



Strategic Plan for
Inuit Violence Prevention and Healing



Since the creation of Pauktuutit in 1984, violence in Inuit communities has consistently been identified as a priority issue. *The Strategic Plan for Inuit Violence Prevention and Healing* is based on research reports and policy recommendations from more than 20 years of Inuit-centred approaches to responding to, healing from and eliminating violence in Inuit communities in Canada. It will allow Pauktuutit and the Inuit women represented by the organization to make informed recommendations to all levels of government on actions to address violence in Inuit communities. It is also intended to assist governments and others with responsibilities to address a range of Inuit issues and priorities.

In addition to collecting the information from key documents, Pauktuutit also included in the Strategic Plan information from the following sources:

1. A regionally representative advisory committee;
2. On-the-ground staff in shelters, health and social service agencies and violence prevention programs in each Inuit region, contacted by telephone and email; and
3. Pauktuutit Board of Directors, who identified contemporary needs and priorities in each region.

What is the Scope of Violence in Inuit Communities?

Violence in Inuit communities is not a simple “one victim, one offender” problem. Violence has its roots in colonization and the resulting loss of self-determination of land, governance, economy, health and family life. As a result, many Inuit who perpetrate violence have also been victims of violence at one time. Beyond the high number of incidents of violence, Inuit families and communities experience adverse impacts related to lower educational outcomes, inadequate and overcrowded housing, work force participation, impacts of economic development, lower health status, suicide, family life and living conditions including food insecurity.

Approaches to eliminating violence in Inuit communities must take an interconnected perspective and reflect solutions that are culturally relevant and Inuit-specific.

Many Reports, Not Enough Action. Why Try Again?

Pauktuutit is focused on action.

The federal government is committed to taking action on the issue of violence against indigenous women and Inuit perspectives, concerns and solutions must be included. In addition, the federal government is in the beginning stages of creating an inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. That means that violence against Inuit women and girls will be in the public eye and Pauktuutit has years of solutions collected in its *Strategic Plan for Inuit Violence Prevention and Healing*.

Pauktuutit is ready to work with the federal government and others to implement the solutions Inuit women and communities have been developing since 1984. Years of community-based research and Inuit women’s policy recommendations will inform the Government of Canada, and other governments, as it takes steps to make change in order to eliminate violence in Inuit communities.



What are Inuit Women's Needs and Priorities Related to Violence Prevention and Healing?

It is time to restore control and resources to Inuit to address violence in communities. What is needed are measures that immediately protect Inuit women suffering from violence and their children; Inuit-specific services that respect Inuit culture, languages and healing practices; and ongoing public awareness campaigns and training that reach every Inuk. Immediate safety measures include affordable housing, shelters or safe houses in every community, and these courses of action cannot wait while inquiries are conducted or policy is written.

The Strategic Plan for Inuit Violence Prevention and Healing draws out recommendations for violence prevention and healing in three broad areas:

1. Services

- a. Shelters and services for women
- b. Community services for children who experience or witness violence and adult survivors of child sexual abuse
- c. Counselling for abusers
- d. Healing centres

2. Education, training, awareness and capacity-building

- a. Ongoing outreach, violence prevention awareness and education efforts
- b. Building community capacity to prevent and respond to violence
- c. Equitable and adequate resources for an enhanced and sustained national Inuit violence prevention strategy including targeted interventions and strategies for youth

3. Housing

- a. Develop and implement an Inuit housing program that addresses the unique vulnerabilities and needs of women including the need for second-stage housing for women and children

The recommendations work to reduce violence and support survivors in the short- and long term.

The following are key immediate needs and priorities to address violence against Inuit women and youth.



SERVICES: OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Services must be readily accessible to Inuit and based in their own culture and language; enhance existing services based on evidence and best/promising practices.
- There is a need for better coordination/integration/communication between service providers and increased awareness among residents of the services that are currently available in the communities. Service providers must be culturally competent and knowledgeable of Inuit historical trauma.
- The service needs identified in the *National Strategy to Prevent Abuse in Inuit Communities* (2006) remain and include training Inuit front-line workers; creating multi-purpose healing facilities in communities; after-care and long-term support for victims and offenders; and integrating elders and Inuit values in service delivery.
- Enhance the provision and use of telehealth supports such as psychiatry, psychological supports and other specialized services.
- Increase access to addictions programs including residential counselling services and supports.
- Address physical and sexual violence toward Inuit women and children as an urgent public health priority.

SERVICES: SHELTERS AND SERVICES FOR WOMEN

1. Most Inuit communities do not have a shelter where women and their children can escape violence. Shelters are even more important in the northern context, where weather conditions can prohibit access to services such as medevac. Every community should have a shelter or safe house with at least two full-time staff, one being an Inuk counsellor. All shelters require:
 - Ongoing, reliable funding including operations and maintenance; and
 - Increased capacity for staff recruitment, retention, professional development and support.
2. Increase knowledge and awareness of and access to legal protections that may be available such as protection or restraining orders.
3. Federal funding must be made available to Inuit communities at a minimum equitable to that provided to shelters on First Nations reserves.
4. Existing mental health and wellness counsellors in every Inuit region should receive training to communicate in Inuktitut.
5. Services for women experiencing violence must extend beyond those provided as an immediate response to an incidence of violence and continue through engagement with the criminal justice system. Currently, Inuit women experiencing violence may access victim assistance programs as part of a criminal action, but this service is time-limited and inconsistently accessible depending on region. Consistent plain language, bilingual information on victims' rights must be made available, including supports available for victims during the court and prison processes. Immediate efforts must be made to inform women and children of their rights through outreach by relevant mandated authorities.
6. Options must be developed/available to remove an abuser from the family home.



SERVICES: COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO EXPERIENCE OR WITNESS VIOLENCE AND ADULT SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

- Recommendations to address the issue of child sexual abuse and healing for adult survivors of child sexual abuse that Pauktuutit identified in its report, *There is a Need So We Help: Services for Inuit Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse* (2003), remain relevant today.
- Develop and provide appropriate 'wraparound' supports to ensure that no child who is a victim of physical or sexual abuse, or who witnesses violence in the home, goes without the services and support they need.
- Develop interagency protocols to work with and support families at risk to potentially prevent a child's removal to foster care.
- Ensure that community mental health and wellness positions are staffed and adequately resourced, with an adequate focus on supporting children.

SERVICES: COUNSELLING FOR ABUSERS

- The need for counselling for abusers is expressed in Nunavut's recent *Public Engagement Report for the Crime Prevention Strategy*. The 2015 report notes 'Investing in crime prevention through policies and programs that address the underlying factors contributing to crime is necessary if we are to make Nunavut a safer place' (pg. 194).
- Best practices in programming directed at counselling for abusers include *Tupiq*, offered by Correctional Service Canada and the Rankin Inlet Spousal Abuse Counselling Program and Pauktuutit's *Pilimmaksarniq* toolkit for men working with men to reduce violence against women and girls.
- There is a need for programs that address anger management, healthy relationship skills, parenting and healing from trauma and addictions.
- Support and resources must be available to individuals at risk of offending such as contact information for 1-800 support services.



SERVICES: HEALING CENTRES

- Establish and maintain regional residential/long term healing centres.
- Provide culturally relevant ongoing trauma, grief and loss counselling.
- Ensure access to specialized services including for child sexual abuse.
- Treatment facilities must incorporate Inuit cultural safety, Inuit healing practices, Inuit counsellors and elders, regardless of where they live. Models and promising practices for such facilities include:
 - *Mamisarvik*, which treats both those who commit acts of violence and those who survived them. Participants benefit from a therapeutic program that combines western and Inuit healing models while holding Inuit culture and language as primary tools to heal from addictions and trauma;
 - *Isuarsivik* Treatment Centre in Kuujjuaq, which is a regional healing centre modeled on *Mamisarvik*, where residents can be close to home and be serviced in their own dialect of Inuktitut;
 - Alternative service delivery models such as the *Qauma* Mobile Treatment Project; and
 - The *Qarmaapik* Family House and *Tasiurvik* Family House in Nunavik.
- Work with appropriate federal, provincial and territorial colleagues to organize annual gatherings of mental health, wellness, addictions and violence prevention counsellors and staff from all four Inuit regions and urban Inuit agencies, and include Inuit elders and healers.

EDUCATION, TRAINING, AWARENESS AND CAPACITY-BUILDING: OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Equitable and adequate resources must be allocated for an enhanced and sustained national Inuit violence prevention strategy including targeted interventions and strategies for youth.
- Ongoing training and capacity-building for shelter and other front-line workers.
- Ongoing empowerment, capacity building and self-esteem workshops for women and youth.
- Mandatory education for health workers on recognizing and documenting the signs of violence and abuse of women and children, including knowledge of and access to helpful resources.
- Campaigns to break the silence around and denial of violence.
- Focusing on Inuit values, such as *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq*, *Tunnganarniq*, *Piliriqatigiigniq*, *Qanuqtuurunnarniq* and *Pijitsirniq*, can support the work of creating safe and healthy communities.



EDUCATION, TRAINING, AWARENESS AND CAPACITY-BUILDING: ONGOING OUTREACH, AWARENESS AND EDUCATION EFFORTS

- Priority must be given to informing and supporting youth including physical/sexual safety and family violence, healthy relationships and self-esteem.
- Support must be available for individuals with FASD.
- Education, training and awareness must focus on what healthy relationships look like and how to behave respectfully toward other people in word and action.
- The best way to reach Inuit is through face-to-face, participatory workshop programming, as opposed to online or print campaigns.
- There is an urgent need for ongoing violence prevention efforts with the long-term goal of reaching every Inuk and creating a real and measurable change in behaviour.

EDUCATION, TRAINING, AWARENESS AND CAPACITY-BUILDING: TRAINING FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS, BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO VIOLENCE

- Build community members' capacity to prevent and respond to violence, and help survivors. For example, Embrace Life Council and Canadian Red Cross' *RespectED* training and the *Qaujigiartiit* Health Research Centre's *Inunnguiniq Parenting Support Program* are best and promising practices in training and programming for Inuit.
- Elders and Inuit healers can be trained in violence prevention.
- Healing centres should have violence and abuse prevention programs.
- Trained and experienced facilitators should be available to work with local communities to hold workshops and programs on a range of issues such as parenting, self-esteem, healthy relationships, communication skills, FASD, etc.

HOUSING: GENERAL

- Housing issues must be addressed as a key priority to ensure the safety of women and children.
- Having a safe place to live without having to be dependent on an abuser for accommodation is vitally important.
- The need to escape violence and the lack of affordable housing in Inuit communities can force women to leave Inuit Nunangat to go to urban centres, where they are uniquely vulnerable to increased violence, exploitation and homelessness.
- The housing shortage and domestic violence are named by Inuit women in Nunavik as top threats to the well-being of all Nunavimmiut.
- Building affordable housing will create safe spaces for women and children to live, as well as address numerous socioeconomic issues in Inuit communities.
- Responsible governments and authorities must make every effort to provide funds for the creation of affordable housing.



OTHER

- The measurement of need for services must be determined by Inuit and not based on southern instruments such as police statistics, use-based statistics and per capita measures.
- Conduct evaluations of existing programs and services to support increased evidence-based interventions.
- Fully engage and support Inuit women's leadership and informed participation in consultation and accommodation processes, through their representative organizations, on the development of public policy that impacts Inuit women.
- A virtual knowledge hub should be created to make Inuit-specific resources accessible across regions, and to network mental health, wellness, addictions and violence prevention counsellors and staff from all four Inuit regions and urban Inuit agencies, including Inuit elders and healers.
- Funding for applied Inuit-specific research to develop and test solutions for the particular problems Inuit face: the highest rate of violence, the highest rate of overcrowding, the highest rate of food insecurity, the highest rate of suicide of any group including other indigenous groups, and the difficulties of social and economic development in small communities in the North. All the funded research should have an academic lead (known to and accepted by Inuit) and an Inuit lead, and all should be trauma-informed.



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