# Formative Evaluation Plan for VGAL Blended Learning Modules

## Purpose of the Evaluation

The goal of this formative evaluation is to use learner feedback, collected through Google Forms surveys, to improve the design and delivery of blended learning modules for Volunteer Guardians ad Litem (VGALs), active GALs, and staff. The evaluation will provide timely, actionable insights that allow for continuous improvement of content, delivery formats, and learner support systems.

## Key Evaluation Questions

1. **Content Relevance and Depth**
   a. Are the modules aligned with the required duties outlined in **RCW 13.34.105** (investigating, reporting, and advocating for the child's best interests)?
   b. Do learners feel confident in applying confidentiality rules from **RCW 13.50.100** to their documentation and interactions?

2. **Learning Format Preferences and Accessibility**
   a. Which training formats (online modules, self-paced, blended, group sessions, reading/research) are most effective for different age and educational groups?
   b. Do participants find the online tools (H5P, Zoom, Google Classroom, etc.) easy to use?
   c. Are accessibility needs (larger fonts, vision accommodations) being met?

3. **Learner Engagement and Application**
   a. Are interactive and scenario-based activities (role plays, case studies) helping learners practice unbiased interviewing and neutral documentation?
   b. Do learners feel prepared to handle court processes, testimony, and emotionally difficult situations?

4. **Support and Resources**
   a. Are learners receiving timely answers to questions during and after training?
   b. Are follow-up materials (notes, slides, job aids) helpful in supporting performance?
   c. Do learners want more opportunities to hear directly from experienced GALs?

## Data Collection Methods

- **Google Forms Surveys**
  - Pre-training survey: Learner demographics, preferred training formats, tech comfort, and expectations.
  - Post-module surveys: 3–4 short questions after each microlearning module or group session to capture immediate feedback.
  - End-of-training survey: Measures perceived learning, confidence, accessibility, and support.
- **Focus Groups / Interviews**
  - Small group discussions with active GALs, VGALs, and staff.
  - Elicit stories about real-life challenges in applying skills, such as interviewing children or writing court reports.
- **Facilitator Observations**
  - Instructors document learner engagement, participation in group discussions, and application of interview techniques during practice.

## Data Collection Timeline

- **Week 1:** Administer baseline survey.
- **Weeks 2–4:** Collect feedback on custom GPT via Google Forms; facilitators record observations.
- **Week 4:** Distribute end-of-training survey and conduct follow-up interviews/focus groups with a diverse set of learners.
- **Week 5 (Review & Adjust):** Analyze data, identify patterns, and make curriculum adjustments.

## Data to Collect

- **Demographics:** Age group, educational background, role (VGAL, active GAL, staff).
- **Preferred Learning Formats:** Online modules, self-paced, blended, group discussion, reading/research.
- **Accessibility Needs:** Visual accommodations, internet access, technical support needs.
- **Learning Outcomes:** Confidence in conducting interviews, separating facts from opinions, and writing neutral court reports.
- **Support Needs:** Access to timely answers, clear expectations, real-life practice, experienced mentor insights, post-training resources.

- **Challenges:** Time/scheduling, emotional fatigue, technical barriers, unclear direction, workload constraints.

## Data Analysis

- **Quantitative Data (from surveys):**
  - Frequency counts and percentages for training preferences by age and education.
  - Comparison of pre- and post-training confidence ratings.
  - Cross-tab analysis of age/education vs. preferred formats.
- **Qualitative Data (open-ended & interviews):**
  - Thematic coding of challenges (time, stress, tech, clarity, support).
  - Collection of direct learner quotes to illustrate key findings.

## Feedback Loop & Adjustments

- Weekly review meetings to examine feedback and make immediate improvements.
- Update modules iteratively (improve upload instructions, expand accessibility features, add real-life case simulations).
- Create a Curriculum Improvement Log documenting changes, linked to specific learner feedback.
- Share findings and adjustments with GAL leadership, trainers, and volunteers to build transparency and trust.

# Summary of Survey Findings (see appendix A and B)

**How learners prefer to train:**

- Most people, regardless of age, liked online modules, self-paced learning, and group discussions.
- Volunteers ages 60–69 especially liked blended learning (a mix of in-person and online) and group discussions.
- Volunteers ages 70–79 leaned strongly toward online modules, though some also liked in-person options.
- Only those in the 70–79 group mentioned reading and research as a preferred format.

**How background affects preferences:**

- Volunteers with Some College/Associate's degrees liked group discussions, self-paced learning, and blended formats.
- Volunteers with a Bachelor's degree also preferred group discussions and self-paced learning.
- Volunteers with a Master's or higher showed strong interest in more in-depth online modules.

**Who is in the program:**

- The largest number of volunteers with Some College/Associate's degrees were in the 40–49 and 70–79 age groups.
- Bachelor's degree holders were most common in the 60–69 age group.
- Master's/Post-Graduate volunteers were spread across ages 40–79.
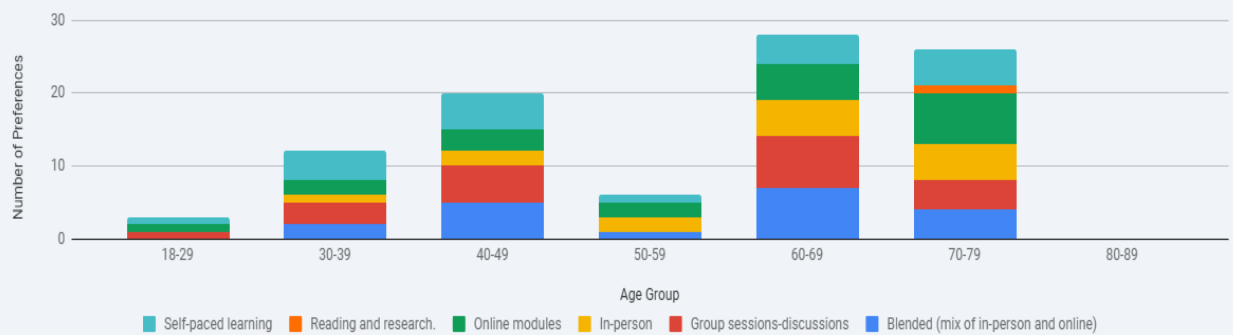
**Current challenges with training:**

- Time and scheduling were the biggest struggles, mentioned by 30 respondents.
- Emotional fatigue/stress was a concern for 5 respondents.
- Technology problems (such as access issues, uploading files, or internet outages) were reported by several people.
- A few participants wanted clearer communication about class times, eligibility, and expectations.
- Some worried about the emotional load of the role, the time commitment, and feeling prepared for court processes and testimony.

**What learners want more of:**

- Real-life practice after Zoom trainings.
- Clear explanations of court expectations and a glossary of terms.
- Examples of effective documentation and more guidance on writing court reports.
- Insights from experienced GALs about what to expect in the role.
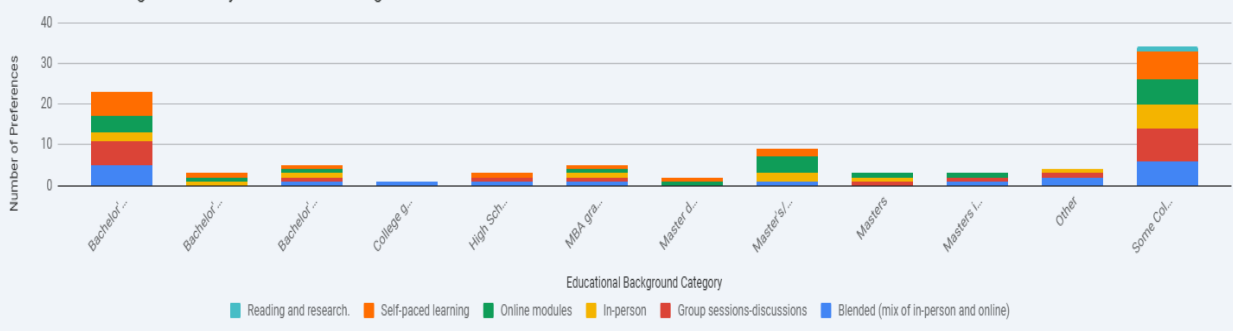- Timely answers to questions and access to slides/notes after training.

Appendix A.

Preferred Training Formats by Age Group



Educational Background by Age Group
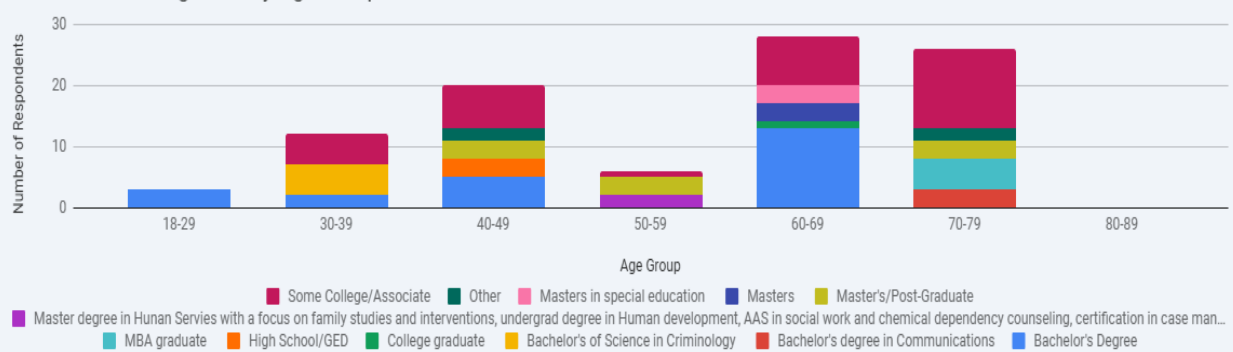


Preferred Training Formats by Educational Background

# Appendix B.

**Key objections and challenges related to the current training and support:**

**1. Training Obstacles:**

- **Time/Scheduling:** This is by far the most significant challenge, cited by 30 respondents. This indicates a strong need for more flexible training options.
- **Emotional Fatigue/Stress:** 5 respondents mentioned this as an obstacle, highlighting the emotional toll of the role and the need for support in managing it.
- **Technical Issues:** 4 respondents experienced technical issues, suggesting a need for improved technical support or clearer instructions for online platforms.
- **Communication:** 2 respondents indicated communication as a challenge, which could relate to clarity of information or responsiveness.
- **Lack of Information/Eligibility:** One respondent felt they didn't have all the necessary information to participate in some classes, and another mentioned not always being eligible for certain training.
- **Job Constraints:** One respondent noted their job doesn't always allow time for extra activities.

## 2. Technology or Online Learning Barriers:

- While 19 respondents reported no anticipated technology barriers, some specific concerns were raised:
  - **Access Issues:** One respondent faced frustration with not being able to access the "classroom" due to group association not being recognized.
  - **Uploading Files:** One respondent mentioned difficulty uploading files into children's records.
  - **Connecting Services:** One respondent cited challenges with connecting services.
  - **Vision Disability:** One respondent noted a vision disability, requiring large monitors or increased font size for accessibility.
  - **Internet Outages:** One respondent mentioned occasional internet outages.
  - **Time-Specific Schedules:** One respondent highlighted that time-specific training schedules are a barrier.

## 3. Desired Support During Training (indicating unmet needs):

- **Real-Life Exposure:** One respondent desired "real life" exposure to the system after Zoom training.
- **Clearer Expectations and Tools:** One respondent wanted greater explanation of court expectations, a glossary of terms, and more thorough review of report and note expectations, as well as how to compose effective court reports.
- **Experienced GAL Insights:** One respondent wished to hear from an experienced GAL about their journey, surprises, and unexpected aspects when they first started.
- **Information about Classes:** One respondent desired more information about classes, including eligibility, accurate times, and locations.
- **Timely Answers to Questions:** Several responses implicitly or explicitly indicate a desire for timely answers to questions and accessible follow-up support.

- **Notes/Slides After Training:** One respondent requested notes or slides to be sent via email after training.

**4. Concerns About Starting/Continuing in the Role (indirectly related to training/support):**

- **Emotional Load/Stress:** Several respondents expressed concern about the emotional heaviness, mental load, and emotional stress of the role.
- **Time Commitment:** Concerns about time commitment, especially with full-time jobs, were frequently mentioned.
- **Court Processes and Testimony:** One respondent was concerned about understanding court processes and having to testify.
- **Effectiveness and Mistakes:** Concerns about being effective in the role, giving bad recommendations, and making mistakes were present.
- **Unclear Direction/Lack of Tools:** One respondent specifically mentioned "Very unclear direction, no documents or tools, seems messy and no responses."
- **Patience and Personality Fit:** One respondent questioned if they had the patience or the right personality for the role.

These objections highlight a need for more flexible, accessible, and comprehensive training and support, with a particular focus on time management, emotional well-being, practical application, and clear communication.

## Appendix C.

Example of raw data collected

| What made you feel most supported during your training? |
| --- |
| The reassurance of continued support after training |
| Engaging with staff |
| My training was different than what is provided now, and really the only support I felt was being able to ask anyone question at anytime. |
| My training was done by current supervisors who included real life examples to the text |
| Follow up from VS/check ins |
| The detailed training, online, evening time offered |
| Nothing really, I'm still very unclear |
| Regular contact. |
| Can't remember!! |

I was trained by Clark County CASA. Their entire staff was organized, supportive, and knowledgeable. I felt confident that I had a qualified team supporting me. Unfortunately, very shortly after I became a CASA, Clark County CASA dissolved.

Having access to a supervisor

Group discussions and examples, plus additional reading materials

presenter answering my questions

Access to facts

Being assigned a supervisor who was available to answer questions and explain the minutiae of the court system.

My initial training with CASA in Vancouver was all live, so there were always staff people there.

Carla's willingness to let me shadow her for anything on her schedule.

Knowing I would have good support after.

I think having the coordinators check in through out the training to see how it's going helped with feeling supported.

The check ins from Veryl and the open communication during the class from Ryan.

Check in by my supervisor

Current information and updates

I didn't feel supported during my initial training many years ago, as back then, lived experience was treated like a red flag. This was way back when it was CASA

just knowing I have someone there to ask questions to

good communication

Communication, knowing when the trainings are and how to join them.

Everyone at CCCA is so supportive and helpful!! Veryl was amazing and so supportive when I first started and then Angie became my supervisor and she is the best!!

my supervisor

The invitation to contact the people providing the training and current volunteers, case managers available for questions, as well as being able to listen to questions from others.

We did the online class everyday and Ryan did a great job

CCCA support.

| What kind of support did you want from staff or the organization during training? |
| --- |
| All the support through each step of the process |
| Accessibility, a warm touch point periodically. |

Training is very different now and I believe what is offered is more of what I would have liked to see for myself

full engagement at first and then willing to step back once I gained confidence and understanding.

check ins

Answers to questions. Which I received

What to do, how to do it and have the tools to see it through

More information about classes. Which classes am I qualified to attend, accurate information about time and location of classes.

?

Same as above.

Would love to have heard from an experienced GAL during training on their journey when they first started: what surprised them most; what was unexpected.

answering questions, have notes/slides sent to email afterward

I can't think of anything

Greater explanation of what to expect in court and a glossary of terms. A more thorough review of what the expectations for reports and notes is. How to compose an effective court report.

Explaining the process, which can seem overwhelming at first.

After Zoom training I wanted " real life" exposure to the system in all aspects possible.

Hearing what my next steps were going to be.

I don't think I needed further support during training.

Nothing outside of what was provided that I can think of.


Lots of support from my supervisor

Just to be there to answer questions

Knowledgeable and concerned trainers


N/A I am the staff

Just access for follow up questions

answer questioons in a timely manner

See above

The kind they gave me :)

answering questions and guidance

Maybe not during training specifically, but options for counseling for myself, or drop-in support group with other volunteers and managers.

Support was great during training