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IQALUIT, NUNAVUT / JANUARY 17-20 2006

SYMPOSIUM  
FINAL  
REPORT



Recommendations  
for a Strategy  
to Stop Violence  
Against Women



Final Report of the Inuuqatigiitsiarniq Symposium

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This report is available in  
Inuinnaqtun upon request

Una tuharut Inuinnaqtun piinnarialiq tuhiqqat

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## Letter from VAWWG Chair

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN WORKING GROUP

Nunavut has some of the highest levels of violence against women in Canada. The Violence Against Women Working Group was established in response to a call for increased awareness of violence against women.

The mandate of the working group is to increase awareness of the seriousness of domestic violence. It seeks to identify programs, services, and data which would help to prevent violence and to alleviate it when it occurs. It also focuses on opportunities for joint planning through better exchange of information between departments and organizations, while recognizing that the goal is for Nunavummiut to take action together on violence, address challenges, develop healthy relationships and strengthen family by supporting community driven solutions.

The Working Group consists of Deputy Ministers and Senior Officials from the Departments of Justice, Health & Social Services, Education, Culture, Language, Elders & Youth, Executive & Intergovernmental Affairs, as well as representatives from Nunavut Tunngavik, the Nunavut Housing Corporation, the RCMP, Justice Canada, Qullit Status of Women Council, and National Crime Prevention.

We were very pleased to host the Inuuqatigiitsiarniq symposium and to witness the strong dialogue with community members about how we can support communities in their efforts to combat domestic violence. We share the vision of building strong, vital communities in which women and their children can live free from violence and where we can improve the quality of life of women.

The working group will be reviewing all of the recommendations in this report to identify areas where all agencies involved can work individually and cooperatively. It is our hope that this will result in a more comprehensive, culturally appropriate strategy to address the high levels of violence in Nunavut communities. It is hoped that this will result in appropriate government support of community-based solutions to violence.

Markus Weber  
Chair, VAWW Group

“ We must return to our communities and do something to stop the violence. We must act now. We cannot wait for the governments to do this. We know what we have to do. ”

## Executive Summary

### Summary

For two and a half days in January, over 100 people, who live in and are committed to communities across Nunavut, met to discuss violence against women. By noon on Day 3, 78 recommendations had been made towards a strategy on violence prevention. There was an overwhelming consensus that violence against women was unacceptable, that it was never the victim's fault that the situation is very serious, and that Nunavut communities are ready to act immediately to eradicate it.

The conclusion was that the solution to violence does not come from outside the community but exists within it. The men and women of Nunavut require training, support, funding and the authority at the community level to prevent violence at its roots when it begins, and before it gets madly out of control. It was also decided that the most important things a community and government could do was to provide locally-based education, counseling and support for the children.

*“We Inuit know how to support a child who has seen violence and felt the violence themselves... Children need to be counseled so they can heal or they will grow up to hurt us (and others) with their anger. This (counseling) should be done by people they know in the community.”*



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A STRATEGY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

### OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES:

1. **COMMUNITY AUTHORITY TO INTERVENE AND PROVIDE SUPPORT IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION**
2. **COMMUNITY RESOURCES UTILIZED, EMPOWERED AND DEVELOPED FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION**
3. **COMMUNITY MODELS OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION DEVELOPED WITH COMMUNITY INPUT**

### COMMUNITY AUTHORITY

Communities require greater authority in order to intervene in issues of violence and abuse prevention. Funding and training must be given to communities in order to train men and women who are interested in and capable of working in community justice and counseling. Local counselors must be available to children, victims and abusers.

### PRIORITIES IN THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE & ABUSE

Each Nunavut community must have dedicated abuse prevention services including:

1. **SPECIFIC COUNSELLING & SUPPORT TO VICTIMS, CHILDREN AND ABUSERS:** Training programs and ongoing support for counselors in violence prevention.
2. **COMMUNITY-BASED JUSTICE:** Justice Committees need training and authority to intervene in issues of abuse and violence.
3. **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:** Increased support, intervention and services for individuals with mental health problems and their families.
4. **ELDER SUPPORT & EMPOWERMENT:** The role of Elder-Advisors must be established in all communities; training and support in the area of violence prevention; authority and respect must be given to the work that elders do.

### ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Identifying root causes provided a foundation for later discussions on prevention:

1. **POWER AND CONTROL OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN:** Some people (both men and women) believe men have the right be in charge of the women they are in a relationship with, which can lead to the use of force to impose control.
2. **INEQUALITY:** When women are not considered equal to men, they are vulnerable to men who seek to control them. Communities need to teach boys and girls that men and women are equals.
3. **POOR SELF-MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS:** Some people are not able to communicate their feelings and their thoughts. When people are unable

to communicate effectively, their behaviour can be violent and abusive. Children who grow up with violence and abuse have difficulty managing their own behaviour and will not solve problems well.

4. **STRONG EMOTIONS:** Some people can not control strong feelings such as jealousy, anger, fear and shame. These feelings build up until they explode in violence and abusive behaviour.
5. **UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS:** Some couples argue and fight and do not resolve their problems. They often behave in ways that hurt their partner and these strong emotions can lead to violence.
6. **PAST ABUSE/ THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE CONTINUES:** Boys growing up in a violent home are more likely to learn controlling and violent behaviour. Girls who see and experience often think they are worthless and accept controlling behaviour from their partners
7. **LACK OF HEALING FROM THE EFFECTS OF ABUSE AND TRAUMA:** When people are not treated for the effects of abuse, they find it difficult to manage strong emotions. Their behaviour can become violent and abusive to women and children.
8. **CHILDREN VICTIMIZED BY ABUSE & NEGLECT:** Children act out in negative ways when they experience abuse and neglect. Without healing and support, the anger quickly turns to criminal activity

and violent behaviour. As adults, their anger turns to women and others whom they feel they can control.

9. **LOW SELF-ESTEEM & CONFIDENCE:** Young men suffer from a lack of education, hunting skills and equipment, and of positive roles for them to fill. There is a crisis in self-esteem among young men leading to substance abuse and violence.
10. **DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY DYNAMICS:** Lack of parenting skills and positive role modeling among young parents often leads to abuse and violence in the home. At times, issues within the family are not properly dealt with through counseling and support and problems fester until violence erupts.
11. **SOCIAL PROBLEMS:** including a high rate of substance abuse addictions, overcrowded housing and housing shortages, youth pregnancy, unemployment and the loss of Inuit cultural values.
12. **MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS:** Some of the most serious violence has been caused by those who people are mentally ill and have not been given help.
13. **GOVERNMENT CONTROL:** Community-based groups require more control over intervention in abuse and, in particular, need more authority to intervene when the potential of violence occurs.

*“The answer is in us...  
We can make this  
violence stop getting worse.”*

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

### VICTIM SUPPORT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

#### COMMUNITY-BASED VICTIM CRISIS RESPONSE:

The consensus was that community-based services must **RESPOND QUICKLY TO VICTIMS WHEN THEY ARE HURT OR IN TROUBLE**. The following types of victim support services are required in every Nunavut community:

- 1. COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM:** Community Law Enforcement officers for safety and protection and Community Counselors for both victims and abusers
- 2. IMMEDIATE MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDED TO THE VICTIM:** Assistance given to the victim to transport and accompany her to get medical help; other support services such as babysitting while she is being treated.
- 3. CRISIS COUNSELLING FOR THE VICTIM AND FAMILY:** Emotional support and accurate information
- 4. 24-HOUR HELP LINE:** Community-based contact for victims when police are off duty; Inuktitut & Inuinnaqtun service.

- 5. THE FAMILY INFORMED AND INCLUDED**

- 6. FAMILY HOME MADE SAFE: Abuser Removed From Home**

#### PARENTING TRAINING AND SUPPORT:

Greater support to parents and families. Parents need to have the skills to deal with problems and prevent violence in the home, and to teach their children to be non-violent. Recommendations included:

- 1. PARENTING SKILLS TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS**
- 2. RESPITE AND SUPPORT FOR ELDERLY PARENTS**
- 3. COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT TO PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN ARE VICTIMS OR ABUSERS**
- 4. COMMUNITY PARENT NETWORKS AND SUPPORT GROUPS**
- 5. ONGOING ABUSE PREVENTION TEACHING TO CHILDREN**

#### CHILD COUNSELLORS IN ALL COMMUNITIES:

Every Nunavut community must have community-based counselors trained in working with children. Recommendations for children's counseling services included:

1. **TRAIN COMMUNITY COUNSELLORS** to provide immediate and long-term support to child victims and witnesses of abuse
2. **USE INUIT QAUJIMAJATUQANGIT** and the Inuit process of assisting children with trauma & abuse
3. **APPROPRIATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN** in safe, nurturing homes of families they know within the community, and avoid re-traumatizing them by removal from the community

### **EDUCATION AND SUPPORT OF CHILDREN:**

Children and teens must be taught emotion management, problem solving and skills to prevent violence. Recommendations included:

1. **ABUSE PREVENTION CURRICULUM FOR ALL AGES, ALL GRADES, IN ALL SCHOOLS**
2. **MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AND CHILDREN WHO WITNESS ABUSE**
3. **USE OF INUIT QAUJIMAJATUQANGIT AND INUIT KNOWLEDGE WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN**
4. **ELDER-ADVISORS**
5. **INVOLVEMENT OF THE FAMILY**

### **LONG-TERM VICTIM COUNSELLING:**

Long-term counseling of victims is required beyond the immediate crisis stage including the following services developed at the community level:

1. **COMMUNITY-BASED VICTIM SERVICES IN ALL COMMUNITIES**
2. **EMERGENCY SAFE HOME IN ALL COMMUNITIES**
3. **TRAINING OF COMMUNITY COUNSELLORS IN ABUSE PREVENTION**
4. **OPEN DOOR AND FLEXIBLE COUNSELLING POLICIES, DROP-IN CENTRES**
5. **INTEGRATED SERVICES: MENTAL HEALTH, SOCIAL WORKER, COMMUNITY COUNSELLORS OFFERING A VARIETY OF SERVICES**
6. **ELDER-ADVISORS**

### **LONG-TERM SUPPORT FOR BOTH VICTIM AND ABUSER**

Practical services are required to assist victims in healing and building their capacity, including services to support victims with housing, childcare, finances, employment, education, training, physical and mental health and life skills.

Abusers also require long-term counseling, treatment and support in order to learn new skills to prevent a recurrence of their violent behaviour. In many cases, abusers have

been victimized or traumatized as children and bear deep scars that only long-term treatment can heal. Recommendations for support services to abusers include: counseling from within the community at the crisis stage and throughout their healing process and treatment while incarcerated or in half-way houses. This support should include the abuser's family. Elders should be available to provide advice and counseling to abusers, and in the programs that treat abusers. Abusers also require half-way houses in communities in order to be supervised before they reintegrate fully. More recommendations:

1. **INUIT CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC PROGRAMS FOR ABUSERS** Treatment and counseling must be provided by Inuit counselors who understand the culture and language of Nunavut.
2. **EDUCATION, TRAINING, LIFESKILLS & HUNTING SUPPORT FOR MEN** This addresses some of the root causes of violence in men, as identified above.

## COMMUNITY-BASED JUSTICE:

The need to intervene at the community-level in abuse issues, particularly before abuse and violence escalates.

1. **MORE AUTHORITY AND DISCRETION TO COMMUNITY JUSTICE COMMITTEES**
2. **COMMUNITY INTERVENTION AT EARLY STAGES OF RELATIONSHIP**

3. **INTEGRATION OF INUIT CULTURE AND INUIT QAUJIMAJATUQANGIT IN JUSTICE SYSTEM**
4. **INUKTITUT/INUINNAQTUN SPEAKING JUSTICE WORKERS**
5. **TRAINING OF COMMUNITY JUSTICE WORKERS (INCLUDING ELDERS) IN LEGAL ISSUES**
6. **RESTORATIVE APPROACH TO LESS SERIOUS CONFLICTS**
7. **COMMUNITY-BASED SENTENCING FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS**

## VICTIM-CENTRED JUSTICE:

1. **VICTIM REPRESENTATION IN JUSTICE SYSTEM**
2. **COMMUNITY VICTIM ADVOCATE AT ALL STAGES OF JUSTICE PROCESS**
3. **INFORMATION AND COUNSELLING TO VICTIM ON JUSTICE ISSUES**
4. **VICTIM AND ABUSE PREVENTION TRAINING**
5. **VICTIM'S SAFETY AND CONCERNS ARE THE PRIORITY**
6. **MANDATORY CHARGING & SENTENCING FOR SERIOUS OFFENCES INVOLVING WEAPONS AND EXTREME VIOLENCE**

7. PUBLIC EDUCATION: ZERO TOLERANCE FOR VIOLENCE MUST BE CONVEYED TO THE COMMUNITY

### **COMMUNITY POLICING & RESPONSE:**

1. RCMP WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH THE COMMUNITY ON ISSUES OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION
2. RCMP INCORPORATE INUIT QAUJIMAJATUQANGIT AND INUIT INTERVENTION PRACTICES BY WORKING WITH COMMUNITY COUNSELLORS & ADVISORS
3. NEW RCMP OFFICERS ORIENTED TO COMMUNITY BY COMMUNITY-BASED ADVISORS
4. PUBLIC EDUCATION: INFORM COMMUNITY ABOUT AFTER-HOURS DISPATCH SERVICE
5. COMMUNITY LAW ENFORCEMENT DEVELOPED AND TRAINED
6. COMMUNITY GIVEN MORE AUTHORITY TO INTERVENE IN CRIMES OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE
7. IMPROVE RCMP AFTER-HOURS LINE TO ENSURE VICTIM SAFETY

### **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:**

Participants discussed various topics that related to the need for improved mental health services. While not a root cause for all or even most violence, it was suggested that individuals with mental health issues have not been given early intervention to prevent potentially violent behaviour.

### **ELDER ISSUES:**

Participants consistently raised the importance of including, supporting, respecting and empowering elders in all aspects of violence prevention. Training for elders is required in legal issues, abuse prevention and substance abuse issues. Elder-advisors should be in all communities, public awareness must increase for elder respect, and youth should be encouraged to seek elder support and advice.





## Final Report

### Summary

For two and a half days in January, over 100 people, who live in and are committed to communities across Nunavut, met to discuss violence against women. By noon on Day 3, 78 recommendations had been made by consensus towards a strategy on violence prevention. What was apparent from the first day of the symposium was the overwhelming commitment to recommending a strategy to prevent the abuse of women, and the urgency that this important work begins immediately. Despite the large number of participants and the vastly different ages and backgrounds, there was, again, an overwhelming consensus that violence against women was unacceptable, that it was never the victim's fault, that the situation is very serious, and that Nunavut communities are ready to act immediately to eradicate it.

The conclusion, established through the Symposium's consultative process, was that the solution to violence does not come from outside the community but exists within it; in the men and women of Nunavut, who request training, support, funding and most of all authority at

“ We must return to our communities and do something to stop the violence. We must act now. We cannot wait for the governments to do this. We know what we have to do. ”

PARTICIPANT SPEAKING  
ON DAY 2  
OF THE SYMPOSIUM

the community level, to prevent violence at its roots, when it begins and before it gets madly out of control.

On the second day of the Symposium a blizzard threatened to shut down the discussions, but participants were not to be stopped from meeting. They had come too far and the issue was too important not to continue. "Let's find another place," many said, as buses were cancelled and the Cadet Hall was shut down. A hastily organized venue change to the most ironic of places, *The Storehouse* - the Frobisher Inn bar, where many seeds of violence have been sown, provided an alternative meeting place. As the news spread, the first 35 who gathered were joined by others as the day progressed; at one point 65 participants squeezed around the flipcharts, and participants voluntarily interpreted for the group. Across town, at The Navigator Inn, a smaller group of stranded participants also continued to meet and make recommendations.

By 5:00 p.m. the Frobisher Inn meeting had worked through the agenda and, while business had been accomplished, there had not yet been time to fully share what violence really means in the lives of victims and their families. They agreed to continue meeting into the evening. From 8:00 p.m. to well past midnight, stories were shared, tears were shed and 62 participants, many whom had never met before, decided that the most important things a community and government could do was to provide locally-based education, counseling and support of children. As one elder-participant stated:

*"We know how to take care of our children. We Inuit know how to support a child who has seen violence and felt the violence themselves ..."*

*Children need to be counseled so they can heal or they will grow up to hurt us with their anger. This (counseling) should be done by people they know in the community."*

## The Process of Consultation:

The most important part of the process for reaching consensus among members of a large group is to establish common goals and instill in all participants the value given to their individual input. Facilitators attempted to structure the consultation in order to highlight the significant role of participant discussion and to assert the participant's role as one of generating and debating ideas. Only issues brought forward by more than one person and agreed upon by the whole would form part of the recommended strategy. Within the limited time available, facilitators looked for commonality between ideas and consistent themes. At the final large group meeting on the third day, facilitators presented the recommendations and ensured there was ample time for further discussion and debate.

What follows is a report that brings together the priorities, the overall guiding principles and recommendations reached through consensus by the participants of the Symposium.

### A NOTE ABOUT THE CANCELLED PANELISTS:

Due to the blizzard and changes to the venue, the agenda was altered to focus on

consultation and no scheduled presenters were heard from. However presenters Alice Isnor, Napatchie McCrae, Debbie Paquette, Rosie Naullaq (all representing community victim support) as well as Ellen Hamilton and Myna Ishulutak (representing abuser treatment) were part of the Frobisher Inn consultations and ensured their information and ideas were integrated into the discussions. At the Navigator Inn, presenters Emiline Komuk, Marianne Tattuinee and Paige Burt (representing abuser treatment) were involved in leading those discussions. Facilitators confirmed with all presenters that important issues they planned to raise were included in the final recommendations.

## A NOTE ABOUT THE EVENING SHARING CIRCLE:

The purpose of the sharing circle on the evening of Day 2 was to allow participants to share their stories and thoughts about violence in an unstructured way. Many of the comments illuminated the recommendations and priorities highlighted by the formal discussions and some of these comments are quoted in this report. The participants gave facilitators permission to record the sharing circle and to quote participants. Facilitators have chosen to keep quotes anonymous, but all are from participants to the Symposium. As one participant said, *“It is important for people to know how serious this issue is.”*

## Recommendations For a Strategy on Violence Against Women

### OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES:

1. Community Authority To Intervene And Provide Support In Violence Prevention
2. Community Resources Utilized, Empowered And Developed For Violence Prevention
3. Community Models Of Violence Prevention Developed With Community Input

### COMMUNITY AUTHORITY

The overall message of the Symposium was that communities require greater authority in order to intervene in issues of violence and abuse prevention. Funding and training must be funneled to communities in order to develop skills in the men and women who are interested in, and capable of, working in community justice and counseling. Community-based counselors must be available to children, victims and abusers.

*“It’s time to do something. We are going back to our communities and we are all going to start talking to our communities about what we can do immediately to end the violence...No more waiting for the government to do something...It’s up to us. We’ve got to do it.”*

*“Each community is different and will have different solutions...It has to work for the community.”*

## Priorities In The Prevention Of Violence & Abuse

Community-based violence prevention services must be developed and reflect the unique character of the community. Each Nunavut community must have dedicated abuse prevention services including:

1. **Specific Counselling & Support to Victims, Children & Abusers:** Training program and ongoing support must be provided to community counselors in violence prevention.
2. **Community-Based Justice:** Justice Committees must be given the training and authority to intervene in issues of abuse and violence.
3. **Mental Health Services:** Increased support, intervention and services must be provided to individuals with mental health problems and their families.
4. **Elder Support & Empowerment:** The role of Elder-Advisors must be established in all communities. Training and support must be provided to elders in the area of violence prevention. Authority and respect must be given to the work that elders do.

\*One recommendation was for a regionally-based Abuse Prevention Centre with a mandate to train community counselors and develop programs that can be delivered in communities. It was felt that community counselors must be trained in violence prevention, victim support, abuser treatment, legal issues and techniques specific to counseling children. Elders at the Symposium requested that they be involved in training as they too want to be able to develop skills and gain knowledge to assist in violence prevention.

## Root Causes Of Violence Against Women

On the afternoon of Day 1, the large group broke into 9 smaller groups of approximately 10 people each to discuss the root causes of violence against women. Establishing root causes provided a foundation for later discussions on prevention. What follows is the consensus about the root causes of abuse and violence.



# Inuuqatigiitsiarniq

## 1. Power and Control Of Women And Children:

Some people in the community (both men and women) believe that men have the right to control women and to be in charge of the women they are in a relationship with. This way of thinking leads to violence if a man feels he is not in control of a woman and has the 'right' to use force to impose his control.

*"Some men think they have the right to control where the woman goes, who she visits, what she does, who she talks to... if he is jealous he thinks he should beat her up."*

*"I was almost beaten to death...I thought I would die for sure. The reason, I will never know. Am I supposed to be killed?"*

*"That man thought he had the right to do whatever he wanted to her (my daughter) because she was small and helpless and he was bigger."*

## 2. Inequality:

When women are not considered equal to men, they are vulnerable to men who seek to control them.

Communities have not always helped teach boys and girls that they are equal to each other.

*"I always hear that women have too much power now and that is the reason we are beaten...why? Are they jealous of us?"*

*"If we are equal then why are there not more women in the Legislative Assembly?"*



**3. Poor Self-Management & Communications Skills:** Some people are not able to communicate their feelings and their thoughts. They hold things inside and do not reach out for help. When people are unable to communicate effectively, their behaviour can be violent and abusive. When children have grown up with violence and abuse, they have difficulty managing their behaviour and will not solve their problems well.

*“When children (young teenagers) have children they cannot be strong parents because they themselves don’t know how to take care of themselves very well.”*

**4. Strong Emotions:** Some people are not able to control strong feelings such as jealousy, anger, fear and shame. These feelings can build up until they explode in violence and abusive behaviour.

**5. Unhealthy Relationships:** Some couples are not able to communicate or solve problems in a calm way. They argue and fight and do not resolve their problems. Sometimes they behave in ways that hurt their partner and the strong emotions can lead to violence.

*“Nobody is teaching how to choose a partner and how to treat a partner. Some teenagers don’t know what a healthy relationship is.”*

**6. Past Abuse/ The Cycle Of Violence Continues:** When boys grow up in a violent home, they are more likely to learn controlling and violent behaviour against women and children. Girls too, who see

and experience violence may learn to control people in abusive and violent ways. Sometimes girls think they are worthless and accept controlling behaviour from their boyfriends or husbands when they grow up. Men who feel they are worthless will try and control others around them to feel more confident; they may think they have the right to control their girlfriends, or women in general, physically and sexually.

*“Violence makes people sick...the whole family becomes sick from the children to the adults.”*

**7. Lack of Healing from the Effects of Abuse and Trauma:** When people do not heal and are not treated for the effects of abuse, they may find it difficult to manage emotions such as anger, fear, jealousy etc. Their behaviour can become violent and abusive to others, especially against children and women in their family.

*“People can become very, very sick if they are teased or hurt. It is like a cancer.”*

*“We older people know this...I was told by my mother to never tease anyone who is disabled or who is not smart...We are always supposed to treat people kindly. If people are hurt they will become very angry and could even be dangerous.”*

**8. Children Victimized by Abuse and Neglect:** Children become angry and act out in negative ways when they experience abuse and neglect. Without healing and support, the anger quickly turns to criminal activity and violent behaviour. As adults, their anger turns to women and

others whom they feel they can control.

*“As a teacher I have seen children who are bullies and I know they have probably been hurt themselves or have been neglected...Some children are full of hurt.”*

*“The early years are very important...a child carries pain for life...pain leads to anger and violence.”*

**9. Low Self-Esteem and Confidence:** Young men are often idle in the community due to lack of education, lack of hunting skills and equipment, and the lack of positive roles for them to fill. Unemployment and the loss of the hunting lifestyle have led to a crisis in self-esteem among young men. This lack of purpose and idleness creates many problems including substance abuse and violence. There is a lack of positive role models in the community for young men to look up to and relate to.

**10. Dysfunctional Family Dynamics:** Lack of



parenting skills among young parents and parents who were not raised themselves in a functional home leads to abuse and violence in the home. At times, issues within the family are not properly dealt with through counseling and support and problems fester until violence erupts.

**11. Social Problems:** The raft of social problems currently affecting Nunavut communities adds to the stress and factors that increase violence and abuse. These social problems include a high rate of substance abuse addictions, overcrowded housing and housing shortages, youth pregnancy, unemployment and the loss of Inuit cultural values.

**12. Mental Health Problems:** Participants spoke about individuals in the community who suffer from serious mental health problems. For some, their families are unable to help them and they can only watch and suffer from the effects of mental illness. Some of the most serious violence has been caused by those who people are known to be mentally ill and have not been given help.

**13. Government Control:** There was a consensus that there is not enough active involvement by community people of all ages in the prevention of violence and abuse. Community-based groups request more control over intervention in abuse and, in particular, request more authority to intervene when the potential of violence

occurs and earlier in the cycle, before it increases in severity.

*“The answer is in us... We can make this violence stop getting worse.”*

## Recommendations Victim Support Services And Programs

On Day 2 participants discussed the support services and programs required by a woman victim at various stages after the violence has occurred. The larger group meeting at The Frobisher Inn broke into smaller discussion groups and reported to the whole group for refinement of their ideas. Topics discussed by the large group included the services and support required by a victim of violence in the crisis stage, in the first 6 months, in the year following the violence and in the long-term. Later in the day, the group discussed how a victim of violence can achieve justice, what services abusers need in order to prevent a violent recurrence and finally, what a community can do to prevent violence. At the Navigator Inn, a smaller group met and had an overall discussion.

On Day 3 of the Symposium, facilitators provided a final opportunity for all participants to add to the recommendations culled from these discussions. The following is the consensus:

## Community-Based Victim Crisis Response:

The consensus was that community-based services must respond quickly to victims when they are hurt or in trouble. The following are recommendations on the types of victim support services required in every Nunavut community:

1. **Community Emergency Response Team:**  
Community Law Enforcement officers for safety and protection and Community Counsellors (for both victim and abuser)

*“We have a very good by-law officer in our community, but he is not supposed to help out when there is a crisis. We are not supposed to call him in emergencies but he is very helpful and he wants to help and does help when there is a problem.”*

*“There are people in the community who can calm people down and help people, why can't they be allowed to help?”*

*“If we didn't have a by-law (officer) it would be really difficult, they are so helpful in our community. They respond faster than the police; after working hours we have to go through Iqaluit detachment first.”*

**2. Immediate Medical Services Provided to the Victim:** There should be assistance given to the victim to transport her and accompany her to get medical help. Other services towards supporting her would include babysitting while she is being treated.

*“Sometimes you feel so alone and you don’t get help.”*

**3. Crisis Counselling For The Victim and Family:**

- Emotional Support
- Accurate information

*“I was not given the right information when my daughter was abused...I was told that I couldn’t do anything except to send her away to another community.”*

**4. 24-Hour Help Line:**

- Community-based contact for victims to call after hours and when police are out of the community
- Inuktitut & Inuinnaqtun service

*“I would have been dead if I had waited for the police to come... I don’t speak English and nobody could understand me when I called (the dispatch office)...I had to call someone to come and help me.”*

*“We are over 2000 kilometres away from Iqaluit...how can the person who answers the phone know how to dispatch help to us...they don’t know our community and they don’t speak our language.”*

*“When she called the dispatch number, she was told to let him sleep it off.”*

**5. The Family Informed and Included:** The Inuit way is to involve the family in order to help solve the problem and provide support. The victim’s family needs to be informed of the incident.

*“Sometimes the RCMP do not know the families and they don’t know the couple.”*

*“When my daughter was hurt, nobody called me and I was not brought to her...A mother should be brought to help her daughter.”*

**6. Family Home Made Safe: Abuser Removed From Home** As opposed to victims and children leaving the home in order to be safe, the consensus was that abusers should be removed from the family home. Some suggested that a safe home be established to secure abusers until they calm down and can be trusted.

*“The woman is very scared when she has been assaulted...she doesn’t want to leave the community but she doesn’t want to die.”*

**7. Community Counselling Provided To Abuser:** Abusers should receive counseling as soon as possible after the violence occurs in order to intervene quickly before violence becomes more serious. Community counselors would provide this counseling.

*“I have counseled abusive men...it’s very hard, especially if the drugs have affected his comprehension...but our community thinks it’s important to talk to the man so he can change his ways and I have had success...The police don’t do this but now have started to call me in.”*

## Parenting Training and Support:

A priority in preventing violence is to provide greater support to parents and families. Parents need to have the skills to deal with problems and prevent violence in the home. Parents also need to teach their children to be non-violent. Recommendations included:

1. Parenting Skills Training And Workshops  
In schools and in the community
2. Respite And Support For Elderly Parents
3. Counselling and Support to Parents Whose Children are Victims or Abusers
4. Community Parent Networks and Parent Peer Support Groups
5. Ongoing Abuse Prevention Instruction for Children

*“Raise your kids to have strong values because they might do terrible things to another person.”*

*“Parents need to learn how to parent and how to teach their children...It is their responsibility but it is the whole community’s responsibility to make sure they know how.”*

## Child Counsellors in All Communities:

Identified as an important factor in addressing root causes of violence, participants agreed that every Nunavut community must have counselors trained in working with children. Consensus was that children’s services should be provided by community-based workers who know and understand the community. Recommendations for children’s counseling services included:

1. Train Community Counsellors to work with Child Victims and Witnesses of Abuse
2. Use Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and the Inuit Process of Assisting Children with Trauma & Abuse
3. Appropriate Placement of Children in Safe and Nurturing Homes
4. Place Children with Families they Know , Within their Community

*“Some families in the community don’t know they can be foster homes...the rules need to be flexible so that more families can get involved in helping children who need a safe home.”*

5. Avoid Re-Traumatizing Children by Removing them from their Community

*“We Inuit knew how to care for these hurt children...we would place them in a calm home, one without small children so the couple would be able to care for this child...a child who is traumatized needs a calm place and the family should be known to them.”*

## 6. Immediate and Long-Term Counselling Support to Child Victims and Witnesses Of Abuse

*“The worst pain is kept inside. It is very hard to talk about...but with time the child can talk and heal.”*

*“A child carries pain without speaking...this pain destroys the soul.”*

## Education and Support of Children:

In order to prevent abuse and violence, children and teens must be taught emotion management, problem solving and skills to prevent violence. Recommendations including:

1. Abuse prevention curriculum for all ages, all grades, in all schools
2. Mandatory reporting of child abuse and children who witness abuse
3. Authorities who work with the community to assist children and families
4. Use of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit knowledge when working with children
5. Elder-advisors
6. Involvement of the Family

## Long-Term Victim Counselling:

Participants agreed that long-term counselling of victims was required beyond the immediate crisis stage, and recommended the following services developed at the community level:

### 1. Community-Based Victim Services In All Communities

*“We should not minimize violence against women...it must be know to everyone that it exists and is wrong.”*

### 2. Emergency Safe Home In All Communities

*“People don’t want to be sent out, they don’t want the victim to go.”*

*“When victims leave the community, people wonder why does she have to leave to be safe? What is she running away from? Is it her fault?”*

### 3. Community Counselling for Victims as Long as Required

*“No woman should hide her pain”*

### 4. Abuse Prevention Training for Community Counsellors

### 5. Open Door & Flexible Counselling Policies, Drop-In Centres

*“It should not be hard to get the help.”*

### 6. Integrated Services: Mental Health, Social Worker, Community Counsellors

7. **Variety Of Counselling Services Available:** Individual, group, family, couple, use of spirituality, traditional healing, contemporary issues

8. **Elder-Advisors**

## Long-Term Victim Support

Practical services are required to assist victims in healing and building their capacity, including services to support victims with housing, childcare, finances, employment, education, training, physical and mental health and life skills.

## Long-Term Abuser Support:

Abusers require long-term counseling, treatment and support in order to learn new skills to prevent a recurrence of their violent behaviour. In many cases, abusers have been victimized or traumatized as children and bear deep scars that only long-term treatment can heal. Recommendations for support services to abusers include:

1. **Counselling for Abusers:** Participants agreed that abusers require counseling from the community at the crisis stage and throughout their healing process. It was suggested by a number of participants that training be provided to community counselors for intervention with abusers.

2. **Treatment for Abusers in Prisons, at Half-Way Houses, and in Community:** There was consensus that abusers not be only incarcerated but provided with treatment in order to understand their behaviour and change.

*“He can’t heal if he is only locked up away from people.”*

*“How do you expect someone to be a nice person if they are treated like an animal?”*

3. **Elder-Advisors:** Participants were consistent in agreeing that elders should provide advice and counseling to abusers, and in programs that treat abusers.



- 4. Half-Way Houses in Inuit Communities for Territorial and Federal Offenders:** Participants agreed that abusers who are incarcerated require half-way houses in communities in order to be supervised before they reintegrate fully. Half-way houses provide opportunities for community people to work with abusers, and for culture to be incorporated into treatment.

*“There is no half-way house for federal offenders in an Inuit community...many offenders never get a chance for parole.”*

- 5. Inuit Cultural and Linguistic Programs for Abusers:** Treatment and counseling must be provided by Inuit counselors who understand the culture and language of Nunavut.
- 6. Involvement of Family with Offender Treatment:** As with counseling of victims and children, participants agreed that the family is an important part of healing and restorative justice and that the abusers family should be involved in his healing process.
- 7. Training of Community Counsellors in Violent Offender Treatment:** Again, training of community-based counselors was a recommendation for abuser support. Participants continued to reinforce the need to train and support people who already live in and work (sometimes voluntarily) in abuse prevention work. Elders at the meeting stated the need to learn more about the criminal justice system, legal issues and other issues related to abuse prevention.

*“Sometimes we are asked by the Court to help a man but we can’t help him... We don’t know about drugs and alcohol.”*

*“Elders would like to learn too so we can help people.”*

- 8. Education, Training, Life Skills & Hunting Support for Men:** Participants discussed the root causes of violence and abuse in the communities in relation to the changing role of men in Nunavut and the lack of opportunities to hunt, nurture their family and feel valued. It was felt that programs to develop opportunities to engage young men be developed in communities in order to reduce substance abuse, idleness and low self-esteem.

*“When Inuit men are busy hunting they are calm and relaxed...the land is a healing place.”*

*“So many teenagers and young men are idle and have nothing to do with their time...Their self-esteem is so low and they feel worthless.”*

## Community-Based Justice:

A common issue brought forth by participants was the need to intervene at the community-level in abuse issues, particularly before abuse and violence escalates.

- 1. More Authority and Discretion to Community Justice Committees:** Consensus was that Community Justice Committees are ready and willing to assume more responsibility but require training and empowerment.

*“They (abusers) wait around for a year or two years for their court date and by then the problem has got much worse.”*

**2. Community Intervention in Early Stages of Relationship:** Participants recommended more immediate intervention at the community level when individuals begin to demonstrate violent behaviour.

*“Our Justice Committee would like to do more for people who are having problems but they are told not to get involved.”*

**3. Integration of Inuit Culture and Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit in Justice System**

**4. Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun Speaking Justice Workers**

**5. Training of Community Justice Workers (Including Elders) in Legal Issues:** Common to all recommendations by participants was the recurring theme of training, support and empowerment of elders so they can be active participants in violence prevention, not untrained volunteers.

**6. Restorative Approach to Less Serious Conflicts:** Along with providing more authority to community justice bodies, participants agreed that there be increased efforts to make the justice system more restorative. Participants did not believe that serious violence be treated lightly, and that assaults with weapons and extreme violent acts must not be tolerated.

**7. Community-Based Sentencing for Young Offenders:** In the case of first-time offenders and less serious offences, a restorative process could ensure counseling and prevention.

## Victim-Centred Justice:

**1. Victim Representation In Justice System:** Currently victims often feel unrepresented in the justice system and are vulnerable to pressure in the community to not speak up.

**2. Community Victim Advocate At All Stages Of Justice Process (police, justice committee, courts, corrections, parole, release of offender)**

*“This is the first time I have ever spoken about my daughter’s murder...I never spoke to anyone, not even at court.”*

**3. Information and Counselling for Victim on Justice Issues**



*"I was never told how I can protect myself from him."*

*"My daughter must leave the community because the man who abused her is coming back from prison and she is afraid."*

**4. Victim And Abuse Prevention Training**  
(Community Justice Workers, JP's, Justice Committees, Elder-Advisors etc.)

**5. Victim's Safety and Concerns are the Priority**

*"We are told Nunavut is the most violent place... This is a serious issue, many women have been hurt and even killed."*

*"We must speak and act for the women who have been silenced."*



**6. Mandatory Charging & Sentencing for Serious Offences Involving Weapons and Extreme Violence**

**7. Public Education: Zero tolerance for violence must be conveyed to the community:**  
Participants continually returned to the issue of public education as a priority in a strategy to prevent violence. Through schools, media and community-based projects, the message of non-violence must be conveyed.

*"20 years ago this room would have smelled like smoke, now we don't ever expect to have to breathe in cigarette smoke... If we could eradicate second-hand smoke, why can't we also teach people not to be violent?"*

## Community Policing & Response:

- 1. RCMP Work Collaboratively With The Community On Issues Of Violence Prevention**
- 2. RCMP Incorporate Inuit *Qaujimajatuqangit* And Inuit Intervention Practices By Working With Community Counsellors and Advisors**
- 3. New RCMP Officers Oriented To Community By Community-Based Advisors**

*“I know some of the young, new RCMP officers do not know the community and they don’t know the families... They should have to work with someone from the community until they know the community.”*

4. **PUBLIC EDUCATION: INFORM COMMUNITY ABOUT AFTER-HOURS DISPATCH SERVICE** Participants recommended that the RCMP educate the public about the after-hours line in order to assure them about how it works and that linguistic needs can be met.
5. **Community Law Enforcement Developed And Trained:** Participants continued to reiterate the need for community authority over intervention, including the training and development of community police officers. It was suggested that many communities currently have by-law officers who could be trained to work with police on incidents of violence.
6. **Community Given More Authority To Intervene In Crimes Of Violence And Abuse**
7. **Improve RCMP After-Hours Line To Ensure Victim Safety:** There was a long debate on Day 2 about the need for a more effective 24-hour crisis line that provides victims with rapid response to their location and service in their language. There were concerns that the current system breaks down due to distance and the lack of familiarity the after-hours dispatch officer in Iqaluit has with other communities.

## Mental Health Services:

Participants had a number of discussions on various topics that related to the need for improved mental health services. While not a root cause for all or even most violence, it was suggested that individuals with mental health issues have not been given early intervention to prevent potentially violent behaviour.

1. **Mental Health Services To Support Families With Mentally Ill Relatives:** Families are often left without information and resources to deal with their relatives who are mentally ill.

*“I didn’t know what to do to help her change.”*

2. **Improved Mental Health Services For Mentally Ill People:** Participants discussed the need to improve mental health services at the community level.
3. **Changes To Mental Health Act To Allow For Earlier Intervention With Mentally Challenged People *Before* They Become Violent**
4. **Training Of Inuit Mental Health Specialists And Counsellors**
5. **Training And Information To Relatives Of The Mentally Ill**

*“To watch a loved one become mentally ill and get worse as time goes on is very hard... We don’t know how to help them, nobody seems to be able to help us deal with their problems...they don’t get help and we don’t know what to do...it’s very painful for the family...we just want them to stop acting this way and they don’t.”*

## Elder Issues:

Participants consistently raised the importance of including, training, supporting and empowering elders in every aspect of violence prevention. Throughout the meeting, elder-participants discussed issues particular to their role including:

1. **Elders Must Not Be Expected To Parent Young Children:** Participants discussed the need to educate the community about the role of elders and to not pressure or expect elders to assume the role of parents to young children.

*“I think there should be a law to prevent anyone from being a parent after 50!”*

*“An elder is not able to parent or discipline a teenager who has a drug problem.”*

2. **Elders Are Not Always The Most Suitable Counsellors For Every Individual:** Elders discussed the need to have input into the placement of clients with counselors as not every elder can counsel a given individual.

*“We don’t know anything about drugs and alcohol...How can we talk to them about this when we don’t know what it is?”*

3. **Elders Want Training In Legal Issues And Abuse Prevention:** There was a consensus among elders that many of them would like training and support in their counseling work but are seldom provided with opportunities to learn.

4. **Compensated And Respected For Work In Abuse Prevention:** It was recommended on a number of occasions that elders be properly compensated for the work they do as opposed to assuming they are volunteers. Respect must be given to elders who travel, consult and work with people in the community.

*“We need funding and support for elder-advisors. So many elders help and they are not paid...that is not fair.”*

5. **Elder-Advisors in All Communities:** Elders are an important resource and their position should be guaranteed by paid, supported roles as elder-advisors. Elders must be a part of community services and program to prevent violence.

6. **Elder-Sensitive Counselling for Abused Elders:** Elders are vulnerable to abuse but there are many dynamics around elder abuse that lead to shame, silence and fear. Elders require counseling and support that is sensitive to their specific issues.

7. **Elder-Specific Safe Housing:** Safe homes in the community are required to provide safety for elders at risk of abuse, usually by members of their families. Again, these services must be elder-sensitive.

8. **Public Education: Renew Respect Of Elders:** The need to educate the public was again reiterated around the issue of respecting elders. Elder-participants requested assistance and ideas in finding new ways of instilling values in youth.

*“How can we teach the young people to respect elders, to respect our values? I know how I learned this, it was from my elders; it was everywhere.”*

9. **Encourage Youth To Seek Elder Support:** Elder-participants discussed the need to encourage youth in the community to seek out elders for support and to ask for help. Again, it was suggested that by entrenching the role of elders in the community, it would become easier to apply the Inuit value of consulting elders.

## Summary of Recommendations

### COMMUNITY-BASED VICTIM CRISIS RESPONSE

1. Community Emergency Response Team
2. Immediate Medical Services Provided To Victim
3. Crisis Counselling To Victim
4. 24-Hour Help Line
5. Family Is Informed And Included

6. **Family Home Made Safe: Abuser Removed From Home**

7. **Community Counselling Provided To Abuser**

### PARENTING TRAINING AND SUPPORT

8. **Parenting Skills Training And Workshops**

9. **Respite And Support For Elderly Parents**

10. **Counselling And Support To Parents Whose Children Are Victims Or Abusers**

11. **Community Parent Networks And Parent Peer Support Groups**

12. **Ongoing Abuse Prevention Teaching To Children**

### CHILD COUNSELLORS IN ALL COMMUNITIES

13. **Train Community Counsellors to Work With Child Victims And Witnesses Of Abuse**

14. **Use *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* and The Inuit Process Of Assisting Children With Trauma & Abuse**

15. **Appropriate Placement Of Children In Safe, Nurturing Homes**

16. **Place Children With Families They Know And Are Within Their Community**

17. Avoid Re-Traumatizing Children By Removing Them From Their Community

18. Immediate And Long-Term Counselling Support To Child Victims And Witnesses Of Abuse

## EDUCATION AND SUPPORT OF CHILDREN

19. Abuse Prevention Curriculum For All Ages, All Grades, All Schools

20. Mandatory Reporting Of Child Abuse And Children Who Witness Abuse

21. Authorities Work With Community To Assist Children And Families

22. Use Of *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* And Inuit Knowledge When Working With Children

23. Elder-Advisors

24. Involve Family

## LONG-TERM VICTIM COUNSELLING:

25. Community-Based Victim Services In All Communities

26. Emergency Safe Home In All Communities

27. Community Counselling For As Long As Victims Require It To Heal

28. Training Of Community Counsellors In Abuse Prevention

29. Open Door And Flexible Counselling Policies, Drop-In Centres

30. Integrated Services: Mental Health, Social Worker, Community Counsellors

31. Variety Of Counselling Services Available

32. Individual, Group, Family, Couple, Use Of Spirituality, Traditional Healing, Contemporary Issues

33. Elder-Advisors

## LONG-TERM VICTIM SUPPORT:

34. Services for Long-Term Support:

- Housing
- Childcare
- Financial Assistance
- Employment
- Education/Training
- Medical And Health
- Mental Health
- Life-Skills

## LONG-TERM ABUSER SUPPORT:

36. Counselling For Abusers

37. Treatment For Abusers In Prisons, At Half-Way Houses And In Community

38. Elder-Advisors

39. Half-Way Houses In Inuit Communities For Territorial And Federal Offenders
40. Inuit Cultural And Linguistic Programs For Abusers
41. Involvement Of Family With Offender Treatment
42. Training Of Community Counsellors In Violent Offender Treatment
43. Education, Training, Life Skills, Hunting Support For Men

#### COMMUNITY-BASED JUSTICE:

44. More Authority And Discretion To Community Justice Committees
45. Community Intervention At Early Stages Of Relationship
46. Integration Of Inuit Culture and *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* In Justice System
47. Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun Speaking Justice Workers
48. Training Of Community Justice Workers (Including Elders) In Legal Issues
49. Restorative Approach To Less Serious Conflicts
50. Community-Based Sentencing For Young Offenders

#### VICTIM-CENTRED JUSTICE:

51. Victim Representation In Justice System
52. Community Victim Advocate At All Stages Of Justice Process (Police, Justice Committee, Courts, Corrections, Parole, Release Of Offender)
53. Information and Counselling To Victim On Justice Issues
54. Victim And Abuse Prevention Training
55. Victim's Safety And Concerns Are The Priority
56. Mandatory Charging & Sentencing For Serious Offences Involving Weapons And Extreme Violence
57. Public Education: Zero Tolerance For Violence Must Conveyed To Community



## COMMUNITY POLICING & RESPONSE

58. RCMP Work Collaboratively With The Community On Issues Of Violence Prevention
59. RCMP Incorporate *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* And Inuit Intervention Practices By Working With Community Counsellors & Advisors
60. New RCMP Officers Oriented To Community By Community-Based Advisors
61. Public Education: Inform Community About After-Hours Dispatch Service
62. Community Law Enforcement Developed And Trained
63. Community Given More Authority To Intervene In Crimes Of Violence And Abuse
64. Improve RCMP After-Hours Line To Ensure Victim Safety

## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

65. Mental Health Services To Support Families With Mentally Ill Relatives
66. Improved Mental Health Services For Mentally Ill People
67. Changes To Mental Health Act To Allow For Earlier Intervention With Mentally Challenged People *Before* They Become Violent

68. Training Of Inuit Mental Health Specialists And Counsellors

69. Training And Information To Relatives Of Mentally Ill

## ELDER ISSUES:

70. Elders Should Not Be Expected To Parent Young Children
71. Elders Given Input Into Counselling And Placement Of Clients
72. Elders Given Training In Legal Issues And Abuse Prevention
73. Elders Compensated And Respected For Work In Abuse Prevention
74. Elder-Advisors In All Communities
75. Elder-Sensitive Counselling For Abused Elders
76. Elder-Specific Safe Housing
77. Public Education: Renew Respect Of Elders
78. Encourage Youth To Seek Elder Support