

Annual Report 2024-2025

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 the staff team

➤ Opal McInnis	President	Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
➤ Camilla Sehti	Vice-President	Government of Nunavut
➤ Sheila Levy	Treasurer	Nunavut Kamatsiaqtut Helpline
➤ Tess Thurber	Secretary	Nunavut Teachers' Association
➤ Rachel Idlout-Smith	Director	Qikiqtani Inuit Association
➤ Pauline Melanson	Director	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
and George Henrie		
➤ Samantha Tugak-Brown	Director	Kivalliq Inuit Association
➤ Vacant	Director	Kitikmeot Inuit Association
➤ Vacant	Director	Elder
➤ Nancy Natanine	Director	Survivor Member
➤ Vacant	Director	Faith Community
➤ Amarinda Alainga	Director	Student Member
➤ Vacant	Director	Nunavut Association of Municipalities

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

In 2024-2025, IIKELC remained a central organization leading life promotion activities through many successful initiatives.

Suicide continues to be a critical issue affecting all Nunavummiut. Addressing this crisis demands collaborative efforts. This year, IIKELC co-developed and signed on to Nunavut's 4th suicide prevention action plan, Inuusivut Annirnaqtut. We look forward to the continued implementation of the plan with our partners and communities.

IIKELC continues to strengthen its community partnerships and build local capacity. This last year, the organization delivered training to close to 150 individuals in communities across the territory. We also delivered over 40 Atii Angutiit programs in the Qikiqtani region.

Throughout the year, IIKELC adapted its methods to better serve communities and broaden its impact. The organization launched *Isumajunnattiarniq* an e-health app and continued to focus on transitioning more training to an online format, thus improving resource accessibility.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our funders and donors for their ongoing support of IIKELC's mission and suicide prevention efforts. Your contributions are essential to this important work.

On behalf of the Board, I sincerely thank all IIKELC staff and volunteers for their dedication to strengthening communities and life promotion. The organization's achievements this past year are a direct result of your hard work.

Qujannamiik, Matna, Koana,



Opal McInnis

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is with great pride that I present the Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit Embrace Life Council's annual report for the fiscal year 2024-2025. This year has been one of growth, innovation, and continued dedication to supporting the wellbeing of Nunavummiut.

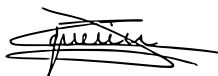
Through collaboration and cultural grounding, we have continued to strengthen our programs and services. The launch of the *Isumajunnattiarniq* app marked a major milestone—bringing accessible, Inuit-centered tools for resilience, mindfulness, and healing into the hands of community members across the territory. We released new resources focused on trauma, grief, and substance use, ensuring that Nunavummiut of all ages have meaningful, culturally relevant supports.

Our success this year reflects the unwavering commitment of our partners, funders, volunteers, and staff. Your belief in our mission inspires us every day to continue this vital work.

To our Board of Directors, I extend my heartfelt thanks for your guidance and leadership. To our dedicated team, thank you for your compassion and efforts in advancing our shared vision.

As we look ahead, we're excited to continue supporting wellness, resilience, and hope in our communities across Nunavut. Together, we will continue to embrace life, uplift our communities, and empower Nunavummiut to thrive.

Qujannamiik, Thank you, merci.



Cecile Guerin

The IIKELC TEAM

Here is the list of staff members that worked with the team over the year.

IQALUIT

Names	Positions
Cecile Guerin	Executive Director
Danika Pare	Administrative and Operations Assistant
Trevor Nordman	Training Manager
Rhea Monteiro	Program Development Coordinator
Atshapi Andrew	Program Manager
Ulliaq Kowmuk	Program Development Coordinator
Keturah Doucet-Brown	Iqaluit Program Coordinator
Ruth Kadlutsiak	Cultural Advisor
Emma Carpenter	Assistant Program Coordinator

RANKIN INLET

Names	Positions
Trevor Nordman	Program Development Coordinator / Training Manager
Keisha Aliyak	Kivalliq Program Coordinator

KUGLUKTUK

Name	Position
Jennifer Ongahak	Kitikmeot Program Coordinator

ARCTIC BAY

Name	Position
Richard Bohlender	Manager, Atii Angutiit

OUT OF TERRITORY

Names	Positions
Maleane Guerin	Communications Specialist
Kara Ashley	Program Development Coordinator

TRAINING PROGRAM DELIVERY

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

A- In-person workshops:

- a) ***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.
- b) ***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.
- c) ***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.
- d) ***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.
- e) ***Our Children, Our Responsibility*** was developed in partnership between IIKELC, Voice found, 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.

- f) **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.
- g) **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

B- Virtual training:

- a) **Addictions Education series.** A 4-part addiction education series which covers the topics of childhood trauma and addiction, alcohol, cannabis, and stimulants. This series is a unique approach to looking at addiction and addictive substances as it covers the general effects and dangers as well as health alternatives to each substance we look at. This series can be offered to the schools via Connected North and used by teachers, mental health educators, and community outreach workers with students aged 12 and above.
- b) **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.

This year, we hosted the following workshops:

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

Communities	# Participants	Participants
Iqaluit Rankin Inlet	49	GN Mental Health staff Group home staff, Community members

Summary: Overall, participants gave a high rating for the training (out of 10). Many participants stated in the feedback forms that they “strongly agreed” that their confidence in helping a person with thoughts of suicide had increased. Comments were positive and the trainers were well received.

Our Children, Our Responsibility

Communities	# Participants	Participants
Iqaluit Rankin Inlet Kinngait	23	Community members School staff Community Health Representatives

Summary: Participants feedback was positive overall, especially being that this workshop can be difficult emotionally for some participants.

Trauma Informed Practice

Communities	# Participants	Participants
Iqaluit Kinngait Rankin Inlet	28	School staff QGH staff

Summary: TIP had favorable feedback from people that took it. Of note, the videos and architecture game were mentioned on numerous occasions.

Healing Support Group Facilitator Training

Communities	# Participants	Participants
Iqaluit/Rankin Inlet	11	GN Mental Health staff Shelter staff - PKFC staff

Summary: Participants shared that this training helped them with their personal healing journey and the material was supportive.

Reach OUT

Communities	# Participants	Participants
Iqaluit Rankin Inlet Kinngait Gjoa Haven	37	High school students

Summary: The vast majority of participants felt that the training was engaging and appropriate.



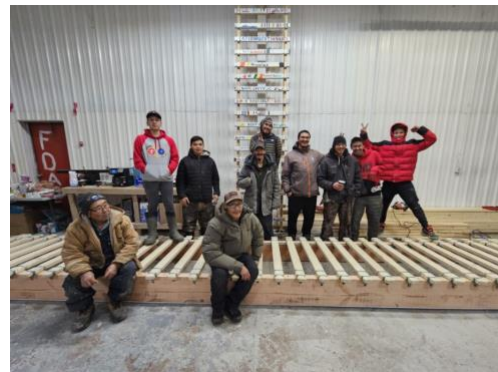
ATII ANGUTIIT PROGRAM

The Atii Angutiit program launched in 2022 with the ultimate goal of having coordinators in all communities in the territory, who will become trained in delivering hands-on, cultural relevant, and safe programs for men. Coordinators also gain the skills to become a supporter, and hold discussions for healing and reflection. IIKELC manages the Atii Angutiit Program within the Qikiqtaaluk Region only.

This year the program was offered in three communities:

- Igloolik: Twenty-one sessions were offered and two land trips,
- Arctic Bay: Seventeen sessions were offered and two land trips,
- Pond Inlet: Five sessions were offered

We also launched the program in Sanirajak and Kinngait.



PUBLIC EDUCATION PROJECTS

This year we worked on multiple resources under different topics:

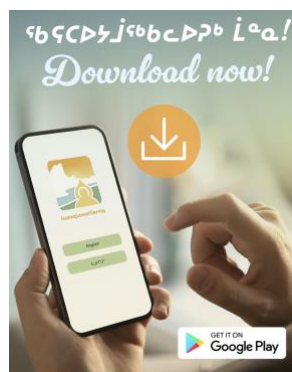
1- Mental health/wellness

- We released the **“Isumajunnattiarniq”** app in September 2025. We launched a three-month social media campaign and distributed posters to all Nunavut Health Centers. In the spring, we will launch a feedback survey within the app to gather input from Nunavummiut on features they would like to see included in the second phase of development.

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. 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.

- Launched the annual **Mental Health Art Contest** in September 2024. The contest was offered to four different age groups (4-8, 9-13, 14-18, 19+) and the theme was: *Connection*. We have decided to combine the 2024 and 2025 winning pieces to develop the following items: paint by number kits, tee-shirts and the 2026 Calendar. All items will be sent to the Mental Health Nurses in the communities for distribution.
- The **Mental health/wellness/self-care stickers** for children and adults are now completed. The stickers were distributed to the communities in March 2025.



2- Substance use

- **Addiction Education** series have been completed and included in the Connected North catalogue. Nunavut schools can now request one or more of the virtual presentations for Middle or High School students. This year we have delivered ten sessions to Grade 6-12 students.
- The content of the **card game** for youth that educates youth on substances is now completed. We are currently working with a contractor to see what the options are for this youth game. We are hoping to have this project completed during the next fiscal year.

3- Grief and loss

- **Grief care packages for families after a suicide**

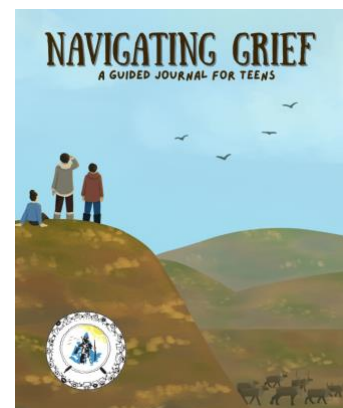
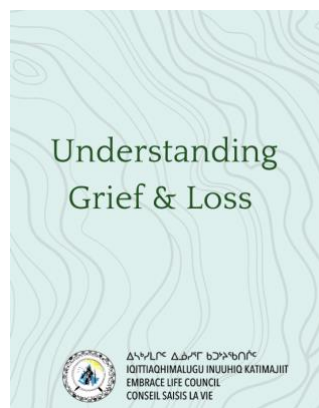
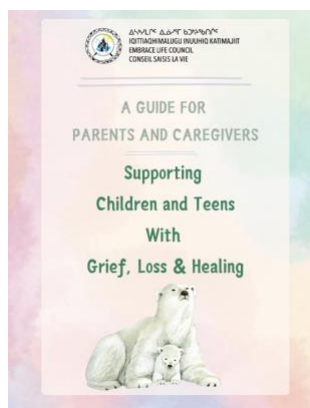
IIKELC continues the distribution of the grief care packages to families that have been impacted by a suicide. Our intention is to create a package that can offer a sense of comfort and support to community members that are grieving with items that encourage self-care, stress relief, relaxation, and healing.

The following resources are now included in the packages:

- Grief Journal for adults
- Guide for parents/caregivers – How to support children with grief/loss

We are currently developing the following resources and are planning on having them completed in 2025/2026:

- Grief Journal for teenagers
- Grief Journal for children
- Understanding Grief and Loss
- Scrapbook kit for families

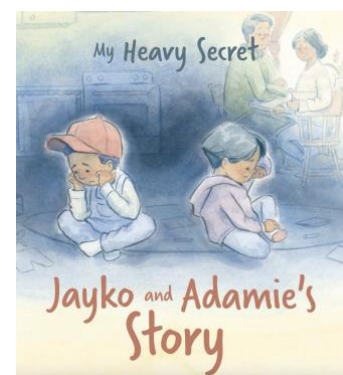


4- Trauma Informed Practice

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- Sexual trauma

- **Affirmation cards** are a set of 53 cards and a booklet. This affirmation deck was created to support Nunavummiut who have experienced prior sexual trauma. We hope these cards will provide them with words of encouragement whenever they need them and serve as a reminder of their strength and resilience. We are aiming to complete this project in 2025.
- **My Heavy Secret – Jayko and Adamie’s story** has been finalized. This story talks about two brothers who have been sexually abused by their uncle. The book conveys empathy, love, and support for the brothers, and includes a helpful guide for parents at the end.
- We are still working on the second version of **My Heavy Secret – Lisi’s story**. The illustrator is working on this book and we are hoping that this picture book will be completed in 2025.



6- Suicide prevention/Intervention

- Completed the presentation “**Talking about suicide at my workplace**”. This presentation provides an overview of how employers can address suicide within the workplace. We are planning on sharing this new presentation to all employers/companies in Nunavut in Spring/Summer.
- We are currently in the process of developing the “**Positive talk**” webinars with a contractor. The webinars will include the interview of a female and a male elder. They share how traditionally we support someone in crisis.

7- Healthy relationships

- **Break up campaign**, we are developing three videos and lesson plans for teachers/educators to teach students about healthy break ups.
- Similar to the Addiction Education series, we are planning on developing Healthy relationships presentations for students.

ON GOING ACTIVITIES

- Distribution of public education materials and materials related to the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy Implementation Committee. Activities to date include:
 - Distributed extra resources (i.e. pamphlets, posters, resources cards) on different topics when required
 - 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, IIKELC and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.
- Continuing updating our social media and the website to be more user friendly and reach target audiences in Nunavut with both resources and materials from IIKELC.
- Participate as an active member in the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy Implementation Committee, the Katinnganiq Makerspace Network, the working group of the Aqqusariaq, Roots of Hope and the Nunavut Association for Non-Profit Organizations

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Our Community Support funding supports community programs at the IIKELC offices (sewing programs, beading classes, cultural program...) and community outreach.

- Embrace Life Day events in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Kugluktuk
- Tea and Bannock (June 21),
- Ear Acupuncture training and clinics in Iqaluit

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

- Summer Art camps, Iqaluit Program Coordinators organized two two-week summer art camps for children/youth aged 11-14 during summer 2024.
- Sewing programs and cultural programs have been offered at the IIKELC offices in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Kugluktuk.



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.

"Reach out" from Inez Inooya Canil
Winner of the Mental Health Art Contest 2024 (youth group)



CONTACT

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