, increased again in 2018. Residential break and enter tickets notably increased in 2015 and 2018; however, decreased in 2016 and 2017.

Figure 2. Less Frequently Reported Crimes in Calgary, 2013-2018



Non-domestic violent crimes increased notably between 2015 and 2018; however, changes to commercial and street robbery crime rates were much more consistent.

Figure 3. Reported Social Disorder Crimes in Calgary, 2013-2018



Social disorder crimes increased significantly between 2013 and 2016; however, then remained fairly consistent over the following two years.

Each of these trends identifies how the rates of different types of crime change over a period of a few years. This demonstrates the importance of continuing to ensure that EFry court programming services is responsive to the ever-changing crime rates specific to different types of crime.

Questionnaire and Observational Results

The following results highlight findings from the three different questionnaires that were completed by service users, staff, and partners. Significant focus is placed on the experiences and perceptions of service users, and is supplemented with results from staff and partners.

Figure 4. Frequency of court program or legal advocacy use among service users

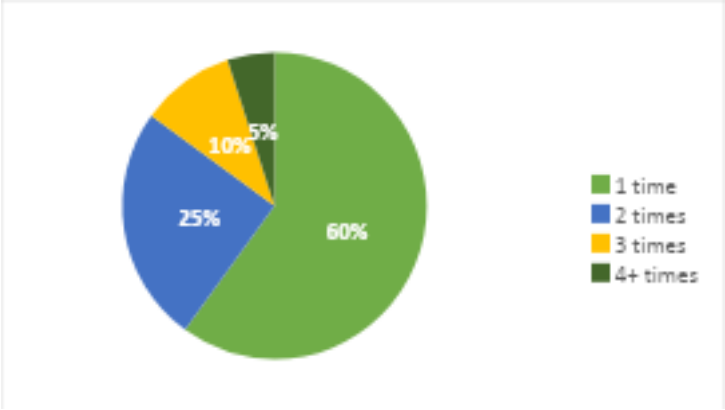


Table 3. Court-based services that service users have accessed from EFry

Court	**Number of individuals** (n=42)	**Percentage**
Traffic Court	13	30.95%
Adult Court	12	28.57%

Domestic Violence Court	7	16.67%
Youth Court	6	14.29%
North Regional Adult Court	5	11.90%
South Regional Youth Court	3	7.14%
South Regional Adult Court	2	4.76%
North Regional Youth Court	1	2.38%
Other	1	2.38%

*respondents checked all that apply

The majority of participants accessed Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary court or legal advocacy programming one or two times. The most commonly accessed court floors were the traffic and adult (CMO) courts in Calgary, followed by domestic violence and youth courts.

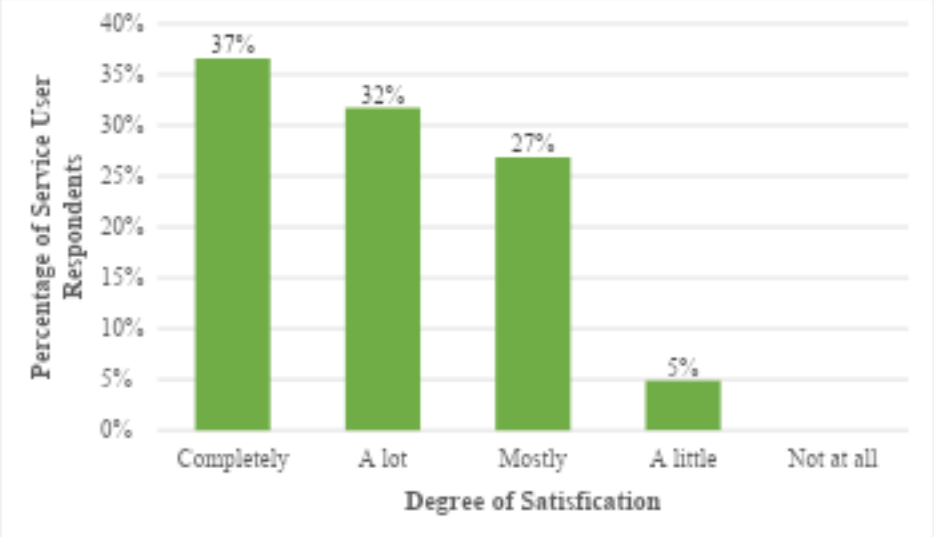
Table 4. How EFry has supported services users in the court process

Role	**Number of individuals** (n=42)	**Percentage**
Explaining court process	28	66.67%
Providing information about plea options	12	28.57%
Providing information regarding options for my court matter	11	26.19%
Referrals within the court system	7	16.67%
Referrals to legal resources in the community	7	16.67%
Assistance accessing forms	5	11.90%
Advocacy within the court house	4	9.52%
Assistance completing/filling out forms	4	9.52%
Emotional support	4	9.52%
Assistance filing documents	3	7.14%
Attending court to provide support	3	7.14%
Advocacy outside the court house	1	2.38%
Crisis management	1	2.38%
Other	3	7.14%

*respondents checked all that apply

As indicated above, EFry court and legal advocacy programming provide a wide-range of supports to service users. Most commonly, respondents identified that the court process was explained to them. This was followed by almost 30% who were given information about plea options and just over 25% who were provided with information regarding options for their court matter. It is evident, upon examining the results of the above table, that there are diverse supports provided to service users, including both practical and emotional support.

Figure 5. Satisfaction with EFry Services



The majority of participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with services provided by EFry. 96% of respondents felt that they were completely, a lot, or mostly satisfied with the services they received. None of the service users expressed that they were not at all satisfied with the services they received.

EFry partners identified the benefits that EFry has both to their agencies and the service users they support. For instance, one individual identified that staff and volunteers have identified service users who would benefit from mental health diversion. EFry helps agencies distribute information and helps identify service users who could be supported by other agencies. This creates a sense of collaboration between agencies and helps other agencies feel like they are not alone in providing services to individuals in the courthouse. Further, a participant identified that EFry's presence helps reduce the amount of court time required to explain things and helps take some of the burden off of judges.

One partner identified that EFry's presence in the courthouse is beneficial to their agency because staff and volunteers are in contact with many mutual service users. Further, multiple individuals identified that EFry's presence helps reduce the anxiety and agitation that service users experience. EFry is seen as an agency that is able to provide service users with more information in a calm setting where they can better understand the information and to direct service users to other services that may benefit them. This was seen to increase service user satisfaction and reduce angst for "unwilling participants in the justice system."

Figure 6. Barriers That Made It Difficult to/Prevented Service Users from Attending Court

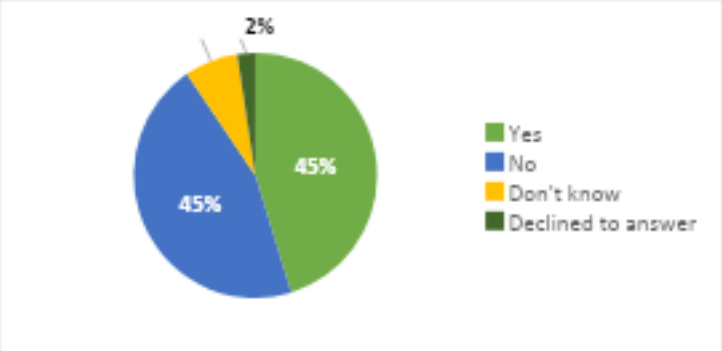
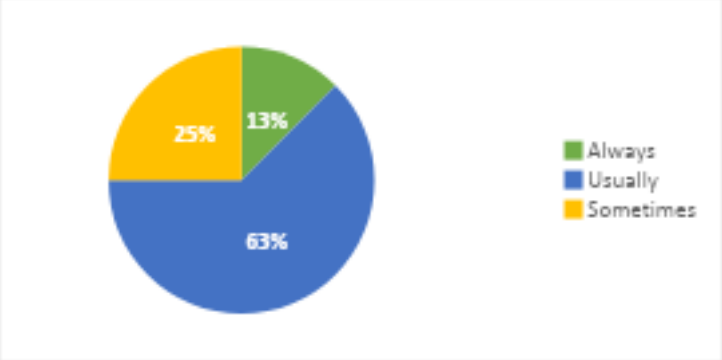


Figure 7. Frequency of Staff Interaction with Service Users Who Have Faced Barriers Attending Court



Responses from both services users and staff are indicative of the barriers that many service users face when attending court. 45% of the service users who participated in the questionnaire expressed that they faced barriers that made it difficult for them to attend court. Further, 75% of staff expressed that they always or usually interact with service users who have faced barriers in attending court. These results are likely an underrepresentation of the number of individuals who face such barriers as individuals with significant barriers may not be present in the courthouse.

Table 5. Barriers that made it difficult to/prevented service users from attending court

Barriers to attending court	**Number of individuals** (n=42)	**Percentage**
Transportation	15	35.71%
Couldn't get out of work	9	21.43%
Stress	7	16.67%
Other appointment to attend	4	9.52%
Uncertainty/fear of potential court outcome	4	9.52%
Didn't remember court date	4	9.52%
Mental health challenges	3	7.14%
Didn't know I had court	3	7.14%
Childcare	2	4.76%
Couldn't get out of school	2	4.76%
Lack of support	2	4.76%
Chose to avoid going	2	4.76%
Other	2	4.76%
Physical health challenges	1	2.38%
Lost court document	1	2.38%
Don't know	3	7.14%
Declined to answer	2	4.76%

*respondents checked all that apply

The most common barriers that service users identified were transportation, being unable to leave work, and stress. This is indicative of the multifaceted supports required to support individuals attending court, including supports from employers, public transportation, and social supports.

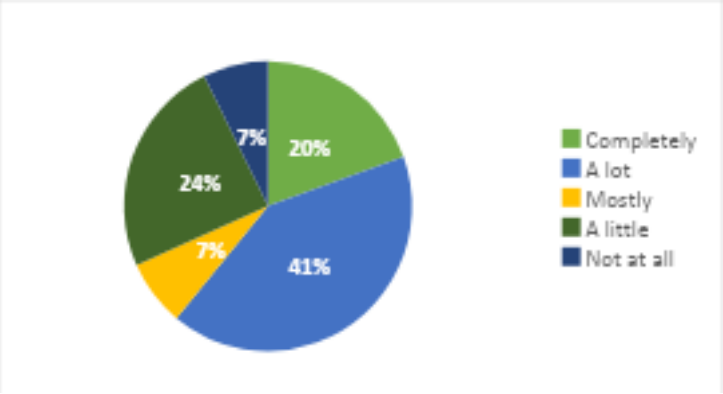
Table 6. Factors that made service users uncomfortable when accessing court services

Factors that increased discomfort	**Number of individuals** (n=16)	**Percentage**
Lack of familiarity with court process	13	81%
Fear of judgement	10	63%
Don't trust the legal system	7	44%
Fear of losing court case	7	44%
Fear of incarceration	5	31%
Security process	4	25%
Navigation of the building	4	25%

*respondents checked all that apply

When service users were asked if they had ever felt uncomfortable accessing court services, 38% identified that they had. Of these individuals, 81% identified that a lack of familiarity with the court process made them uncomfortable when they were accessing court services. This was followed by fear of judgement, lack of trust in the legal system, and fear of losing their court case. As identified in figure 5, 69% of service users identified that EFry reduced the discomfort they were experiencing completely, a lot, or mostly. Thus, EFry continues to play a key role in the justice system by assisting individuals as they are navigating the court processes, by providing non-judgmental services, and by facilitating appropriate referrals within and outside the court system.

Figure 8. The extent to which EFry services reduce discomfort experienced by service users attending court



The following themes were identified within the qualitative data that was collected and was used to support the recommendations provided for program improvement. This is complemented by the summarized observational research that follows. These observations were conducted to further identify strengths and weaknesses within existing programming.

Themes Regarding EFry Court Program Successes

- Providing legal information
- Navigation of services and resources in the court house
- Provision of emotional support
- Provision of external resources (community and legal)

General Themes to Inform Recommendations

- Clearer instructions
- Shorter wait times

Specific Solutions Proposed

- Online appeal process
- Transportation in regional areas to court
- Better location for information booth; disperse court support over a wider area

Observations of EFry Programming at Calgary and Regional Courts

Calgary Traffic Court

While legal advice is not provided to service users, EFry volunteers provide a source of emotional support for individuals who are frustrated, afraid, or confused by the court system. EFry Representatives support individuals accessing the court floor with information to assist them with the court process, triages lines ups to ensure tickets being reviewed are current and location for addressing the ticket is correct, and explains judicial processes to ensure individuals are prepared and ready to address their matters.

Insufficient EFry signage may decrease awareness of services provided and the location of staff/volunteers. Expediting the process of speaking with the Justice of Peace and the Crown Prosecutor is outside of the authority of EFry representatives. EFry representatives do not have the capacity to address service users' concerns about incurring another ticket while waiting in long lines. As street parking is only available for two hours, this increases agitation and a sense of urgency for those waiting for their matter to be addressed.

Calgary Youth Court

Staff and volunteers have the opportunity to develop relationships with youth and their guardians, particularly if they are appearing in the court multiple times. This allows service provision to be more comprehensive and ongoing. This provides staff and volunteers with opportunities to provide different services at different times to suit the changing needs of youth. . The professional relationships that EFry has developed on the youth court floor enables meaningful referrals to be provided to connect youth with other available services.

Youth court staff and volunteers spend a significant amount of time referring youth to appropriate services, including lawyers and mental health diversion. However, insufficient EFry signage may cause confusion about the services provided and the agency that staff and volunteers are associated. Thus, staff and volunteers must ensure to clarify that they are associated with EFry and are an independent partner agency operating within the courthouse.

Calgary Domestic Violence Court

Translators on the domestic violence court are an important resource for service users and for the court to function properly as many service users do not speak English fluently. Professional translators are most often needed for service users who speak Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, and Arabic. EFry staff and volunteers who are multilingual, help ease the burden on translators as they travel throughout the courthouse to work with service users.

The triage forms provided by EFry are an important tool for communication among service users, EFry volunteers, Duty Counsel, and court staff to understand how best to meet the needs of each service user.

One of the challenges faced on the domestic violence court floor is the location of the EFry table. The EFry table is close to the screen that projects the docket as well as the doors that lead to duty counsel and the courtroom. When there are a lot of service users waiting, it becomes congested and unsafe if people on the other side of the doors open them too quickly. Further, there is not much EFry signage, which can create confusion about the role of staff and volunteers.

Calgary Case Management Office (Adult Court)

EFry representatives provide information to service users accessing the CMO counter as well as other people who are traveling to and from different floors in the courthouse. The support that staff and volunteers provide varies widely, including explaining court processes, providing information about how they can deal with their court matter, and redirecting people to appropriate services. Further, EFry representatives can easily refer service users to University of Calgary Student Legal Assistance (SLA), which is just down the hall from EFry's CMO table.

While the EFry table is highly visible, there is not clear signage indicating that it is where EFry supports are located. It is also easy for people to pass without interacting with an EFry representative. This makes it difficult for staff and volunteers to speak with all service users attending CMO. Further, if there is only one EFry representative present, they must stay at the table. This inhibits their ability to escort a service user to the counter or down to Duty Counsel.

Canmore Regional Court (Adult and Youth Courts)

The placement of the EFry table is advantageous. Service users have the ability to walk by if they do not need support but the table is visible enough that it looks like an information desk for potential service users who need support.

Lack of EFry signage may make it difficult for service users to be aware of the role that the court support worker occupies in the court system.

Cochrane Regional Court (Adult and Youth Courts)

As the current EFry representative in Cochrane court speaks Stoney, this increases the accessibility of services for the many Stoney-Nakoda service users traveling from the Nation to address their court matters.

While the EFry table is clearly visible, the hallway can become quite congested when the waiting area is busy. Additionally, the lack of EFry signage can make it difficult for service users to identify the role of staff and volunteers in the courthouse.

Airdrie Regional Court (Adult, Youth, and Traffic Courts)

As Airdrie is a busy courthouse, it is advantageous that there are often multiple EFry representatives present. This makes it easier for service users to receive extended support.

The location of the EFry table is located very close to the Duty Counsel room. This makes it difficult for service users and staff to navigate the waiting area and can create congestion.

Further, lack of EFry signage can make it difficult for service users to distinguish between Duty Counsel and EFry staff.

Strengths and Limitations

This study is characterized by several strengths and limitations. Conducting questionnaires among EFry staff and volunteers as well as external agents and service-users provided these researchers with a variety of perspectives, especially those that might not otherwise be considered. However, questionnaires were susceptible to recall and social desirability biases. Some individuals were not aware that they had received services that were considered to be EFry court programming and thus, were unsure as to how to answer some of the survey questions. Recalling their experience, these service-users responded to the questions with uncertainty, under the impression that they had benefitted from the general support of EFry but not a particular EFry program. Further, EFry staff and volunteers may have had conscious or unconscious biases when completing the questionnaires as they are most likely view EFry (their employer) and the work they do positively.

While the questionnaires were written at a grade seven level, some second-language respondents and individuals with learning barriers were unable to respond independently. As researchers, guardians of youth, and on one occasion, a professional translator were able to help respondents complete the questionnaires, this reduced the burden that literacy barriers presented.

Obtaining completed questionnaires was easier in the domestic violence court and the traffic court than the CMO and the youth court within the Calgary Courthouse. Service users within the domestic violence court and the traffic court experience longer wait times to speak with duty counsel or a judge and the Justice of the Peace and a Crown Prosecutor, respectively. There is more motivation to complete a questionnaire when the service user has nowhere else to be or nothing better to do.

This observation substantiates the limitation of disproportionate representation. Because it was more difficult to recruit respondents from the CMO and youth courts there was a smaller amount of data from these courts to analyze in this study. EFry service users that came to the CMO volunteers would often have to go back and forth between the CMO counter on the fourth floor of the courthouse and duty counsel on the third floor. There was no great opportunity for them to take ten or fifteen minutes to sit down and fill out a questionnaire. Similarly, service users in the youth court frequently moved between duty counsel and the courtroom. The few CMO and youth service users that did have the time and willingness to complete a questionnaire were often waiting to to speak with duty counsel, their own lawyer, or legal aid, were waiting for a guardian to pick them up, or were willing to spend some additional time at the courthouse to provide their input.

Recommendations

The following recommendations identify ways in which programming can be changed to address current challenges presenting on the different court floors.

Distinguishing EFry Representatives from Courthouse Staff

Both the questionnaire results and first-hand observations indicate that many service-users are not able to distinguish EFry representatives from courthouse staff. To some degree, this trend is encouraging because it validates the effectiveness of EFry's court programs. They are so relevant and helpful that people have no reason to believe that they are not run by the court. However, this tendency to conflate EFry with the courthouse backfires when negative attitudes towards the court system also diminish the reputation of EFry. Service-users may not explicitly blame EFry for things like long lines and confusing paperwork, but some amount of blame might transfer even though EFry has little to no power to address these issues. Here, then, lies an opportunity for EFry to improve brand recognition without distinguishing it so much from court staff that people avoid interacting with EFry.

An easy way to improve brand recognition for EFry at the Calgary and regional courthouses would be increasing the amount of signage visible to service-users. Currently, the signage is minimal with one or two small posters displaying EFry's logo. Furthermore, staff and volunteers have small name tags with EFry logos that are barely visible. If they are not looking for it, a service user would have no idea who is helping them at the courthouse, especially if the EFry volunteer does not mention that they are working for EFry.

Three small changes would make a significant difference in brand recognition. First, the signs with EFry's logo should be slightly larger and more frequent, facing multiple directions, especially if EFry representatives are positioned in high-traffic areas. Along with the logo, the signs should include a short statement to familiarize people in the courthouse with EFry's programming like: "See an EFry volunteer for court and legal information". Pamphlets could also be made available at the volunteer tables that describe EFry's programming both within the courts and the community.

Clipboards and Pens

First-hand observations indicate that a small, extra clipboard for the quarter-sheet evaluation forms would improve the efficiency of court volunteers, especially those who work in the Calgary Traffic Court. When volunteers walk through the line of people waiting to speak with a Justice of the Peace, they carry all their EFry materials with them in a storage clipboard. It appears cumbersome and less professional when volunteers are scrambling to distribute evaluations, collect statistics, and still interact with each service user. Further, volunteers may have to let the service user use their large clipboard to fill out the small evaluation form, which takes away time from the volunteer to finish writing statistics for the service user.

A separate clipboard would prevent a volunteer from wasting time waiting to get their large clipboard back. Having a small clipboard with the quarter-sheet evaluation forms ready to go

would also allow the service user to fill it out more privately. This might also decrease the presence of social desirability bias as service users would feel more comfortable providing honest answers when volunteers are not holding the clipboard that the service user is using to fill out the survey right in front of them. Using pens with EFry logos and adding EFry logos to the clipboards would be a great way to increase brand recognition and trust among service users.

Both volunteers and service users at the Calgary CMO would benefit from a stack of normal-sized clipboards. When CMO volunteers explain disclosure forms and other documents it is helpful to have them organized on a clipboard that the volunteer can hold at a comfortable height in front of a service user so that neither must bend down to look at papers on a low table. When the service user is satisfied with the information they received, they can take the clipboard with them to read/fill out forms while they wait in line for the CMO counter. These clipboards should also display EFry's logo and have an EFry pen attached to the clipboard. On their way out of the CMO, service users would return the clipboards to the CMO volunteer hopefully with a better understanding or sense of curiosity to find out more about EFry's programming.

Alternative Measures

For people of low socio-economic status, tickets, fines, and incarceration may trap them in a cycle of poverty. Providing pamphlets or information sheets about alternative measures would allow more information to be available to individuals attending court if this is something that individuals are interested in or might qualify for.

Transportation

Many respondents indicated that transportation was a prominent barrier for them to get to court. Although providing transportation is out of the scope of the services that EFry provides, there is an opportunity for the organization to seek funding to provide more transit passes for service users. EFry could also instigate a carpool system, especially for Morley service users to get to Canmore or Cochrane courthouses. EFry could also propose a virtual appeal process to the court that would circumvent the need for people to travel to the courthouse, especially people with physical disabilities or young children who would find it difficult to wait in a long line.

Number System

Many of the complaints, feedback, and observations from the Calgary Traffic Court are beyond the scope of EFry's programming. However, EFry might be able to collaborate with the Justices of Peace and Crown Prosecutors to implement a number system that is projected on a screen in the waiting area of the Crowne Prosecutor. This system could give people a general idea of when they will be seen so that they can move their car to prevent getting another ticket, get food/drink, or use the washroom. The system could also provide information about when the Crown Prosecutor is closing that day. A smartphone application could be developed to provide a portable complement to this in-house system. EFry volunteers could explain the system to service users while they help them.

Conclusion

The results from this evaluation of EFry's court programs highlight the many strengths of the existing programs. This includes reducing barriers for individuals attending court, providing support and working collaboratively alongside other agencies, as well as assisting individuals navigate the court process effectively. While there are many elements that should be retained, the above recommendations should be considered to increase program effectiveness.

Appendices

Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary Service User Survey

1. How many times have you used court or legal advocacy services provided by *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary*?
    a. 1 time
    b. 2 times
    c. 3 times
    d. 4 times
    e. 5 or more times

2. Which court-based services have you accessed from *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary*? *Check all that apply.*
    - □ Adult Court
    - □ Youth Court
    - □ Traffic Court
    - □ Domestic Violence Court
    - □ Adult Legal Advocacy Program
    - □ Youth Legal Advocacy Program
    - □ North Regional *Adult* Court (Cochrane, Canmore, Didsbury)
    - □ North Regional *Youth* Court (Cochrane, Canmore, Didsbury)
    - □ North Legal Advocacy Program
    - □ South Regional *Adult* Court (Airdrie, Okotoks)
    - □ South Regional *Youth* Court (Airdrie, Okotoks)
    - □ South Legal Advocacy Program
    - □ Other:
    - □ Don't know
    - □ Declined to answer

3. How has *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* supported you in the court process? *Check all that apply.*
    - □ Explaining court processes
    - □ Providing information about plea options
    - □ Providing information regarding options for my court matter
    - □ Referrals within the court system
    - □ Referrals to legal resources in the community that may help me address a core issue related to my legal matter (i.e. counseling, treatment)
    - □ Advocacy within the court house
    - □ Advocacy outside the court house
    - □ Assistance accessing forms
    - □ Assistance completing/filling out forms
    - □ Assistance filing documents
    - □ Attending court to provide support throughout the legal process
    - □ Emotional support
    - □ Crisis management

- □ Other:

4. In general, how satisfied are you with *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary's* services?
    a. Completely
    b. A lot
    c. Mostly
    d. A little
    e. Not at all

5. Which services have been the most helpful?

6. Which services could be improved?

7. Have you ever faced barriers that have made it difficult to/prevented you from being able to attend your court appearance?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Don't know
    d. Declined to answer

8. If so, what barriers have you faced that made it difficult to/prevented you from being able to attend court? *Check all that apply*
    - □ Transportation
    - □ Childcare
    - □ Couldn't get out of work
    - □ Couldn't get out of school
    - □ Other appointment to attend
    - □ Physical health challenges
    - □ Mental health challenges
    - □ Lack of support
    - □ Stress
    - □ Uncertainty or fear of potential court outcome
    - □ Chose to avoid going
    - □ Didn't know I had court
    - □ Didn't remember court date
    - □ Lost court document
    - □ Other:
    - □ Don't know
    - □ Declined to answer

9. Are there existing services that *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* could **improve** that would improve your ability to attend court?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Don't know
    d. Declined to answer

10. [If YES], what existing services could *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* **improve** that would improve your ability to attend court?

11. Are there additional services that *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* could **provide** that would improve your ability to attend court?
    e. Yes
    f. No
    g. Don't know
    h. Declined to answer

12. [If YES], please specify the additional services that *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* could **provide** that would improve your ability to attend court?

13. Have you ever felt uncomfortable accessing court services?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Declined to answer

14. If [YES], what factors made you uncomfortable? *Check all that apply.*
    a. Lack of familiarity with court processes
    b. Don't trust the legal system
    c. Fear of judgement
    d. Security process
    e. Navigation of the building
    f. Fear of incarceration
    g. Fear of losing court case

15. To what extent do the services provided by *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* reduce the discomfort you experience when accessing court services?
    a. Completely
    b. A lot
    c. Mostly
    d. A little
    e. Not at all

16. What services could *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* provide that would further reduce discomfort/anxiety when accessing court services?

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. Your input is greatly appreciated and will continue to improve services we are providing.

Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary **Staff/Volunteer Survey**

1. How long have you worked for *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary*?
    a. Less than one year
    b. 1-2 years
    c. 3-4 years
    d. 5+ years
    e. Declined to answer

2. Which court do you work with (primarily)?
    a. Youth
    b. Adult (CMO)
    c. Traffic
    d. Domestic violence
    e. Regional courts
    f. Not applicable
    g. Declined to answer

3. Are you involved with the legal advocacy program?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Declined to answer

4. Are you involved with the youth mentorship program?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Declined to answer

5. What are the most satisfying/rewarding elements of your job with *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary*?

6. What are the most challenging elements of your job with *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary*?

Client Services

7. When interacting with clients who face barriers attending court, what barriers are the most evident? *Check all that apply.*
    a. Transportation
    b. Childcare
    c. Couldn't get out of work
    d. Couldn't get out of school
    e. Other appointment to attend
    f. Physical health challenges
    g. Mental health challenges
    h. Lack of support

i. Stress
j. Uncertainty or fear of potential court outcome
k. Chose to avoid going
l. Didn't know I had court
m. Didn't remember court date
n. Lost court document
o. Other:
p. Don't know
q. Declined to answer

8. In your experience, how often do you interact with clients who have faced barriers attending court?
    a. Always (100% of the time)
    b. Usually (more than 75% of the time)
    c. Sometimes (26% to 74% of the time)
    d. Occasionally (less than 25% of the time)
    e. Never [skip to question 8]
    f. Don't know
    g. Declined to answer

9. Do you feel that the services provided by The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary are supporting/meeting the needs of clients on a regular basis?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Don't know
    d. Declined to answer

10. In your experience, how do services offered by *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* help clients?

11. In your experience, what additional services could be offered that would better meet clients' needs when attending court?

12. Are there services that *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* could provide/improve that would improve clients' ability to attend court?
    a. Yes
    b. No [skip to question 14]
    c. Don't know
    d. Declined to answer

13. [If YES], what services do you think *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* could provide/improve that would improve clients' ability to attend court?

Partnerships

14. Do you feel that the relationships you have with *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* partners are meaningful?
    a. Completely
    b. A lot
    c. Mostly
    d. A little
    e. Not at all
    f. Don't know
    g. Declined to answer

15. How do you think that the relationships with partners could be strengthened?

16. Are there new partnerships that you think *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* should develop that would be beneficial to clients and staff/volunteers?
    a. Yes
    b. No [skip to question 19]
    c. Don't know
    d. Declined to answer

17. [If YES], what partnerships do you think should be developed?

18. [If YES], please explain how you think these partnerships would benefit clients, staff, and/or volunteers.

19. Are there any barriers that limit your capacity to help clients?
    a. Yes
    b. No [skip to question 23]
    c. Don't know
    d. Declined to answer

20. [If YES], what are the barriers that limit your capacity to help clients? *Check all that apply.*

    ☐ Procedural barriers

    ☐ Interpersonal barriers with partners

    ☐ Interpersonal barriers with clients

    ☐ Interpersonal barriers with volunteers/staff

    ☐ Agency policies

    ☐ Systems barriers

    ☐ Limited available resources

    ☐ Lack of time available for clients

- □ Shift schedule
- □ Busyness of floor
- □ Limitation regarding only being able to provide legal information (as opposed to legal advice)
- □ Lack of engagement from clients
- □ Other:
- □ Don't know
- □ Declined to answer

21. If there are barriers that you are facing that limit your capacity to help clients, please elaborate on what these barriers are.

22. What could be done to reduce the barriers that you are facing?

23. How often do you communicate/collaborate with the main office at *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary*?
    a. Regularly
    b. Occasionally
    c. Never
    d. Don't know
    e. Declined to answer

24. In what capacity do you communicate/collaborate with the main office at *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary*? (I.e. in what ways do you communicate/collaborate with the main office?)

25. What suggestions do you have that could facilitate better connections/communication with *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary*'s main office and programming?

***Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* Partner Agency Survey**

1. How would you describe your level of understanding regarding the role that *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* plays within the court system?
    a. Excellent
    b. Good
    c. Fair
    d. Poor
    e. Very poor

2. Do you feel that the partnership your agency has with *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* is beneficial?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Don't know
    d. Declined to answer

3. [If YES], how do these partnerships benefit you and your agency?

4. [If YES], how do these partnerships benefit the clients/individuals that you assist?

5. How often does your agency communicate with staff/volunteers of *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary*?
    a. Daily
    b. Almost every day
    c. Weekly
    d. Monthly
    e. Less than monthly
    f. Never
    g. Don't know
    h. Declined to answer

6. How satisfied are you with your agency's relationship with *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary*?
    a. Completely
    b. A lot
    c. Mostly
    d. A little
    e. Not at all

7. Do you think that further work needs to be done between your agency and *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* to develop better communication and understanding?
    a. Yes
    b. No [skip to question 9]
    c. Don't know
    d. Declined to answer

8. [If YES], what could be done to develop better communication and understanding with *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary*?

9. Do you think that further work needs to be done between your agency and *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* to develop better collaboration?
    a. Yes
    b. No [skip to question 11]
    c. Don't know
    d. Declined to answer

10. [If YES], what could be done to develop better collaboration with *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary*?

11. Are there additional services that *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* could provide that would assist your agency and clients?
    a. Yes, there are services that would better assist both my agency and clients [answer the following two questions]
    b. Yes, there are services that would better assist my agency [answer only question 10]
    c. Yes, there are services that would better assist clients [answer only question 11]
    d. No [skip to question 12]
    e. Don't know
    f. Declined to answer

12. [If YES], what services could be provided that would better assist clients you are serving?

13. [If YES], what services could be provided that would better assist your agency?

14. Considering when *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* staff and volunteers are present on the court floor, are there other times of day where partners/clients would benefit from having staff/volunteers on the court floor?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Don't know
    d. Declined to answer

15. [If YES], please specify when the presence of *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* staff/volunteers could better help your organization/the court process.

16. Considering when *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* staff and volunteers are supporting clients with legal advocacy, are there other times of day where partners/clients would benefit from this support?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Don't know
    d. Declined to answer

17. [If YES], please specify when the presence of *The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary* staff/volunteers could better help your organization/the court process.