

## **Inuit Well-Being: Gender-Based Violence Project: What We Are Learning**

**2022**

### **The Second Project Evaluation**

This year, the second evaluation was completed for the GBV project. The evaluation's purpose was to collect data about how the wrap-around model is supporting those impacted by GBV to see what is working well and where there are gaps in services.

Two project participants participated in interviews with NVision Insight Group. The number of participants were lower this year due to challenges connecting interviewers quickly to clients willing to participate. In 2023 new approaches will be explored to address this. Centre staff also participated in interviews and project partners completed online surveys. Participants, staff and partners all answered questions regarding the wrap-around model and the gender-based violence project. This ensured the project was continuing to collect information from all parties involved with Inuuqatigiit Centre services. Information from the interviews, surveys and meeting notes were included in a report that was created by the external evaluation team from NVision.

Much like the first evaluation report, the second provided important information about the project and the effectiveness of the wrap-around model thus far. Eleven recommendations for improvements to the project were made in the report. Some of these recommendations included: considering including Inuit men as a target group within the GBV project, reviewing the cultural sensitivity training GBV project staff provide to project partners, and the GBV team continuing to improve internal communications about the project.

The GBV team was able to move some of these recommendations forward towards the end of 2022. One way this was achieved was by making supporting Inuit men a main topic for the Stakeholder meetings. Exploring different ways to engage men in programing and working with partners to support their clients when they are finished treatment are two ideas that came out of the meetings. We also asked the Advisory Group how to make cultural sensitivity training more accessible when organizations may only have a few staff who need training at any time. The idea that came from advisory members was to offer dates that training would take place that staff from any organization could participate in. This approach will be explored in 2023.

The GBV project team also has plans in place to continue annual meetings with each department at Inuuqatigiit Centre to continue communications about the project with staff throughout 2023. Various other recommendations were also worked on throughout 2022.

### **Coming Out of Covid**

In 2022, we were able for the first time since Covid-19 to see some of our Elders, community members and project partners in person. Both the Inuit Stakeholder meeting and Community Stakeholder meeting were hybrid meetings allowing participants that felt comfortable and were able to attend in person. This

was very exciting and offered everyone involved an extra layer of connection as well as an easier flow of conversation in person. Staff are hopeful more in person meetings can continue in 2023.

### **Ongoing Relationship Building**

Throughout 2022, GBV project staff continued to build relationships with new staff, Elders, project participants and partner agencies. Some examples include offering cultural sensitivity training, providing Inuit art work to help a mainstream agency feel more welcoming for Inuit and inviting another Elder to participate in a Stakeholder meeting. There was also an opportunity to maintain many relationships that had begun earlier in the project.

This year, GBV staff were able to share how recommendations made by Advisory Group and Stakeholders were able to move forward. There also continued to be an increase in collaboration between Inuuqatigiit Centre and the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa (CAS), Ottawa Police Services (OPS) and Ottawa Victims Services (OVS). This took place with regularly scheduled meetings between Inuuqatigiit Centre and CAS to discuss ways to work best together, to answer each other's questions and to notify each other of programming. OVS and OPS also initiated contact with Inuuqatigiit Centre on more than one occasion to support loved ones of deceased Inuit community members and to ensure cultural competency was a top priority when handling their remains. We have learned that building relationships with partners and continuing to have ongoing communication better supports Inuit survivors of violence.

Data tracking from clients that attend Inuuqatigiit Centre programming and have been affected by violence continued throughout 2022. In 2022, the GBV team also held their first round of departmental meetings with Inuuqatigiit Centre staff. The goal of these meetings was to ensure staff knew about the GBV project and to give them an opportunity to share what they felt worked well in supporting survivors. They also identified where there may be gaps in services and what trainings and other assistance would be most beneficial for them to continue to support survivors. Lots of great information was collected from front line staff during these meetings that helped inform the evaluation and project going forward. Through this process, we were able to find out specific training front lines staff felt would be beneficial in order for them to continue to support Inuit affected by violence. These recommendations were given to department managers to address, enabling staff to feel heard, grow their skills and be better equipped to support survivors.

There was one Advisory Committee meeting in 2022, one meeting with the Inuit Stakeholders and one with the Community Stakeholders. We held the Advisory Committee meeting first, allowing GBV staff to share an update on what they had been doing as well as present the second evaluations findings. This allowed us to be transparent with Advisory Committee members and strengthening our relationships. The Stakeholder meetings also touched on these topics and participants spent some time discussing ways to support men affected by violence. This was a topic that was brought up as an area of focus in the evaluation as well as a challenge front line staff had started noticing moving out of Covid-19 lockdowns. Together, staff from various agencies shared ideas on how to engage Inuit men in services and therefore provide them with more support.

### **Year 4 - What We Learned**

In year 4 we saw many individuals, families and organizations trying to find their footing coming out of Covid-19. Many individuals that Inuuqatigiit Centre and our partner agencies support unfortunately have been really struggling with mental illnesses, addictions, and financial hardships with the cost of living increasing dramatically. Staff at Inuuqatigiit Centre as well as our partner agencies know that many individuals, unfortunately, have also been faced with an increase in GBV resulting from isolation and stressors throughout the pandemic. Since lock downs have lifted, staff have also seen a reluctance from individuals in seeking out support, especially Inuit men. Front line staff at Inuuqatigiit Centre as well as many other agencies are working very hard to support clients, however, it continues to be a trying time for many.

Year 4 of the project taught us how important it is to continue spending time staying connected with partners. The closer relationships with shelters, addiction treatment and child protection services have really enabled more collaboration and for the wrap-around model to grow, ultimately benefiting more clients affected by violence. Another learning throughout 2022 was the importance of hearing more internal staff voices and opinions on what they need to be successful in supporting survivors of violence. Ultimately, keeping the conversations going about GBV, Inuit survivor experiences and the supports they require to get to a better place in their healing journey was a top priority to continue to improve the Inuit-specific wrap-around service model.