



Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqaatigiit  
Embrace Life Council

**Strategic Plan for**

**2016-2019**



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## Strategic Plan for

## 2016-2019

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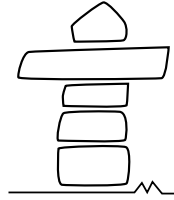
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# Background

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Embrace Life Council (ELC) is a registered non-profit suicide prevention organization based in Iqaluit, Nunavut that was formally established in 2004. We began with the recognition that there needed to be a coordinated initiative to address the extremely high suicide rates in Nunavut.

The ELC's Board is comprised of representatives of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), the Regional Inuit Associations, the Government of Nunavut (GN), Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Kamatsiaqtut Help Line, Nunavut Teacher's Association (NTA), Nunavut Association of Municipalities (NAM), Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Katimajiit, and the faith community.

The ELC provides suicide prevention related teaching and information resources to Nunavut communities and organizations through its office in Iqaluit, as well as its website and community activities. Information and resources designed to help youth, parents and others are made available and promoted across the territory. It currently has two staff, an Executive Director and a Program Coordinator, and utilizes volunteers as much as possible.

In 2008, as a result of Nunavut's high suicide rates, a Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy – Action Plan was developed. The Action Plan is the result of a coordinated partnership approach which began when the Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., the Embrace Life Council, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police formed a partnership to create the Action Plan. We agreed to work together to ultimately reduce the suicide rates in Nunavut.

In 2014, a review of the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy and the accompanying action plan was undertaken. In the fall of 2015, the Nunavut Coroner hosted an inquest into suicide, which was followed by the Government of Nunavut's declaration of suicide as a crisis in Nunavut. Subsequently, the GN created the office of the Quality of Life Secretariat to assist with suicide prevention efforts in the territory.

In March of 2016, the Nunavut Suicide Prevention partners (GN, NTI, RCMP, and ELC) released, "Resiliency Within", a one year suicide prevention action plan for the territory. After hosting the "United for Life Summit" in May, 2016, the partners continue to work toward the creation of a new five year suicide prevention action plan to be released in early 2017.

The work of ELC is more necessary now than ever. As a non-governmental organization, it has the unique ability to respond quickly and effectively to the issue of suicide in both a proactive and reactive way. The crisis is not over, and requires the commitment and passion of the ELC's Board of Directors and Staff to realize its vision of the eradication of suicide in Nunavut.

Since its inception in 2004, ELC has experienced a number of successes. Some examples are our public awareness campaigns and capacity-building community programs, including the Inuusivut Project. Our website includes many resources in Inuktitut and English on suicide prevention, mental health, and wellness. We connect with Nunavummiut on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. We partner with the Canadian Red

Cross to deliver Ten Steps, Be Safe, and Respect Ed training in Nunavut communities. We partner with Voicefound to deliver the Stewards of Children Child Abuse Prevention Training. We have developed community resource cards for all Nunavut hamlets and informational pamphlets and videos about risk factors and coping skills.

ELC is currently working on a number of new projects. We are updating and broadening the scope of our informational pamphlets and our website. We are doing more community outreach. We are creating new community capacity building programs like a Nunavut-specific Child Abuse Prevention Training Resource and a Nunavut-specific safeTALK Training Resource. Embrace Life Council has begun to pilot a Bereavement Support Group in Iqaluit, which we ultimately hope to roll out in all Nunavut communities. We are creating a toolkit for survivors of suicide. We maintain our partnerships with the Canadian Red Cross and Qikiqtani Inuit Association in program delivery, and are creating new program-delivery partnerships with Bell Canada, Northwestel, Big Brothers and Sisters, Recreation and Parks Association of Nunavut (RPAN), Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre (QHRC), Iliniapaa Campus, Pinnguaq, and Iqaluit Community Justice. ELC is also playing a role in the planning and execution of the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP) Conference in Iqaluit in October, 2016.



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# Challenges

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Until quite recently, Inuit society, arguably one of the strongest and most resilient in the world, had a very low rate of death by suicide. While suicide occurred, as it does in all societies, it happened infrequently, and rarely involved young people. In contrast, in the last few decades, hundreds of Inuit have died by suicide, placing Nunavut's suicide rate far above the Canadian average. Young Inuit men make up the largest proportion of these deaths, and although Inuit women also die by suicide to a lesser degree, their rate is still far higher than the suicide rate for women in the rest of Canada.

Socially, culturally and economically, the people and communities of Nunavut, particularly Inuit, have experienced an unprecedented pace of change in the past 50 years. The human and economic impacts of such societal change have resulted in declines in participation in traditional economic activities, poor health outcomes and the emergence of persistent social issues including high rates of suicide, addictions, violence and abuse.

The historical context underlying the current situation is best described in the following quotes from the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy:

"While Inuit had differing levels of interaction with whalers, missionaries, and fur traders for centuries, most Inuit feel that the truly traumatic impacts on their society began after World War II, when Government of Canada policies coerced Inuit into moving from their seasonal camps into newly established communities.

Southern values were imposed in these new communities: the wage economy was introduced; formal schooling of children was made mandatory; Inuit traditional justice was replaced by the Canadian justice system; inadequate and substandard southern-style housing was erected, and non-Inuit administrators tightly controlled the operations of each community. As a result, today Inuit associate this transitional period with an overarching loss of self-respect".

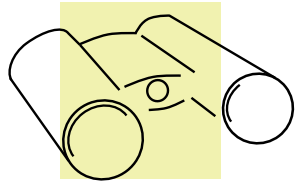
"The cumulative effects of this massive disruption of Inuit society produced dramatic results. The first and subsequent generations of children who have grown up in communities embody a fundamental transition in Inuit society, away from a traditional Inuit lifestyle and towards a mix of Inuit and southern values. The generations of Inuit who have been raised in communities since have struggled with the delicate balancing act of living concurrently in two very different cultures".

"The settlement era also coincided with the imposition of the residential school system, which created an immense amount of trauma for Inuit children and their families. Many children in these schools lost their language, some because they were violently forbidden to use it even though it was the only language they knew. Students were also denied regular contact with their families in their most formative years, which prevented them from learning skills that were fundamental to Inuit life. In addition, many were sexually, emotionally, or physically abused while at these schools".

With respect to indicators of social well-being and the social determinants of health, many of which result from the factors described above, Nunavut faces a number of challenges. These include not only high rates of suicide and family violence, but also poor and overcrowded housing conditions, low educational achievement, high rates of alcohol and tobacco use, poor nutrition due to very high food costs, and crime rates that are higher than in nearly every other jurisdiction in Canada.

It is important to note that elevated suicide rates emerged in Nunavut within the first generation of Inuit youth who grew up in the communities after the conditions identified above were fully implemented. In the absence of an adequate healing process, a continuous cycle of trauma has been created, which has been passed from generation to generation. This has resulted in an intergenerational transmission of historical trauma.



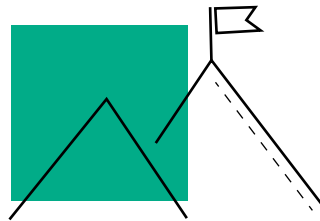


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# Vision

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Embrace Life Council envisions a suicide-free Nunavut. We envision a territory rich in Inuit culture and language and grounded in the strength of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.



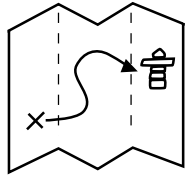
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# Mission

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First and foremost, our mission is to encourage Nunavummiut to embrace life. We support individuals and groups in Nunavut to take well-informed action to prevent suicide within the three major timeframes: prevention, intervention, and postvention. We do this through education and awareness programs and through community capacity strengthening activities. We are committed to action that is grounded in Inuit values and informed by current suicide prevention research.





# Strategic Plan

## MULTI-YEAR OBJECTIVE

## IMMEDIATE STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVMENT

**I** Continue to work closely with the NSPS Committee to implement the objectives of the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy

- Implement Resiliency Within
- Work with NSPS partners to create the new five year action plan
- Assist with planning and coordinating United for Life Summit
- Assist with planning and coordination of Iqaluit CASP Conference
- Regularly attend partner meetings
- Consult partners regarding potentially relevant issues, ideas, and projects

**II** Strengthen ELC's communications strategy including capacity and presence as an information hub on suicide prevention

- Survey Nunavummiut responses to website and implement change as recommended
- Evaluate website
- Ensure social media is culturally relevant, pertinent, inclusive, interactive, and increasing its audience
- Work with partners (Bright Blue Wave, G.N., and others) to collaborate on best S.M. practices and resources

**III** Broaden our public relations campaign in order to educate others about our mandate, vision, and role and potential contributions

- Develop a newsletter that includes current research, interesting projects, and core messages
- Increase community outreach when travelling to communities for training or other purposes
- Attend events (regional Inuit Association AGM's, trade shows, Nunavut Teachers' Association meetings, etc.) when invited and/or funding available

## MULTI-YEAR OBJECTIVE

## IMMEDIATE STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVEMENT

III

Help create safer communities through initiatives that promote Inuit language and culture

- Create Nunavut-specific Child Abuse Prevention Training Resource
- Create and market ELC product that promotes Inuit language and culture
- Utilize social media to promote increased engagement utilizing Inuit language and culture
- Promote community based research initiatives identified by community groups involved in suicide prevention
- Annual Hope and Healing Art Contest

IV

Provide recognition and professional development opportunities to continuing staff

- Annual performance review to include a professional growth plan

V

Expand the scope of suicide prevention activities, education, and research initiatives available to Nunavummiut

- Seek additional sources of funding in order to increase staff/office locations in regions
- Secure contract for territorial ASIST coordination
- Continue to deliver ASIST training
- Secure additional GN funding in order to partner with Voicefound and GN to create a Nunavut-specific Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Resource
- Develop Trauma Informed Training Resource for Nunavut Professionals
- Continue to deliver training in responding to disclosure
- Partner with Pinnguaq to support te(a)ch—increase cultural component, including elder involvement
- Partner with Sparx to secure CIHR funding for 5 year culturally, technologically based wellness game
- Support annual Embrace Life Day
- Support annual Pink Shirt Day

## MULTI-YEAR OBJECTIVE

## IMMEDIATE STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVMENT

**VI** Implement bereavement support group pilots

- Iqaluit pilots

**VII** Continue to implement specific strengths-based programming targeting the general youth population, including youth at risk of suicide

- In partnership with Red Cross, Respect Ed and Ten Steps training and support as necessary
- In partnership with QHRC, Big Brothers and Sisters, and Aqsarniit Middle School, pilot, support, and secure statistical analysis of combined Makimautiksat/Game On programming with AHS at-risk land program
- In partnership with Arctic Children and Youth Foundation, pilot delivery of Peer Leadership training in interested communities
- In partnership with RPAN and Sport and Rec, with consent, target Nunavut athletes and document via video their stories of success for local and Nunavut-wide sharing.
- ELC staff to attend appropriate conferences and workshops to inform training resource development and delivery

**VIII** Continue to create and disseminate resources which explain the risk factors for suicidal behavior, seek to destigmatize mental illness and help-seeking for mental distress, and provide information on how to obtain help for persons in mental distress

- Create a working group to develop a Nunavut-specific toolkit for suicide survivors
- Develop adolescent self-injury prevention workshop
- Create a Trauma-Informed Practice Educational Resource

**IX** Develop increased partnerships and secure funding from additional agencies to fund programs

- Partner with Sport and Recreation and RPAN to provide community training in safeTALK and Peer Leadership

## MULTI-YEAR OBJECTIVE

## IMMEDIATE STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVMENT

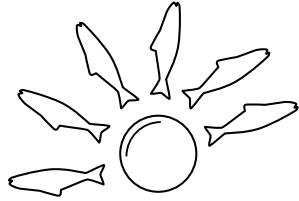
**X** Continue to support the creation of additional community or cultural group, territorial/provincial, and national suicide prevention strategies and action plans

- Work with NSPS partners to create and implement the long term Nunavut action plan

**XI** Review options for expanding the Board to include more community-level representation

- Board to explore





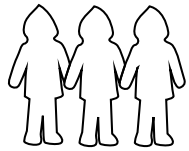
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# Vision of Success

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- Suicide is viewed as a preventable public health problem.
- Individuals experiencing mental illness, substance abuse, or feelings of suicide feel comfortable asking for help, and have access to culturally appropriate services in their communities.
- Suicide prevention services are provided in an integrated manner so that people receive the comprehensive coverage and support best suited for their individual needs.
- Suicide prevention strategies incorporate elements of resiliency and protective factors as well as risk factors.
- Prevention strategies grounded in the best evidence available are used in communities across Nunavut.
- There is a strong, diverse, Nunavut-wide suicide prevention coalition in every part of Nunavut, as well as local community coalitions.
- Institutions and organizations include mental health efforts as part of their health and wellness benefits, policies, curricula, and other initiatives.
- Suicide prevention is supported by public and private funding sources.
- There is a general public awareness of suicide prevention efforts in the Nunavut and willingness to assist those who may be in need of help.
- The eradication of suicide in Nunavut





# People Development Plan

This personal development will help our board and staff better serve the needs of Nunavummiut. Investing time, energy, and financial resources will help us meet our objectives during the timeline of this strategic planning period and beyond.

Staff Person	Area of Development Needed	What will be done	When	Cost of this development
Kimberly Masson <i>Executive Director</i>	Increased capacity to deliver suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (direct and indirect) training to Nunavut communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend safeTALK! T4T</li> <li>Deliver safeTALK!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>November, 2016</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 days time and travel plus fees</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>April, 2017 and ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dependent upon need</li> </ul>
Cecile Guerin <i>Project Coordinator</i>	Increased capacity to deliver suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (direct and indirect) training to Nunavut communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver Child Sexual Abuse Prevention training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>April, 2017 and ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One week travel plus fees</li> <li>Dependent upon need</li> </ul>
Board Members	TBA			

