

# Law in Lives

Bringing a Life Course Perspective  
to Access to Justice Research

Andrew Pilliar  
PhD Student  
UBC Faculty of Law

# Outline

- Why a Life Course Perspective?
- What is a Life Course Perspective?
- Applications to Access to Justice Research
- How to Proceed

# Why a Life Course Perspective?

- Access to justice “crisis”?
- Need for a “culture shift”?
- Need for more high quality empirical research on A2J
- Unmet legal needs research provides a point-in-time snapshot
- Life course perspective would help understand access problems over time

# What is a Life Course Perspective?

- History of life course perspective
- Trajectories, transitions, turning points
- Lives and historical times, timing of lives, linked lives, human agency

# Applications to A2J Research

- Trajectories of frequent users (or avoiders) of the legal system
- How do previous experiences affect later responses?
- Some areas of A2J focus already implicitly raise life course ideas: e.g. Elder law

# How to Proceed

- Draw from existing unmet legal needs research
- Build on existing “biographical” work – e.g. The Common Place of Law
- Explore existing cohort studies for any clues about justiciable problems
- Prospective, longitudinal studies