

Two bald eagles are perched on a piece of weathered driftwood. The eagle on the left is looking slightly to the left, while the one on the right is looking directly at the camera. The background consists of a range of mountains with patches of snow under a clear blue sky.

The Role of the BC Ombudsperson

Pathfinder Presentation

P'egp'ig'lha Council

Acknowledgements & Introductions



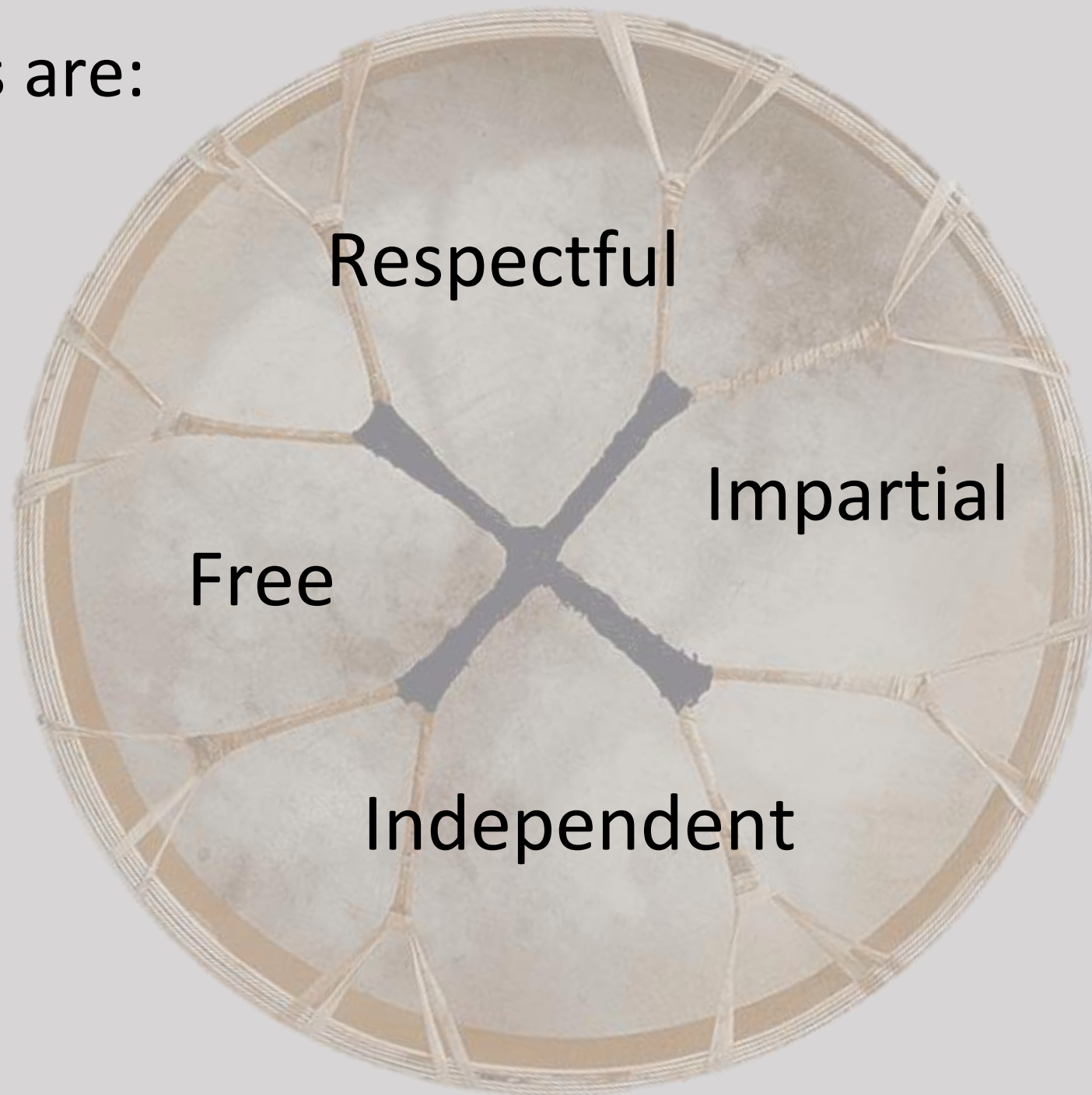
What is an Ombudsperson? *Strange word, important service.*



- Watchdog; protector
 - Listens to complaints
 - Investigates
 - Finds fair solutions
 - Recommends change
- Oversees over 1,000 provincial and local organizations in BC.
- Receives 8,000 complaints a year.



Our Services are:



Respectful

Impartial

Free

Independent



The BC Ombudsperson
and Office's legal
Authority

- Two statutes: *Ombudsperson Act* & *Public Interest Disclosure Act* (PIDA)
- The power to:
 - Investigate
 - Protect (Info., Confidentiality)
 - Report
 - Recommendations

Jurisdictional/Within legal authority to review:


BC Ministries (i.e. MSDPR, MCFD, Forestry etc.)	BC Boards and Commissions (i.e. WorkSafeBC)	Crown Corps (i.e. ICBC, BC Hydro)
Local gov. including: BC municipalities, districts, local improvement & waterworks districts	All public schools & school boards, public colleges and universities	Hospitals and Pharmacare Professional regulators such as the Law Society and the College of Physicians and Surgeons, BC's health authorities



Non-jurisdictional/No legal authority to review:

Federal government agencies (i.e ISC)	Police/RCMP	Individual doctors and lawyers
Court Decisions & Judge's Conduct	Bands and Nations	Private disputes

Defining (administrative) fairness



Fair decision-making process: opportunity to be heard, decision-maker is unbiased, etc.

Fair decision: were the rules followed, was the person's situation and relevant information considered.

Fair service: was there good communication, was it timely and transparent, were errors fixed.



Pathfinders' Initiative:

- Is part of the larger, Indigenous Community Services Plan
- Recognizes that unfair treatment experiences are historical, contemporary & compounded for Indigenous people.
- Understands the multifaceted impacts to individual and community wellbeing.



4 Goals

- Awareness
- Trust
- Guiding complaints
- Identifying gaps in services

Ombudsperson Pathfinders

- Four Pathfinders are working in the five health regions in BC
- Crystal Bird North, N. Interior
- Lenny LaRock Fraser Interior
- Wendy Simon Vancouver Coastal
- Justine Thomson Vancouver Island



Indigenous Initiatives Pathfinder Engagement Team

Indigenous Liaison Officer, Indigenous Coordinator
Pathfinders

Intake & Early Resolution

Social Programs (MCFD, Social Development & Poverty
Reduction)

Health and Local Services (Hospitals, city/town services)

Regulatory Programs (Corrections, ICBC)

Systemic Investigations

Communications Lead



Reflections one year into this work:



- Looking for the right path to fairness from Indigenous lens takes a whole team including community members
- Honouring the truths of Indigenous people's lived experiences shines a light on fairness for all
- At the core of every stage of work is honoring Indigenous people's additional & inherent rights

Creating the basket that can hold our communities



A single complaint can often lead to changes that benefit many



A better explanation or clearer reason for a decision



Employee training



An apology



A new hearing or reconsideration of a decision



A commitment to follow policy in the future



Changes to policy, procedures and sometimes to legislation

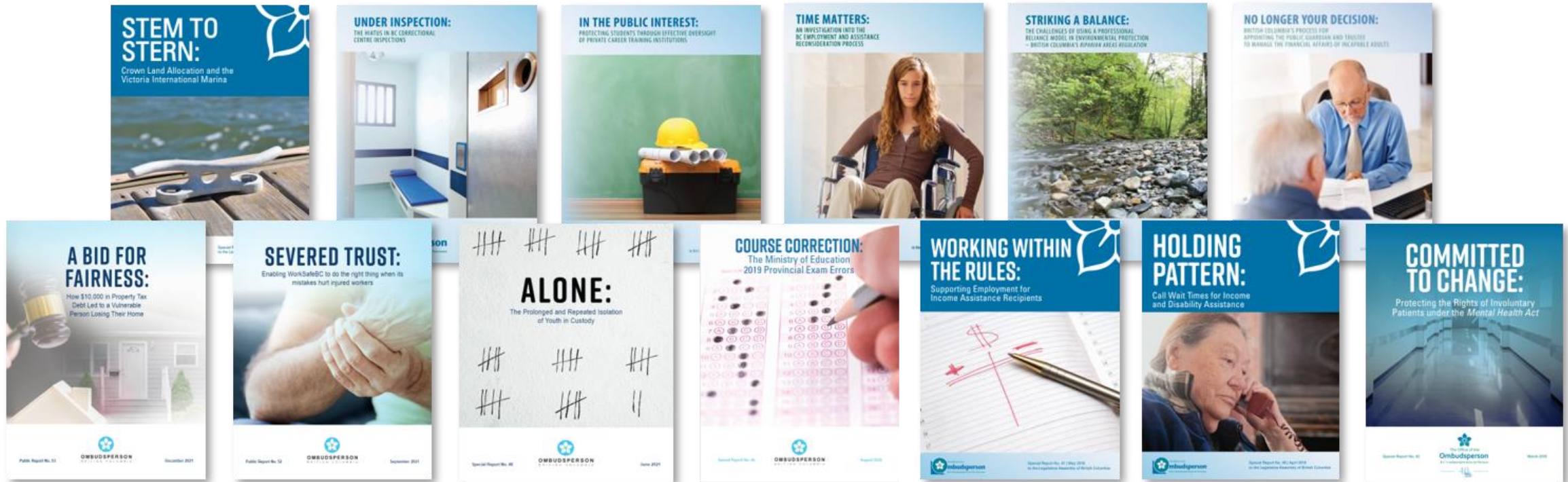


Access to a benefit previously denied



A refund or reimbursement of expenses

Systemic Investigations



Available resources

Brochures

Graphic w/PF Info

Posters

Postcards

Addressing Racism Line

Complaint Handling Guide



OMBUDSPERSON LAUNCHES
NEW PATHFINDER INITIATIVE

WHO ARE THE PATHFINDERS?



4 Regional Pathfinders will be raising awareness about the Ombudsperson's services in Indigenous communities. They are working to build trust and provide guidance to people who may want to raise a concern to the Ombudsperson's office if they believe they have been treated unfairly when receiving provincial or local public services. They join the office with awareness and knowledge of the communities they will be reaching.

HAVING A PRESENCE IN COMMUNITIES

Pathfinders will be working in communities, providing information about the Ombudsperson to individuals and meeting with community leaders and support agencies. They will be offering presentations about the Ombudsperson's role and holding in-person appointments where they will help members of the public raise concerns.

IT'S YOUR RIGHT TO BE TREATED FAIRLY

The BC Ombudsperson is committed to supporting and actively advancing reconciliation through work with Indigenous Peoples; First Nations, Métis and Inuit. Through our Indigenous Communities Services Plan (ICSP) currently under development, the office aims to strengthen our partnerships with Indigenous service providers, community leaders and individuals to ensure all Indigenous Peoples across BC are treated fairly by provincial and local public services under our jurisdiction. The Pathfinder Program is an important part of this work.

5 REGIONS

The Pathfinders are working in each of the five health regions of B.C.



PATHFINDER CONTACT INFO

The Pathfinders can be reached at:

CRYSTAL BIRD NORTHERN BC • INTERIOR BC
CBird@bcombudspersonpathfinders.ca

LENNY LAROCK FRASER VALLEY • INTERIOR BC
LLarock@bcombudspersonpathfinders.ca

WENDY SIMON VANCOUVER COASTAL
WSimon@bcombudspersonpathfinders.ca

JUSTINE THOMSON VANCOUVER ISLAND
JThomson@bcombudspersonpathfinders.ca

About the Ombudsperson: The Ombudsperson's office receives and investigates concerns from the public when they believe they have been treated unfairly when receiving provincial or local public services. The office is independent of government and impartial. The office's services are free.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- 1 CONTACT US WITH YOUR COMPLAINT
- 2 WE'LL LISTEN RESPECTFULLY
- 3 WE'LL ASK SOME QUESTIONS

Is your complaint about an organization under our jurisdiction? If not, we can direct you to the right place.

Have you tried to resolve your complaint directly with the organization involved?

WE'LL SEE IF WE CAN HELP

We will try to resolve your issue quickly

OR We will do a more in depth investigation

THERE MAY BE MANY OUTCOMES FOR YOU INCLUDING:

- Getting money that is owed to you
- Getting a better explanation of a decision that impacts you
- Getting a policy that was unfair changed



HAVING A PROBLEM
RESOLVING A CONCERN
WITH PROVINCIAL OR
LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICES?

YOU CAN
TALK TO US

bcombudsperson.ca
1-800-567-3247
BC OMBUDSPERSON

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Take A Short break



Reflecting on your or your community's experiences of services that are within the jurisdiction of the BC OMBD Office (hospitals, schools, MCFD) Consider the following examples of *administrative fairness*



1. Having an impartial and unbiased decision maker
2. Having an opportunity to participate & to be heard
3. Having decision (reasons) explained
4. Rules and policies are followed
5. Consider individual circumstances & case
6. Decisions are based on complete and relevant information
7. Good communication & respectful treatment
8. Accessibility, timeliness & transparency
9. Errors and mistakes are fixed

For More Info/To file a Complaint:

CONTACT US:

1-800-567-FAIR (3247) PLEASE MENTION "Pathfinders"!

Indigenous Liaison Officer Jolene Andrew JAndrew@bcombudsperson.ca

Indigenous Coordinator Cindy Allen CAllen@bcombudsperson.ca

Northern/N. Interior Pathfinder Crystal Bird CBird@bcombudspersonpathfinders.ca

Fraser/Interior Pathfinder Lenny LaRock LLarock@bcombudspersonpathfinders.ca

Addressing Racism in Health Care Kerrie Reay Toll-free: 1-888-600-3078

Email us: Addressing_Racism@bcombudsperson.ca

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OMBUDSPERSON
BRITISH COLUMBIA

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T'oyaxsuut Nuusm
"Thank you All"

Reflections:

- What surprised you the most?
- What concerns remain?
- What is most encouraging?