

Annual Report 2022-2023

Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit Embrace Life Council

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BACKGROUND

The Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit Embrace Life Council (IIKELC) was established in January 2004 as a result of partnerships of many organizations. Efforts to create the council began in 2003 with the recognition that there needed to be a coordinated initiative in addressing the high suicide rate in Nunavut. The Council's twelve-member board collaborates to provide leadership to a small staff team

- Opal McInnis, President (Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated)
- Sheila Levy, Vice-President (Nunavut Kamatsiaqtut Helpline)
- Camilla Sehti, Treasurer (Government of Nunavut)
- Pauline Melanson, Secretary (Royal Canadian Mounted Police)
- Natasha Allakariallak, Director (Qikiqtani Inuit Association)
- Tess Thurber, Director (Nunavut Teachers' Association)
- Samantha Tugak-Brown, Director (Kivalliq Inuit Association)
- Darlene Eyegetok, Director (Kitikmeot Inuit Association)
- Mary Kanayok Voisey, Director (Elder)
- Joanasi Akumalik, Director (Survivor Member)
- Vacant, Director (Faith Community)
- Vacant, Director (Student Member)

The council is a non-profit organization with charitable status. According to our bylaws, the Council aims to:

- Contribute to the mental, emotional, and physical health and community wellness of Nunavut residents by providing education, research and statistical analysis, a clearing house, training, and a coordinated holistic approach to suicide prevention activities;
- Recruit, coordinate, and provide on-going training to volunteers in order to give them the expertise to deliver suicide prevention and community wellness activities;
- Educate the public on the issues of suicide, mental health, community health, and related issues;
- Acquire sufficient resources in cash or in kind to support the objectives of the Council and communities throughout Nunavut

Our guiding principles are:

- Embracing life—not just preventing death
- Inuit history and Inuit pride drive the programming
- Communities identify their own solutions, recognizing that every community is unique
- Families are central to life—focus on parenting skills, kinship, and teamwork
- Protecting and being aware of and guided by the environment

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

IIKELC continued to demonstrate itself as an impactful organization in 2022-2023. The organization emerged from the pandemic with initiatives that were both innovative and effective.

Throughout the year IIKELC, continued to adapt its approach to better meet the needs of communities and expand the organization's reach. The organization made great strides in further developing its "*Isumajunnattiarniq*" e-health app and moving more trainings to an online platform to increase access to resources.

Suicide continues to be a crisis in the territory, and it has deeply affected all Nunavummiut. Preventing suicide requires us all to work together, which is why IIKELC continues to strengthen its partnerships with- and build capacity in communities. This past year, the organization offered more than 30 workshops across the territory.

I would like to thank our funders and those who have donated to the organization for their continued support of IIKELC's mission and efforts in suicide prevention. Your contributions make this critical work possible.

On behalf of the Board, I express our sincere gratitude to all the IIKELC staff and volunteers for their hard work and passion in supporting and promoting healthy communities. The organization's successes this past year are because of your perseverance and commitment.

Qujannamiik, Matna, Koana,



Opal McInnis

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I'm pleased to present the annual report for the fiscal year 2022-2023. The report includes all of the activities, programs and new resources that we started or completed this year. I am so excited to share with you the progress of a few big projects and confirm that most of them will be completed during the year 2023-2024.

It has been a wonderful year! There have been several changes within the IIKELC team, some team members have taken new positions and we had new people joining us during the year. We also secured an office in Rankin Inlet that is now staffed by two IIKELC staff members.

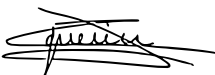
IIKELC continues to work with partners and communities to promote evidence-based strategies on suicide prevention. This year, the team has delivered workshops/training to more than 500 community members in 11 different communities.

The 4 videos from the *Inutsiaq* campaign launched on Pink Shirt-day were so well received. Those videos taught us how to feel more compassionate towards other, show support, speak with kindness and offer help when needed.

In addition to the agencies on our Board of Directors and those that were acknowledged in the report, I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of Nunavut – Inuusivut Mental Health and Addictions, Northwestel, Kitikmeot Friendship Society, the Hamlet of Cambridge Bay, Atiigo Media, Pinnguaq, Mark Aspland, Livingworks, Julia's translations, Nunavut Arctic College, CESO, Arctic Children and Youth Foundation, Nunavut Marketing and many, many more.

In closing, I'd like to acknowledge the Board of Directors for their ongoing support and advice, it is so much appreciated. I also want to thank the amazing team for their hard work and dedication to the organization, it gives me such a pride to be the leader of the IIKELC team.

Qujannamiik, Thank you, merci.



Cecile Guerin

The IIKELC TEAM

IQALUIT

Names	Positions
Cecile Guerin	Executive Director
Elisapee Johnston	Support Coordinator
Nastassja Bjørknes	Qikiqtani Regional Coordinator, Training and Program Development
Tooma Laisa	Iqaluit Program Coordinator and Communications Lead
Kara Ashley	Qikiqtani Program Coordinator

RANKIN INLET

Names	Positions
Tagalik Eccles	Kivalliq Program Coordinator (November 2022-February 2023)
Art Sateana	Kivalliq Regional Coordinator, Training and Program Development
Haley White	Kivalliq Program Coordinator (started in January 2023)

CAMBRIDGE BAY

Name	Position
Julia Ogina	Kitikmeot Program Coordinator

OUT OF TERRITORY

Name	Position
Misha Leach	Program Development Coordinator (started in January 2023)

TRAINING PROGRAM DELIVERY

Currently, we are able to offer the following workshops in Nunavut communities when requested:

Uqaqatigiiluk! (ASIST) is the Nunavut version of ASIST, a two-day course from Living Works Education (www.livingworks.net). The workshop is structured around small group discussions and skills practice based on adult learning principles. Participants learn to recognize the signs of suicide behavior and the skills to talk to people who are thinking of killing themselves. It empowers participants to feel comfortable intervening and keeping a person safe by making a plan or connecting them with further help.

Reach OUT helps community members aged 15 and up to feel more comfortable, confident, and competent in directly preventing the immediate risk of suicide. It is a half day suicide alertness workshop that will provide tools and guidelines to:

- **Recognize** the signs of distress,
- **Ask** about suicide with more ease,
- **Listen** by using helpful attitudes,
- **Refer** to appropriate resources.

Trauma Informed Practice Training is a full-day workshop designed to increase individual success and wellbeing in Nunavut. It helps participants understand how to better support individuals who have experienced trauma, whether first hand, historically, or intergenerationally. Participants do not need any formal preparation to attend the training. We encourage all frontline and service staff to take this training, from support through administration.

Youth Self-Injury is a half-day workshop designed by Nunavummiut for Nunavummiut to provide an overview in understanding the reasons why youth may self-injure and then to provide practical strategies for working with self-injuring youth. Participants do not need any formal preparation to attend the training. We encourage all frontline and service staff to take this training, from support through administration.

Our Children, Our Responsibility was developed in partnership between Embrace Life Council, Voicefound, and the Government of Nunavut. OCOR is a full day Nunavut-specific child sexual abuse prevention workshop designed to improve community awareness, knowledge, and behavior. It provides hope for the adults who take it that we can become more supportive of children and reduce children's vulnerability to childhood sexual abuse. Participants also learn how to respond to reports of child sexual abuse.

Inuusiq Pimmariujuq is a two-day strategic planning event designed to promote community health, wellness, suicide prevention, and life affirmation. The event enables participants to create a community-specific action plan for implementation. The event begins with a sharing circle honouring our stories before moving into a discussion of how far we've come in Nunavut since the pre-contact era. With this grounding, we begin an active review of strengths and opportunities in the community, which will inform the final action plan. Inuusiq Pimmariujuq includes a plan for follow-up and support by Embrace Life Council Program Coordinators with the community development team.

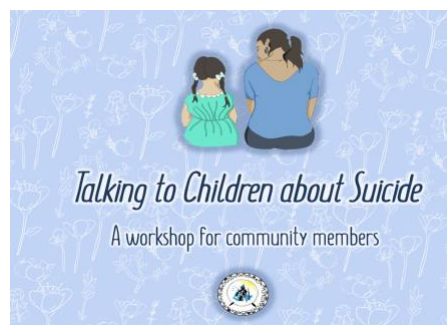
Healing Support Group Facilitator Training is a two-day training designed to promote healing and enable local community adult paraprofessionals to facilitate group healing. Participants will be given the practical skills and tools they need to coordinate and facilitate group healing sessions, as well as suggested access to potential sources of funding to support their group programming. The training includes mindfulness and self-care strategies to assist facilitators to maintain their own wellness while providing this valuable community service. Embrace Life Council provides ongoing debriefing and troubleshooting support as community healing groups are implemented.

Canadian Red Cross Babysitter Training Course covers everything from managing difficult behaviours to essential content on leadership and professional conduct as a babysitter. Babysitting promises to deepen and enhance the responsibility that older youth feel when caring for younger children.

Talking to Children about Suicide was developed in response to a number of requests from community members who wanted to know how best to support children who have experienced a death by suicide in their family, friend group or wider social circle.

Talking to Children about Suicide is a half-day workshop that aims to provide community members with information about:

- How to approach the topic of suicide with children
- How children may respond to a death by suicide,
- How to discuss the death in an age-appropriate way and,
- The importance of self-care when dealing with this difficult subject



This year, we hosted the following workshops:

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

Communities	# Participants	Ethnicity	Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clyde River • Iqaluit 	32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 80% Inuit ➤ 20% non-Inuit 	Community members NAC students

Our Children, Our Responsibility

Communities	# Participants	Ethnicity	Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iqaluit • Kimmirut • Qikiqtarjuaq • Sanirajak • Kinngait • Clyde River • Pond Inlet • Rankin Inlet • Arctic Bay • Arviat 	263	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 56% Inuit ➤ 44% non-Inuit 	School staff

Trauma Informed Practice

Communities	# Participants	Ethnicity	Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panniqtuuq • Kimmirut • Qikiqtarjuaq • Sanirajak • Clyde River • Pond Inlet • Iqaluit 	182	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 53% Inuit ➤ 47% non-Inuit 	School staff

Reach OUT

Communities	# Participants	Ethnicity	Participants
Iqaluit	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 90% Inuit ➤ 10% non-Inuit 	High school students

Healing Support Group Facilitator Training

Communities	# Participants	Ethnicity	Participants
Kinngait	10	➤ 100% Inuit	Community members, members of Justice Committee

Baby-sitting courses

Communities	# Participants	Ethnicity	Participants
Iqaluit	28	➤ 70% Inuit	Youth aged 11-14

Canadian Firearms Safety Course

We secured again funding in order to provide the **Canadian Firearms Safety Course** (CFSC) to Nunavummiut free of charge. The CFSC was developed in partnership with the provinces and territories, national organizations with an ongoing interest in firearms safety, and many firearms and hunter educator course instructors from across Canada. In Nunavut, this course not only supports a valuable life skill, but also provides an opportunity to educate community members about the safe storage of firearms in order to reduce access to a means to attempt suicide. We funded 20 courses in 10 communities. Communities included:

- Cambridge Bay (16 participants)
- Pond Inlet (10 participants)
- Chesterfield Inlet (12 participants)
- Kugaaruk (7 participants)
- Gjoa Haven (22 participants)
- Baker Lake (32 participants)
- Clyde River (15 participants)
- Resolute Bay (10 participants)
- Taloyoak (48 participants)
- Iqaluit (23 participants)

Total of participants: 198

PUBLIC EDUCATION PROJECTS

This year we worked on multiple resources under different topics:

1- Mental wellness

We continued co-developing the “*Isumajunnattiarniq*” eHealth app.

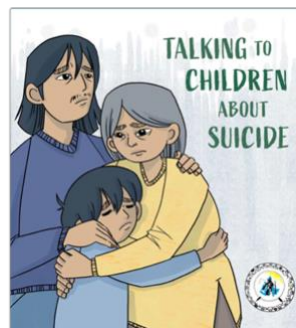


The app is centered around resilience and mindfulness interventions, featuring culturally curated tools for healing and resilience that can assist Nunavummiut.

These include Elder-led traditional stories of resilience, traditional songs for strength, culturally connected meditations, nature-based soundscapes, guided movement exercises, and safety planning. The app was developed using a trauma- and violence-informed lens, with a GBA+ analysis informing its design. Using the concept of Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR), this resource is intended to not only provide a relaxation/cultural experience for GBV survivors but to also provide support in the form of resources (available offline) that arm them with knowledge about trauma-related symptoms they may be experiencing, as well as coping strategies.

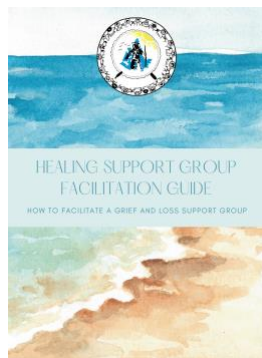
2- Grief and loss

- In 2022, IIKELC developed a new workshop for adults “*Talking to children about suicide*”. The second phase of this project was to create two children’s books that will first, help adults to be better equipped on how to approach the topic of suicide with children and youth and secondly, to be prepared for those conversations depending on their development.



The stories for the pictures book (ages 5-9) and the graphic novel (ages 9-12) have been finalized. Both books will be printed and available for distribution in 2023/2024 and will be available in 4 languages.

- We started to update the **Healing Support Group Facilitator training** so we can make it available virtually. This training will provide a framework for a peer group program. It allows some flexibility to ensure the needs of the group are met. The purpose of the group is to support individuals on their journey. The group is an opportunity for people to explore their grief, and reflect on what is shared in the group during the sessions. Three resources will be developed under this training: Healing Support Group Facilitation Guidelines, Healing Support Group Facilitator Training Manual and the PowerPoint presentation for the two-day training. We will start piloting this training in the Fall 2023.



- In order to respond to the survivors of suicide's needs IIKELC started to develop a new resource called **"Talking about suicide in the workplace"**. This presentation provides an overview of how employers can address issues pertaining to suicide within the workplace. It includes information about risk factors of suicide, how to provide support after a suicide and how to refer an individual at risk.

3- Substance use

"Addiction Education" is a presentation for youth that was developed to learn how drugs work in the brain and how to make informed decisions about your health. A facilitator's guide that goes along with the PowerPoint presentation is currently developed. This program includes discussions and activities to engage the participants. Both resources will be sent to the communities once they are completed.

4- Trauma Informed Practice online course

All modules of the Trauma Informed Practice online course have been completed. The courses on our Learning Management System will provide evidence-based and trauma-informed skills training for both GBV survivors and first responders. Our courses focus on traditional community-based restorative approaches. There have been some delays with

the launch, we asked Pinnguaq to work on the lay out so the modules can be more user friendly.

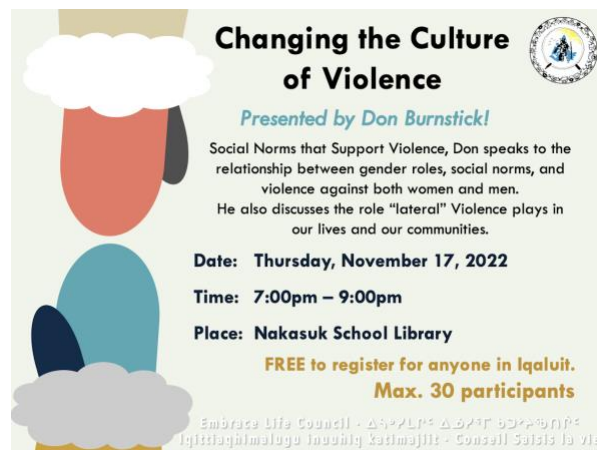
5- Mental Health/Health Promotion

- IIKELC sent the first **newsletter** in November 2002. The bi-monthly newsletter brings updates to community members who are interested in hearing about the organization, exciting achievements and additional stories. It is also an opportunity share our new resources, training and our collaborations with new partners! Check the following link for the Inspiring Nunavummiuq of the month: <https://inuusiq.com/about-us/news/inspiring-nunavummiuq-brianna-taparti/>
- Launched the annual **Mental Health Art Contest** over the summer to three different age groups (16-25, 26-40, 40+). For the 2022 annual contest, we partnered with the Nunataq Museum in Iqaluit to offer an art exhibition of the winning pieces. This year's art contest themes were: Empower, Strength and Support.



- IIKELC successfully coordinated a **Peer Leadership Mental Health Program** in Iqaluit from November 17-21, 2022. Ten (10) youth aged 18-25 were selected from the Kivalliq Region to attend this program. This program was designed with the learning goals to foster youth's confidence in being supportive peers in relation to receiving disclosures of abuse and thoughts of suicide. It was also designed with the intention of promoting youth's ability to advocate for wellness activities and services that they would like to see in their community, while also learning new coping mechanisms and creative alternatives to drugs and alcohol.

Additionally, the program provided an environment where youth felt welcome, safe and respected. It also provided an environment that connected youth leaders throughout Nunavut. During this program, youth attended workshops with Guest Speaker Don Burnstick who facilitated talking circles regarding healing in indigenous communities, sober living and how that lifestyle contributes to healthier lives and cyberbullying.



The participants also attended the Reach OUT Session and a Peer Leadership Workshop. At the end of the Peer Leadership Program, we had Uasau Soap come in to do a self-care soap making workshop. Bernice Clarke, co-founder and owner of Uasau, spoke about healing in terms of Inuit Culture and the path going forward – “*Kajusigiaqaqtugu*” – meaning We Must move forward.

All the feedback and evaluation forms we’ve received thus far, has been really positive and encouraging. One participant said, “this program opened my eyes to many things and we left with a whole bunch of great friendships”. Not only were life-long friends made, but confidence was boosted in so many.

During these workshops, participants developed community action plans – which included obtaining Community Resource Cards, future program planning and obtaining funding for self-sufficient-community-led initiatives – to which some participants are now creating, planning and initiating youth-led programs in their communities.

ON GOING ACTIVITIES

- Distribution of public education materials and materials related to the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy Implementation Committee. Activities to date include:

Our mission is to support and encourage Nunavummiut to Value Life

- Community resource cards for Nunavut communities;
 - Distributed educational pamphlets on healthy relationships and harm reduction;
 - Increased translation of materials (Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun and French) for distribution on public bulletin boards, website, social media, etc.
 - Development and distribution of promotional materials for Embrace Life Day across Nunavut that promoted the work of IIKELC and directed Nunavummiut to access the Nunavut Kamatsiaqtut Help Line, First Nations and Inuit Help for Wellness Hotline, and Kids Help Phone; and,
 - Increasing community awareness of the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy and the efforts being undertaken through Inuusivut Anninaqtuq by the Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit Embrace Life Council and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.
 - Continuing updating our social media to be more user friendly and reach target audiences in Nunavut with both resources and materials from IIKELC, but also on the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan;
- Provide administrative support to the Embrace Life Council Board of Directors;
 - Manage financial and administrative functions within IIKELC;
 - Participate as an active member in the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy Implementation Committee; the Firearm Safety committee, the Katinnganiq Makerspace Network and the Nunavut Association for Non-Profit Organizations
 - Contribute to research initiatives within the territory including ISPARX;

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Our Community Support funding supports community programs at the IIKELC offices (sewing programs, beading classes, cultural program...) and community outreach for individuals at the Qimaavik Women's Shelter, the Women's Healing Centre and the Young Offenders' Facility.

- Embrace Life Day events in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay
- Tea and Bannock (June 21),
- In partnership with the Department of Healthy Living in Cambridge Bay, we supported spring activities with the Boys club (over 20 participants)
- IIKELC brought two Instructors from POCA to offer a two-day Auricular Acupuncture (AAT) training. Twelve Iqaluit residents were trained to become technicians with the 5-needle protocol.



IIKELC hired local instructors/carpenters to teach community members different skills:

- Offered Anaanannu Sewing program to 25 young women in Iqaluit
- Twelve (12) youth participated in the Iqaluk Preservation program in the summer
- Linocut Art program was offered to two groups: youth (6) and adults (10)
- Winter slipper Making program in Iqaluit (49 participants)
- Sapangaliriniq program in Iqaluit (10 participants)
- Creative kits were distributed to 50 families in Iqaluit during the PD week in February

FINANCIAL REPORTING

See audited financial statement. Our core funding (operations and salaries) is provided by both the Nunavut Territorial Government via the Department of Health and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated via the Department of Social and Cultural Development.

“Good thoughts” from Annie Nookiguak

Drawing that was submitted for the Mental Health Art Contest 2022



CONTACT

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