



# Annirusuktugut

A Suicide Intervention and Prevention Strategy  
for the Government of Nunavut

**June 2007**

ISBN 978-1-55325-125-5

**Table of Contents**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY..... 2**

**THE CONTEXT IN NUNAVUT ..... 3**

    Background ..... 3

    The Need for a New Approach..... 3

    Guiding Principles ..... 4

    Links to Pinasuaqtavut..... 4

    Inuit Wisdom, Community Capacity & Healing..... 5

    Building on Existing Knowledge ..... 6

    Ethical Considerations..... 6

**A FRAMEWORK FOR INTERVENTION AND ACTION..... 7**

    Purpose & Scope ..... 7

    GN Programs, Services and Activities..... 7

    Priority Action Areas & Broad Goals ..... 7

    Objectives, Strategies & Recommended Actions ..... 9

    Implementing the Strategy ..... 17

**APPENDICES ..... 18**

    APPENDIX A: Statistics from the Office of the Chief Coroner of Nunavut..... 19

    APPENDIX B: Example GN Programs, Services and Activities Addressing Suicide  
        Intervention  
        Strategy Priorities ..... 0

    Appendix C: Suicide Intervention Strategy Working Group..... 0

    Appendix D: Inuuqatiitsiarnirmut: Inuit approach to Community Kinship and Wellness  
        ..... 1

    APPENDIX E: Additional Resources..... 1

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the creation of Nunavut, suicide has accounted for 40 per cent of reportable deaths investigated by the Coroner's Office. With rates reaching upwards of nine times the national average, suicide is distressing our families, communities, government, economy and the territory as a whole. Regrettably, the trend shows no signs of abating.

The need to act has never been more critical. The Government of Nunavut is committed to bringing about positive change. The government is proposing a strategy; a renewed framework for its actions in conjunction with other community-based efforts and initiatives.

The GN strategy will rest upon six foundational objectives:

1. *Culturally relevant and effective GN programs and services based on the Nunavut experience and "best practices" from other jurisdictions such as Greenland and Australia;*
2. *A strengthened working relationship with Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit (the Embrace Life Council) in order to better address the needs of Nunavut communities;*
3. *Improved government programming to promote healthy lifestyles;*
4. *Improved community awareness of the availability of GN suicide intervention/prevention and healthy lifestyle promotion programs and services;*
5. *Centralized and comprehensive information about suicide in Nunavut including a guide to current GN programs and services related to suicide intervention, prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles;*
6. *Strengthened and continuous interdepartmental collaboration within the GN.*

In order to implement the strategy, the GN will establish from within existing resources a small office dedicated to meeting these objectives. Although designed as a GN-wide entity, it will not be a new department or agency. It would not divert authority or resources from existing departments. Instead, it would organize, harmonize, increase and help adapt programs to gain momentum for overall GN efforts.

In spearheading the Government's initiatives, this office would:

- Establish continuity in GN suicide intervention efforts
- Review existing GN programs and services using Inuit Societal Values as a foundation
- Collect and maintain up-to-date research
- Elevate public and internal GN awareness of suicide intervention and healthy living promotions

The GN strategy - Annirusuktugut - will inform and guide the GN's internal work on this issue. The GN will also work with *Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit*, the Embrace Life Council, to develop a community-based approach to suicide intervention, prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles.

## THE CONTEXT IN NUNAVUT

### Background

In Nunavut, suicide is not an isolated tragedy. As the leading category of reportable death investigated by the Coroner, it is devastating the entire community.

Since April 1, 1999, there have been 553 reportable deaths investigated by the Coroner's Office. Of those, 222 involved Nunavummiut, predominantly young males, taking their own lives. This is an astonishing 40 per cent of these deaths as of April 30, 2007, that are attributable to suicide.

The number is the equivalent of 10 classrooms—the population of an entire school—lost, in less than a decade. In 2006 alone there were 29 completed suicides in Nunavut. To put this in perspective, an equal rate in Toronto, Ontario would have resulted in 2,500 suicides in a single year.

Unfortunately, the tragic trend does not appear to be waning. It is becoming a larger and increasingly complex problem as the number of victims, more of them female, rises.

All Nunavummiut are suffering as suicide robs us of family, friends and neighbours—undermining our community's very future. Each death takes away another hunter, entrepreneur, teacher, doctor, parent and community leader in the making; before they have had the chance to discover their potential. The social and economic damage to the entire territory is immeasurable and irrevocable.

### The Need for a New Approach

The causes of suicide are many and difficult to define. Unemployment, mental health, justice issues, housing, substance abuse, sexual and physical abuse, relationship break-ups, education and countless other factors are involved. And the solutions are just as complex and elusive.

Preventing suicide in Nunavut has been, and continues to be, a top priority for all levels of the territorial government, as well as its private and public-sector partners. A host of past, current and planned GN programs and services pursue suicide intervention, both directly and indirectly.

Throughout the GN, though, there is awareness that additional suicide intervention is needed urgently in order to save lives.

## Guiding Principles

The Government of Nunavut has developed this new approach following this set of Guiding Principles:

- Building strength in our working relationships with one another as well as community organizations and agencies to increase cooperation in program and service delivery at the community level
- Tailoring services to meet local community goals and needs
- Respecting traditional wisdom and community decisions based on Inuit Societal Values
- Communicating in clear and accessible language
- Sharing information between departments

## Links to Pinasuaqtavut

The strategy was developed to reflect the goals and objectives set out in the Government of Nunavut's Pinasuaqtavut document. At its heart is the Government's commitment to supporting communities through building a stronger cultural foundation based on Inuit Societal Values.

Following the lead of initiatives such as CLEY's *Inuuqatiitsiarnirmut* project<sup>1</sup>, Annirusuktugut regards Inuit Societal Values as an inextricable part of all GN operations. Instilling holistic Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ) philosophy throughout Government activity, and reintegrating it into the larger Nunavut society, is essential.

The values observed in this strategy are:

- Inuuqatigiitsiarniq - Respecting others, relationships and caring for people
- Tunnganarniq - Fostering good spirits by being open, welcoming and inclusive
- Pijitsiraniq - Serving and providing for family and the community
- Aajiiqatigiinni - Decision making through discussions and consensus
- Pilimmaksarniq/Pijariuqsarniq - Development of skills through practice and action
- Piliriquitigiinni/Ikajuqtigiinni - Working together for a common cause
- Qanuqtuurniq - Being innovative and resourceful
- Avatittinnik Kamtsiarniq - Respect and care for the land, animals and the environment

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D for a more detailed description of the Inuuqatiitsiarnirmut project.

## **Inuit Wisdom, Community Capacity & Healing**

The Government is focused on seeking out and employing traditional knowledge as well as existing capacity within communities to address suicide among many other issues.

Traditional Inuit culture fosters a strong sense of identity and purpose. It entails stable family and social structures that pass on age-old survival knowledge and life skills to successive generations. Education came from role models and support systems including parents, extended family and other members of the community. Elders, shamans, healers, and all men and women were active in upholding customs, beliefs, spirituality, values and principles to ensure a robust society.

The role of elders and their uqaujjuiniq (advising) was inherent in all aspects of life be it cleaning a sealskin, making a tool, hunting animals, reading the weather, child-rearing, marriage, death, relationships or anything else. Passing on this knowledge and information by example and through stories helped youth, adults and elders alike to understand and process problems. Elders let individuals know that there is always hope and a way out of every problem.

Present day social agencies such as Health, RCMP, Education, Social Services and others that offer programs and services are predominately imported from outside of the region, and outside of Inuit culture. Most have been in existence only since the 1960s, when communities and schools were established in the North. Traditional Inuit self-sufficiency and interdependency were turned upside-down as they were moved into larger communities where foreign culture was imposed on them.

Over the tumultuous years of transition and adjustment to the imposed new lifestyle, Inuit families and individuals lost much of the control and freedom they once enjoyed. Traditional social support structures were undermined as the role of elders, family and Inuit societal values were usurped by these new self-appointed authorities and their agencies.

The Annirusuktugut Strategy stresses the need to recognize the profound social, spiritual, cultural and other forms of harm imposed on Inuit by outside groups. Negative ramifications of this contact cannot be dismissed as closed history, but must be treated as factors currently influencing Nunavut society.

Efforts to fully explore and heal from this trauma must be integrated into the basis of all GN programs and services, including suicide intervention efforts and healthy lifestyle promotion, if they are to achieve lasting and positive results.

### **Building on Existing Knowledge**

The GN recognizes the wealth of valuable work already produced on the subject of suicide in Nunavut. Projects such as *Our Words Must Come Back to Us*, from the Inungni Sapujjijit Task Force on Suicide Prevention and Community Healing, offer tremendous insight into the causes and effects of suicide. They answer many of the difficult questions and lay the groundwork for reaching effective solutions.

There are no intentions of duplicating previous works with the Annirusuktugut Strategy. On the contrary, it actually looks to apply the findings and recommendations of existing projects wherever possible. Many pieces of the puzzle have been provided already. This strategy enables the Government to organize and incorporate them successfully into ongoing suicide intervention activities and healthy lifestyle promotion.

### **Ethical Considerations**

In developing this strategy, the Government of Nunavut has, and will continue to consider the very human element of the issue. It strives to maintain a careful balance between developing an effective suicide intervention strategy, and respecting the privacy of individuals and communities. Personal and cultural difficulties with discussing suicide and associated subjects are appreciated throughout this strategy.

## **A FRAMEWORK FOR INTERVENTION AND ACTION**

### **Purpose & Scope**

The fundamental purpose of this strategy is to reduce the number suicides in Nunavut and to further the promotion of healthy living among Nunavummiut. The Government of Nunavut is committed to generating positive territory-wide results through renewal of internal efforts, as well as through enhanced collaboration with external community partners; especially Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit (the Embrace Life Council).

### **GN Programs, Services and Activities**

In order to move forward in a new direction, the GN must first know exactly where it stands. A chief purpose of the strategy is to develop a comprehensive list of all current programs and services that directly or indirectly address suicide and healthy living. The wide-ranging perspective gained will help guide government and additional community efforts to advance suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion.

### **Priority Action Areas & Broad Goals**

Annirusuktugut focuses on areas—linked in some way to suicide intervention and healthy living—where communities need attention most, and where GN programs and services have an influence. These identified priorities are Youth, Elders, Children, Parents, Leadership Development, Life Skills, Mental Health, Sports, Addictions and Justice.

With some modification of its focus on and resource allocations targeting these priority areas, the GN will maximize the impact of ongoing healthy lifestyle promotion and suicide intervention, as well as determine where changes may be warranted.



Some recommended broad goals for the Government within these priority areas include:

- Added services and resources devoted to bettering the lives of our Elders, who are so heavily relied on for their wisdom, guidance and assistance; but who need more support themselves.
- Increased funding of and collaboration with Hunters and Trappers Associations/ Organizations providing more active, frequent and effective on-the-land programs for youth. A reconnection with the land and traditional knowledge should be made now, while Elders and others who can serve as generational and cultural bridges can be called upon.
- Continued recruitment and training of teachers capable of delivering curriculum in traditional languages for the higher grade levels.
- Bolstered addictions counselling services in the territory.
- More confidence in schools from Nunavut communities. Diminished misconception of schools as adversarial, outsider institutions that undermine Inuit culture and language. Promoted image of schools as members of the community pursuing and safeguarding local interests.
- Strengthened support network for mental health workers in Nunavut to help them cope with the unique and acute challenges of their profession and avoid burnout.
- Increased awareness of mental health and its associated issues within Government, and among the public.
- Improved distribution of mental health services in Nunavut. Reduced shortages in some communities that have resulted in serious social, medical and legal problems for residents, and in undue strain on those communities with mental health services.
- Continued development of permanent mental health expertise from within Nunavut's population.
- Increased preventative GN mental health services. Further shift in focus away from reactive treatment of symptoms, and toward dealing with root causes.
- Assessment tools to GN departments enabling them to gauge the effectiveness of their suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion programs and services.
- More funding and other support for early childhood development programs that help prevent many problems suffered by Nunavummiut as they get older.
- A more open workforce for qualified Northern candidates through increased daycare spaces overall, and more culturally appropriate daycare and preschool facilities for Inuit.

## Objectives, Strategies & Recommended Actions

### OBJECTIVE 1

Culturally relevant and effective GN programs and services based on the Nunavut experience and “best practices” from other jurisdictions, such as Greenland and Australia.

#### Strategies:

- A) Evaluate current and future initiatives in terms of their cultural relevance.

##### Recommended Actions

- Design and distribute a simple evaluation tool for communities to rate GN suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion programs for user-friendliness, cultural appropriateness and suitability to community resources and relevance to community needs. GN to collect, compile and utilize data.

TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- Provide timely feedback to departments recommending any needed changes in design or delivery of programs.

TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- Maintain an ongoing exchange of information between the GN and NTI Policy Officials Committee and Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Katimajiit to ensure the continued cultural relevance of GN healthy living and suicide intervention programs.

TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 1 YEAR OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- Continuously solicit open dialogue with and guidance from Elders.

TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 1 YEAR OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- B) Ensure that documentation and other materials relating to healthy living promotion and suicide intervention are written in widely accessible language and correctly translated into all of Nunavut’s official languages.

##### Recommended Actions

- GN communications staff to maintain clarity of language and translation-friendly writing as a top priority.

TIMEFRAME: ONGOING

- C) Ensure the capacity of Government to readily deliver all programs and services related to suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion in all of Nunavut's official languages.

Recommended Actions

- Ensure all GN departmental working plans include providing staff with appropriate language abilities, or translators and interpreters, to deliver suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion programs and services.

TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- Human Resources to enhance GN hiring policy in the areas affecting suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion, emphasizing traditional language skills, life experience and cultural knowledge. Utilize existing community capacity to develop and deliver pertinent programs. Professional training and accreditation to be a secondary or post-hiring concern for GN in respect to prior learning.

TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 5 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- D) Establish and maintain effective and up-to-date healthy lifestyle promotion and suicide intervention programs and services.

Recommended Actions

- Ensure that departmental suicide intervention/healthy lifestyle promotion plans are completed, updated and implemented annually.

TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- Assist departments with design of their work plans, monitor implementation and report back to departments and the SOHLC with findings and advice.

TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 1 YEAR OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- Participate in and keep up with the latest regional, national and international research and developments in suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion.

TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 1 YEAR OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- Consider all effective suicide intervention initiatives—regardless of whether or not they are sourced by the GN—for comparison when setting benchmarks for success in Nunavut.

TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

## OBJECTIVE 2

A strengthened working relationship with Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit (the Embrace Life Council) in order to better identify and address the needs of Nunavut communities.

### Strategies:

- A) Improve GN reception to community input regarding suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion.

#### Recommended Actions

- Sustain and improve, as resources permit, financial and administrative support for Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit governance and administrative needs.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION
- Partner with Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit in the development of a Nunavut-wide, community-based strategy for suicide prevention and promotion of health lifestyles.
- Support public information meetings in each community to hosted jointly by Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit and the GN.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 3 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- B) Help increase and simplify access to funding for healthy living promotion and suicide intervention programs.

#### Recommended Actions

- Work with third party funding providers to simplify application processes, making money more accessible to communities and organizations for suicide intervention initiatives and the promotion of healthy living.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION
- Provide expertise to communities and organizations to assist them with complex funding applications and expedite dispersal of money to where it is needed.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION
- Cultivate closer partnerships with third-party funding sources such as the Federal Government. Work with them to increase funding for healthy lifestyle promotion and suicide intervention, as well as to broaden discretionary authority for recipients to use money in the ways most effective for their communities.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 3 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION
- Assist Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit in coordinating activities of other interest groups within communities to resolve instances of overlapping and redundant services. This strengthens overall quality and impact of programs, as well as eliminates excessive division of available funding.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 3 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- C) Establish methods to continuously monitor, compare and adjust program performance to ensure high-quality suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion services within communities.

Recommended Actions

- Along with Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit, actively study and adopt elements of healthy lifestyle promotion/suicide intervention efforts of other territories, provinces and countries to help establish best practices for Nunavut.

**TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

- Facilitate lateral dialogue among communities, giving them the opportunity to share experiences with suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion, and to learn from one another's mistakes, challenges and successes.

**TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

- D) In cooperation with Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit, help empower communities to deal with suicide-related crises.

Recommended Actions

- Establish strong working relationships with recreation leaders in each community and provide them with suicide intervention and healthy living promotion “tool kits.”

**TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

- Provide suicide crisis training for GN employees.

**TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 3 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

- Provide municipalities with the resources needed to hold suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion workshops for their staff.

**TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

- Promote and support inter-community collaboration for sharing information, resources and success stories.

**TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 3 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

### **OBJECTIVE 3**

Improved government programming to promote healthy lifestyles.

#### **Strategies:**

- A) Renew on-the-land programs for Nunavummiut to preserve survival skills and related traditional knowledge, as well as promote physical activity.

#### Recommended Action

- Department of Education to continue organizing on-the-land excursions for students and Elders where traditional skills and knowledge can be passed on.  
TIMEFRAME: ONGOING
- Department of Environment to renew its on-the-land job skills training for current and prospective employees.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 1 YEAR OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- B) Enhance opportunities for participation in organized recreation within and beyond the territory.

#### Recommended Action

- Maintain existing, and build additional recreation facilities in all Nunavut communities.  
TIMEFRAME: ONGOING
- Recruit, train and maintain recreation coordinators, coaches and other leaders from within the communities themselves.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 1 YEAR OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION
- Expand role of physical activity and achievement within school curriculum.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 1 YEAR OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- C) Strengthen partnerships with hunters and trappers organizations to promote traditional lifestyle and diet.

#### Recommended Action

- As resources permit, increase financial support for hunters providing country food to communities.  
TIMEFRAME: ONGOING
- Help facilitate and fund mentorship programs for community youth looking to learn hunting skills and other forms of traditional knowledge from elders.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 1 YEAR OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

**OBJECTIVE 4**

Improved community awareness of the availability of GN suicide intervention/prevention and healthy lifestyle promotion programs and services.

**Strategies:**

- A) Strengthen channels of communication between GN and communities in regards to healthy living and suicide intervention.

Recommended Actions

- Launch interactive website, distinctive from the current GN site, providing community access to information on suicide prevention and healthy lifestyle choices in Nunavut.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 3 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- B) Raise the profiles of healthy living and suicide prevention as issues.

Recommended Actions

- Implement public awareness campaign to promote suicide intervention and healthy living. Campaign to include promotional items, ad placements on local radio and television, handouts in post office boxes, etc.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 3 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

## **OBJECTIVE 5**

Centralized and comprehensive information about suicide in Nunavut including a guide to current GN programs and services relating to suicide intervention, prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles.

### **Strategies:**

- A) Establish an up-to-date list of current and developing GN departmental programs and services related to suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion.

#### Recommended Actions

- Create committee of representatives from each GN department conversant with their suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion to carry out a comprehensive programs and services mapping project, submitting their report to SOHLC.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION
- Establish a database categorizing and detailing all current GN programs and services directly and indirectly related to suicide intervention and healthy living. Ensure database is kept up-to-date and accessible to all departments.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 1 YEAR OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- B) Develop a more holistic and complete understanding of suicide in Nunavut as well as broader and deeper perceptions of suicide's causes, full impact and solutions.

#### Recommended Actions

- Conduct research into indentifying less direct factors contributing to completed and attempted suicides in Nunavut. Collaborate with jurisdictions responsible for these factors to seek solutions.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION
- GN departments to link suicide intervention initiatives with broader issues, such as education and healthy living, as opposed to limiting focus to mental health and similarly direct causes.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 3 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION
- Gauge the number of attempted suicides in Nunavut as accurately as possible.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 4 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION



**OBJECTIVE 6**

Strengthened and continuous interdepartmental collaboration within the Government of Nunavut.

**Strategies:**

- A) Establish more frequent interdepartmental communication about healthy living promotion and suicide intervention, as well as a higher and fuller awareness of one another's related programs and services. Increase number of collaborative efforts among GN departments.

Recommended Actions

- Set up quarterly Suicide Intervention/Healthy Lifestyle Promotion Work Plan status reports among departments to provide a shared overview of all programs and services being offered.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 1 YEAR OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION
- Human Resources to integrate suicide intervention and promotion of healthy living into the orientation for all new GN employees, and training for current ones.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- B) Frequent exchange of information among all GN employees regarding suicide in Nunavut and associated issues

Recommended Actions

- Make suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion a part of all GN Occupational Health and Safety Committee, as well as IQ Committee mandates.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 2 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION
- Create Intranet or Internet sites where all GN departments can access up-to-date and complete information on suicide intervention and healthy living in Nunavut. Ensure that all GN employees are able to access and contribute to the common source information.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 3 YEARS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION
- Liaise with Nunavut Employees Union regularly on subject of suicide intervention and healthy living.  
TIMEFRAME: WITHIN 1 YEAR OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

## **Implementing the Strategy**

The objectives laid out in Annirusuktugut can be achieved using existing government resources to form a small office dedicated to implementing the strategy.

This office would not duplicate or divert resources from programs and services GN departments offer already. Nor would it copy or replace activity of non-governmental agencies such as Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit. Instead, it would foster intergovernmental, as well as private-public collaboration, harmonizing suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion whenever practical and hopefully improving it overall.

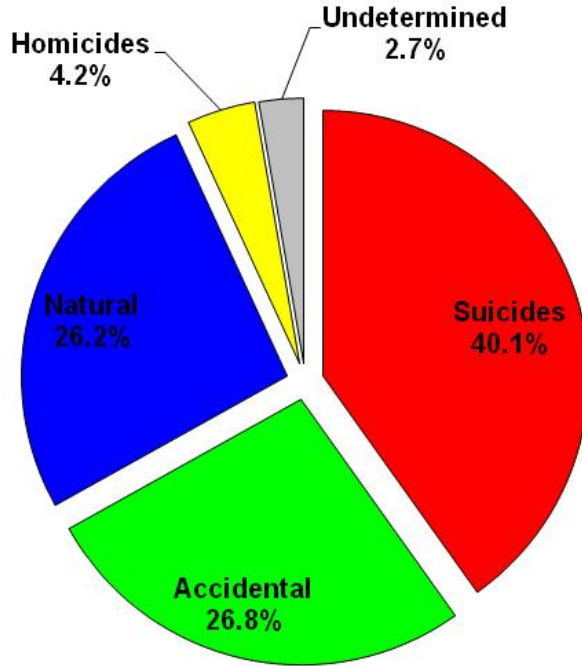
The primary role of office staff would be partnering with GN departments, not working outside them. Departments would continue creating and providing suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion programs independently. Weaving into the government structure, the office would keep departments connected and furnish them with research, funding alternatives, administrative services and other forms of assistance.

## **APPENDICES**

- A. Statistics from the Office of Chief Coroner of Nunavut
- B. Example GN Programs, Services and Activities Addressing Suicide Intervention Strategy Priorities
- C. Suicide Intervention Strategy Working Group
- D. Inuuqatiitsiarnirmut: Inuit approach to Community Kinship and Wellness
- E. Additional Resources

**APPENDIX A: Statistics from the Office of the Chief Coroner of Nunavut**

**Reportable Deaths Investigated by the Coroner's Office  
April 1, 1999 - April 30, 2007**



553 Total Reportable Deaths

Natural Deaths	=145 (26.2%)
Accidental Deaths	=148 (26.8%)
Homicide Deaths	=23 (4.2%)
Undetermined Deaths	=15 (2.7%)
<b>Suicide Deaths</b>	<b>=222 (40.1%)</b>

## APPENDIX B: Example GN Programs, Services and Activities Addressing Suicide Intervention Strategy Priorities

This list of ongoing GN programs and services, although incomplete, demonstrates current measures to combat suicide, directly and indirectly.

Youth	
Department	Program/Service
CULTURE, LANGUAGE, ELDERS & YOUTH	Community sports and recreation programs
	Scholarship Program
	Provide more training for community recreation coordinators to identify youth at risk
	Fund youth facilities in communities
	Develop on-the-land youth camps
	Provide support to community youth committees
	Promote Recreation and Active Living to enhance self esteem and self confidence, while building social skills
COMMUNITY & GOVERNMENT SERVICES	Technical studies programs with college/university bursaries
	Math and science awareness programs
	Stay in school initiatives
	1 PY and office space provided to the Embrace Life Council in Cambridge Bay

EDUCATION	Nunavut Early Apprenticeship Training Program
	Multiple Options pilot program
	Increased focus on cultivating positive school environments and restitution based policies (“Wraparound” process) to support students instead of reliance on "zero tolerance" and "3 strikes" styled discipline models
	Aulajaaqtut Curriculum: wellness, career-focused, Inuit identity program for secondary school students, eventually to be made available to all students at all grade levels
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES	<p>Suicide Prevention</p> <p>Ministerial Youth Advisory Tobacco Team (MYATT) promotes youth advocacy, team-building, self-esteem building, leadership and generally mobilizing youth using tobacco reduction/de-normalization, as a focus</p> <p>Supporting groups/schools in using YOGA as a way to ease stress and as a way to promote inner peace</p> <p>Partners with other departments, NGOs in supporting activities that youth find as a form of self expression. Such an activity that youth are actively exploring and using is Hip Hop</p>
NUNAVUT ARCTIC COLLEGE	New Guiding Principles adopted by Board of Governors places emphasis on Inuit culture and language
	Focus on improving Quality of Life for students
ENVIRONMENT	Training youth interested in wildlife to work in the field rejuvenating connection to the land and providing future jobs
	Summer Student Program

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TRANSPORTATION	Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation: supports community broadband connectivity (high youth interest/CAP sites, Nunavut Youth Consulting, etc.)
	Math and Science Awards: rewards academic accomplishment in high school
	Small Business Support Program: Program funds have been used by youth organizations; e.g., Kugluktuk Grizzlies
	Business Development Centres: produce job fairs, youth entrepreneurship training, etc.
<b>Children</b>	
<b>Department</b>	<b>Program/Service</b>
EDUCATION	Early Childhood programs
	Healthy Children Initiative to focus on supporting children in their pre-school years
	Healthy Schools Initiative
	Consolidating efforts with NTA, NEU and NAC to develop stronger and more accessible training for future and current school staff from within Nunavut
	Continued focus on increasing traditional language use, curriculum materials and teacher resources in schools

<b>Parents</b>	
<b>Department</b>	<b>Program/Service</b>
COMMUNITY & GOVERNMENT SERVICES	Technical professional scholarships to fill high-skill positions from candidates within Nunavut
EDUCATION	District Education Authorities
	Inuktitut curriculum for secondary school includes parenting modules
	Community counselors at schools
	Improve distance education infrastructure
	Income support delivery in conjunction with hamlets
	Adult education for income support recipients
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES	Canada Prenatal
	Aboriginal Head Start Program
	Brighter Futures and Building Healthy Communities
	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder programs
	Public Health Offices
NUNAVUT ARCTIC COLLEGE	Management Studies and Office Admin Programs empowering Nunavumiut with skills and communities with capacity
	Working to expand student housing including units to accommodate families



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TRANSPORTATION	Strategic Investments Program: equity fund; development fund.
	Nunavut Development Corporation creating jobs and businesses; currently involved with 9 businesses
	Community Capacity Building program: Provides funding to municipalities that can be used for community development purposes
	Small Community Initiatives Program: Provides funding to municipalities that can be used for community development purposes
	Development Partnership Agreement” could be used to address community development issues
	Fisheries Diversification Program could be used to develop local economic opportunities
	Prospectors’ Assistance Program” provides support for land-based economic activity (identification of rock/mineral/carving stone sites)
	Fur pricing Program assists individuals with land-based (harvesting) land-based economic activity
HUMAN RESOURCES	Family Violence Workshops
HOUSING	Nunavut Housing Trust building new units while training people in cooperation with EDU to help them learn a trade and gain self sufficiency (DOH)
	Reworking housing allotment formula to better suit the needs of Inuit families (DOH)

<b>Leadership Development</b>	
<b>Department</b>	<b>Program/Service</b>
COMMUNITY & GOVERNMENT SERVICES	Municipal Training Organization
	\$10K p/year distributed through hamlets for community development workshops, training, and similar activities
	Municipal Government Certificate Program
EDUCATION	Training for District Education Authorities
	Increase capacity of regional school services offices to better monitor and facilitate performance improvement locally
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TRANSPORTATION	Focus on coordinating and developing organizations to affect economic and social development
	Business Development Centres: provide business training and advice
	Small Business Support Program has a business training and aftercare component, as well as a Sustainable Livelihoods Fund to support on the land economic activity
	Community Capacity Building program: Provides funding for training and employment of a municipal economic development officer
	Nunavut Fisheries Training Consortium focuses on development of (leadership) skills needed to participate in fisheries sector

<b>Life Skills</b>	
<b>Department</b>	<b>Program/Service</b>
EDUCATION	More culturally meaningful and applicable school curriculum
	Assist people under the LMDA program who are on EI, or EI reachback or who have received maternity benefits in the last five years to apply for training programs. Provide training dollars to those who qualify.
	Career centers where adult learners can search and apply for work online, write resumes, develop portfolios, etc.
NUNAVUT ARCTIC COLLEGE	Academic tutors to help students cope with challenges of class work, personal time management, etc.
	Elder-in-Residence program offering male and female students access to elders to help cope with problems learn from traditional wisdom in all facets of life
	Developing IQ Literacy Programs
ENVIRONMENT	Support for Harvesting Business
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TRANSPORTATION	Nunavut Development Corporation: provides culturally appropriate entry level jobs to individuals learning how to participate in the wage economy
JUSTICE	Inuusirmut Aqqusiugtut (Pathfinder) Pilot Project

<b>Mental Health</b>	
<b>Department</b>	<b>Program/Service</b>
EDUCATION	Develop suicide prevention protocols for schools, H&SS staff & communities
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES	Mental Health Services
	Suicide Prevention Protocols
	Mental health units (limited to certain communities)
	Psychiatric Nursing
	Support to Embrace Life Council
NUNAVUT ARCTIC COLLEGE	Mental Health Diploma Program
	Human Services Program
	Counseling for students
	Conduct staff training workshops on suicide prevention
HUMAN RESOURCES	2 Day Suicide Intervention and Prevention Workshops for GN employees
	24 hour Employee and Family Assistance Telephone line counselling service
	Anger Management Workshops
	Grief and Loss Workshops
	Suicide Prevention and Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)
	Respectful Workplace Workshop
HOUSING	New needs assessment in conjunction with Nunavut Association of Municipalities looking at social implications of housing, including effects on mental health

<b>Sports</b>	
<b>Department</b>	<b>Program/Service</b>
CULTURE, LANGUAGE, ELDERS & YOUTH	Develop traditional; culturally based recreational activities & manuals
	Athlete/Coach Recognition Awards
	Coaching/Mentorship Program
	Arctic Winter Games (Multi-sport Games) Program
	Aim High/Atii Aksut Program
	Territorial Championship Program
	Sport Club Funding
COMMUNITY & GOVERNMENT SERVICES	Capital funding for arenas and other community facilities/equipment
EDUCATION	Develop a more culturally relevant curriculum for physical education and health
<b>Addictions</b>	
<b>Department</b>	<b>Program/Service</b>
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES	Addictions Treatment Services
NUNAVUT ARCTIC COLLEGE	Alcohol counseling for students
HUMAN RESOURCES	Addictions in the Workplace Workshops
<b>Justice</b>	
<b>Department</b>	<b>Program/Service</b>
JUSTICE	Youth Court Advisory Panel
	Community Elders in Court
	Family Abuse Intervention Act
	Suicide Intervention/Counselling programs at Youth and regular correctional facilities

### **Appendix C: Suicide Intervention Strategy Working Group**

The Senior Officials Healthy Lifestyles Committee (SOHLC) established the Suicide Intervention Strategy Working Group (SISWG). The body was mandated to help draft the Annirusuktugut Strategy, steering GN suicide intervention and healthy lifestyle promotion in a new direction.

Nine departments were asked to name representatives in order to assemble a broad perspective. Those invited were Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs (Chair); Justice (including the Office of the Chief Coroner); Culture, Language, Elders and Youth; Health and Social Services; Education, Nunavut Arctic College; Economic Development and Transportation; Community and Government Services; as well as the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

## **Appendix D: Inuuqatiitsiarnirmut: Inuit approach to Community Kinship and Wellness**

### **Introduction**

The current socio-legal conditions of Nunavut Inuit indicate the need for a substantial improvement in promoting community wellness.

There needs to be an additional support system put in place to address and deal with social issues and problems within the community other than what has been put in place since establishment of communities. Families in their camps had strong support systems to deal with family problems. Elders and others were able to counsel, advise and support one another. During the growth and development of the larger settlements, these support systems and mechanisms were weakened. There is a strong and growing sense that community service agencies should deliver programs in a manner more in keeping with Inuit societal values and approaches. Elders are eager to pass on their knowledge of proper behaviour to achieve a healthy, harmonious traditional kinship structures.

The goals are stated in *Pinasuaqtavut: 2004-2009* that by '2020 Nunavut is a place where: We respect the accumulated wisdom of our elders, examining and evaluating our actions based on the best of both modern and traditional ways.' The other goal is, 'the raising and teaching of children and the care of those in need, 'ilagiinniq' (kinship and 'inuuqatigiinniq' (community kinship), are a collective community process.' The second government in its mandate is committed to building a stronger cultural foundation based on Inuit societal values and expanding the economy. In order to achieve this, meaningful dialogue and collaboration must occur between the community service agencies and the clients.

### **Project<sup>1</sup>**

Two Nunavut communities, in varying sizes (big and small) will participate. The ultimate goal is to improve community wellness through the establishment of a high level of cooperation between community service agencies and groups using a more Inuktitut approach in dealing with social problems and issues. This will allow the community to collaborate and create a sense of "togetherness" in defining and addressing relevant community issues in a more holistic approach.

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<sup>1</sup> This proposed project models an initiative that was successfully undertaken in Igloodik in 2000.

The expectation is that the roles of elders and others who want to help are re-established in the community kinship and support system. The Elders Committee in the communities will lead the project and they will employ a project coordinator/consultant who will facilitate the implementation of the project. Following are some examples of the duties of the project coordinator/consultant:

1. facilitate and coordinate regular inter-agency/group meetings;
2. identify areas of overlap in the mandates and services amongst the community service agencies;
3. recommend ways to make the delivery of services more efficient and appropriate.
4. write up the Inullariit model; in detail, the processes and strategies which made it effective in helping Iglulingmiut to deal with family and social wellness issues.

There is no intention to impinge or duplicate on individual community service agencies' mandates, responsibilities or to compromise their existing confidentiality standards. Instead, there is a commitment to contribute their particular expertise and solicit from interested community service agencies. Following are some types of community service agencies that could participate:

1. Youth committees
2. Church groups
3. RCMP detachment
4. Health committees

There are community groups and agencies with the involvement of elders which provide support to individuals and families. These 'effective practices' can be shared with other communities to help people in need of counselling, support and advice. A compilation of these approaches or strategies could help determine and validate the use of Inuit societal values in a supportive community kinship model.



### **Anticipated Project Outcomes**

Following are the anticipated results of the project:

1. Full participation of community Elders who provide advice based on Inuit societal values. Their knowledge and experience will be validated and demonstrates the positive impacts of using a holistic approach.
2. Greater cooperation and communication between all community service agencies concerned with community wellness;
3. Increased community understanding of roles, mandates and responsibilities of the elders, and the various community service agencies/groups;
4. Identify strategies and approaches from other communities which involve elders and others that support a community kinship model to addressing social wellness issues and developing guidelines to support long-term cooperation among community service agencies/groups.

**Case Description – Inullariit Elders Society**

In 2000, the Inullariit Elders Society in Igloolik obtained funding through the Brighter Futures Program to run an exploratory project. The outcomes were very positive.

The assumption is that families have to be socially healthy in order for the community to be an ideal place to live. The idea was to target the re-establishment of healthy harmonious family relationships.

**Elders** - They identified Elders to play several roles in the community. The idea was to provide alternative services for people facing domestic problems, so Elders provided counseling, upon request, to individuals and families. In addition, the Elders acted as resource people for the community by hosting radio-talk-shows, presenting at training sessions on traditional social control mechanisms, participating in school visits and being available to community agencies. Moreover, Elders held monthly Elders meetings where they would interact with each other, and share concerns about the community's social structure.

**Coordinator/Consultant** – Through an open competition at the community level, they hired a part time coordinator to facilitate the work of the Elders and community Inter-agency Committee.

**Action Plan** – In order to ensure full cooperation between the community service agencies, they developed a "blue print" to guide the actions of both the Elders and Inter-agency Committee.

## APPENDIX E: Additional Resources

- Our Words Must Come Back To Us  
(<http://www.gov.nu.ca/hsssite/Inunqni%20Sapujijiiit%20E.pdf>)
- (Australia) National Action Plan for Suicide Prevention  
(<http://www.aifs.gov.au/ysp/actionplan.pdf>)
- Pinasuaqtavut  
(<http://www.gov.nu.ca/Nunavut/pinasuaqtavut/>)
- Proposal for a National Strategy for Suicide Prevention in Greenland  
([http://www.peqqik.gl/upload/rapport\\_-\\_engelsk.pdf](http://www.peqqik.gl/upload/rapport_-_engelsk.pdf))
- Colonization, Indian Policy, Suicide, and Aboriginal Peoples  
(<http://www.ualberta.ca/~nativest/pim/suicide.html>)
- Youth Suicide Prevention Website  
(<http://www.youthsuicide.ca/index.htm>)
- Report of the Workshop on Best Practices in Suicide Prevention and the Evaluation of Suicide Prevention Programs in the Arctic  
(<http://www.gov.nu.ca/education/COEWebsite/images/library/Arctic%20suicide%20%C9%20workshop%20e.pdf>)
- Suicide Prevention: Inuit Traditional Practices that Encouraged Resilience and Coping; Ajunnginiq Centre, National Aboriginal Health Organization  
(<http://www.naho.ca/inuit/english/suicideprevention.php>)
- National Inuit Youth Suicide Prevention Framework; ITK/National Inuit Youth Council  
(<http://www.niyc.ca/download.php?list.18>)