



**Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajiit**

**Summary Report**

**2013-2015**

58-4(3) Tabled Document

*NOV 5/15*

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>INUIT QAUJIMAJATUQANGIT KATIMAJIIT MEMBERS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2013-2015 ACTIVITIES .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>MARCH 19-21, 2013 .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>FEBRUARY 19-21, 2014 – IQALUIT .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>INUIT CUSTOMARY LAW .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>ANIMALS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CHILD-REARING .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>NOVEMBER 24-16, 2014 – IQALUIT .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>INUIT CUSTOMARY LAW .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>MENTAL HEALTH ACT .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>MARCH 17-19, 2015 – IQALUIT .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>INUIT <i>ISUMILIRIJUSINGA/INUUSILIRIJUSINGA</i> – INUIT-WAY OF COUNSELLING .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HEALTH AND WELLNESS.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HEALTH AND WELLNESS INUIT CALENDAR .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>AFTERCARE IN COMMUNITIES.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>ELDER HEALTH CARE CENTRES.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>ILISAQSIK CENTRE, <i>CLYDE RIVER</i> .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>KATIMAJIIT RESPONSE .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE FOURTH KATIMAJIIT .....</b>	<b>24</b>

## **Introduction**

The Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajit (Katimajit) is appointed by the Cabinet to provide advice and assistance with Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit to the Government of Nunavut. Under the Terms of Reference set out for the committee, there is an annual requirement to submit a report to the Cabinet on the activities of the committee and any recommendations the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajit may have for the Government of Nunavut. This report draws on the quarterly meetings held by the Katimajit in the 2013-15 fiscal years, and summarizes the discussions and provides a list of key recommendations for the Government of Nunavut.

The Katimajit is made up of non-governmental members who have knowledge and expertise in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and provide advice to the Government of Nunavut Departments. The first Katimajit members served for the two years (2003-2004). The second Katimajit was appointed in 2005 with some members re-elected, and they served for three years (2005-2008). The third Katimajit members were appointed in March 2009, and served for the three years (2009-2012).

Working with the interdepartmental Tuttarviit, the Katimajit assists in government to achieve an Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit approach in its service delivery and day-to-day operations. The Katimajit does not limit departments in pursuing additional consultations as required.

## **Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajiit Members**

The Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajiit is fortunate to have strong membership from across Nunavut representing all three regions and communities, both large and small. Currently, the Katimajiit consists of the following representatives:

- |                           |               |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Okpik Pitseolak        | Iqaluit       |
| 2. Martha Tikivik         | Iqaluit       |
| 3. Gamailee Kilukishak    | Pond Inlet    |
| 4. Josephen Kublu         | Igloolik      |
| 5. Daniel Qattalik        | Igloolik      |
| 6. Annie Isiriniq Napayok | Whale Cove    |
| 7. Adamie Veevee          | Pangnirtung   |
| 8. Saul Qirngnirq         | Gjoa Haven    |
| 9. Alice Ayalik           | Kugluktuk     |
| 10. Eqsuktuk Eetuk        | Coral Harbour |

The Department of Culture & Heritage would like to acknowledge the late Levi Evic from Pangnirtung for his contribution to Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajiit. He contributed his life experience and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit knowledge about the land and life values.

## **2013-2015 Activities**

The Katimajit met four times in 2013-2015. The meetings were held in Iqaluit.

### **March 19-21, 2013**

This marks the first sitting of the Fourth Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajit.

The Katimajit were given orientation to their roles, duties, functions and responsibilities as Katimajit members. This included historical aspects of the committee and the GN as well as logistical matters for travel, reimbursements and planning.

### **Work Plan – 2013-2015**

Over their three-year term, the Katimajit will offer insight and recommendations toward the following broad themes:

1. *Inuusiqattiarniq-makimattiarniq* – “healthy thriving communities” – respecting and engaging the authority and responsibility of extended families towards Inuit societal wellbeing.
2. Inuit great laws – *Inuit Maligallarningit* – *Inuit Piqqusingit* – *Inuit Piusingit* – what are they?

The Katimajit were inspired by presentations given by the DM of Culture and Heritage and the ADM of Environment and Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. The committee also had the opportunity to attend the legislative assembly and sit in the outer ring of elders’ chairs and listened for part of a session.

During this three-day sitting, the Katimajit expressed perspective, experience and insight on a range of topics including: challenges in the midwifery and birthing practice; child welfare; justice and policing; and traditional laws with regards to individual, collective and material/economic wellbeing.

Through these discussions, the Katimajit worked with the IQ Division Director to articulate three recommendations.

**Summary of Recommendations:**

1. The Katimajit urges the Government of Nunavut to advise all departments and agencies working toward community social wellbeing to recognize and implement the traditional Inuit practice of involving parents, elders and extended families with youth who are above the age of 18. While this is not meant to contravene the western law of age of majority, there have been serious consequences for Inuit communities in regards to health, social services and justice matters where parents, elders and extended families did not have the notification or opportunity to intervene in a culturally rooted way. This is a serious violation of Inuit values and methodology. Departments, programs and agencies working with youth past the age of majority need to be informed of the following:

- Inuit family and societal wellbeing depends on a system of practices that require immediate communicate with parents, elders and extended families of people in need or in trouble, regardless of age;
- Inuit traditional law in regard to familial, parental, and elder responsibility for an offspring's wellbeing and guidance is lifelong;
- Delayed knowledge of need has had serious consequences for family and societal wellbeing. This is a well-documented view stated by many elders over a long period of time. The current Katimajit is asking the GN to act on this recommendation urgently;
- With respect to the Canadian age of majority and privacy laws, GN departments, programs and agencies are asked to innovate with elders and community to groups to

support circles of caring and monitoring for youth at risk that involve their parents, elders and extended family members;

- Where limited by Canadian law, departments, programs and agencies are invited to share and meet with the current Katimajit in future to discuss different approaches to effectively apply IQ in the delivery of their services;

2. The Katimajit urges the Department of Health and Social Services to establish a protocol within their department so as to immediately inform parents, elders and in some cases extended family of children at risk before they go into foster care. Children should be with their own family as a very high priority. The Katimajit understands that social services takes children away when they are potentially in a dangerous situation; however, by Inuit laws, this practice of removing them from family is actually as dangerous because it interferes with family bonding, which is at the core of Inuit values for life. Where children are at risk, grandparents, elders and extended family should be an immediate part of the short and long-term solutions in order to address what the Katimajit perceives as a severe threat to family a societal wellbeing.
3. The Katimajit recommend that *ujjiqsuiniq* - “observation/discernment”– be added to the GN’s eight guiding principles. *Ujjiqsuiniq* creates a balance with the other principles; for example, *ujjiqsuiniq* can help people notice when help is requires (*ikajuqtigiinni*/team work, *pijitsirniq*/service) and can help an individual with *pilimmaksarniq* (skill building) and *qanuqtuurniq* (innovation) if they are highly observant. People also have to be discerning and observant while welcoming new people and processes (*tunnganarniq*). When engaging effectively in *aajiiqatigiinni* (consensus building), one must be keenly observant of others’ thoughts, ideas, and contributions as well as that of the group as a whole. This principle *ujjiqsuiniq* has cultivated many skills, innovations and relationship building within the Inuit culture over many centuries. GN workplace, programs and services can be more effectively and

efficiently run with an understanding of *ujjigsuiniq* as a balancing principle among the current eight principles.



## **February 19-21, 2014 – Iqaluit**

### **Agenda:**

1. Katimajit three-year project: *Ukiuqtaqtumi Maligait, Inuit Maligangit* (Inuit Customary Laws). What are they?
2. Department of Justice: The ADM presented on the Department's role and mandate, and sought advice for improving their services in Justice.
3. Official Languages Division: asked the Katimajit about issues of language protection and revitalization.
4. Family Services: Poverty division presented on Poverty initiatives, and sought advice about their Department's strategies.
5. Recommendations by the Katimajit

## **Inuit Customary Law**

Katimajit suggested focusing on three categories: animals, people/humans and belongings

### **Animals**

Inuit Customary Law has strict guidelines regarding the treatment of animals. A member shares that "animals can [avenge] later on" if one [is] cruel to them. The negative actions done by the human is reflected in the health of that human; for example, the member tells the story of a raven that "accidentally trapped itself"; the trapper made fun of the raven, and "cut off the bird's feathers on its rear end and later on in the years the trapper had bad back aches"<sup>1</sup>. There are many oral stories that communicate this same concept: another member shares about a person who "cut off a caribou nose

---

<sup>1</sup> A member shares a similar story about a raven that gets caught in a fox trap. "The trap owner ten poked the raven's eyes on purpose because he wasn't happy that he trapped a raven instead of a fox. Later on in the years, the person went blind".

purposely while the caribou was still alive; later in the years, the person had bad mucus coming out of his nostrils and he ended up getting disease inside his nostrils”.

Harming animals without reason physically or emotionally is forbidden. One member says he was taught not to “make fun of animals by playing with them to hurt them on purpose”. With polar bears, for example, one should not make it “tired” or “sick on purpose. It is believed that later on in the years the person could become ill, have disability or another family member can receive this later on”. He believes this is why polar bears wander into communities: Polar bear are put to sleep and a necklace marker is placed on their necks by the people in helicopters. This means the customary law has been broken. This was to track the polar bear, so populations of bears can increase. Later on in the following years, the polar bear then comes into a community as it is in its revenge after it’s been put to sleep”.

Inuit Customary Law promotes mental and physical health. The Katimajit believe that Inuit “did not want to lose the customary law because it was a way for a person to take good care of their life”. Inuit Customary Law has fallen out of use, which members believe is the cause the “medical boarding homes and institutes for criminals” are “overcrowded”. Another member observes that “the younger generation is ... saying that the customary law is no longer necessary because Inuit culture has changed”; she questions whether the lack of use of Inuit Customary Law is the reason the “caribou [are] getting scarce”.

#### *Treatment of animals after death*

The treatment of animals after death is as important as the treatment before. Inuit Customary Law dictates that after death, and after all useable parts of the animal are gone, the leftovers must be dealt with in specific ways as it is believed that the soul of that animal can avenge the human if it is not respected. One member was taught that ‘if an animal was a land animal’, one was “not allowed to put

the left over [meat and/or bones] on the salt water or sea ice". The same rule is for "sea animals"; we were not to leave them in a lake as they are sea animals". Any piece left over from an animal is to be left to rest in the habitat natural to it; otherwise, the spirit of that animal will not be at peace and it will avenge the human.

This idea goes beyond the treatment of animals: one's actions -- negative or positive -- are reflected in one's physical health. A Katimajit member relates how talking back to an Elder is against Customary Law: "it eventually causes health problems to the younger person, and also [causes] the young person to look a lot older than their age".

### **Child-rearing**

According to Customary Law, it is the responsibility of adults to protect children from negative words about themselves or about other negative things as this affects the "child's life as they ... [grow] up". Children were protected from the "confidential, private conversation" of adults because it was believed that "children can learn" negative behaviours, and "extend" that negativity to other areas of their life. Not listening to adult conversations sheltered children from negative things.

Discipline for children, according to Inuit way, followed three stages similar to the Inuit-way of counselling: when a child needed discipline, the parent would correct that child privately two times, and "would not let the other people in [the] camp know". If the child needed a third correction, a member remembers that a camp member would be asked for help. Inuit grew up with this same three-stage method of discipline as the three-step Inuit-way of counseling method for adults, which demonstrates the holistic method by which Inuit social order was enacted from birth through adulthood.

## **Department of Justice – the ADM gave a presentation about Justice and Inuit Customary Law and asks for advice and questions**

The Katimajit believe Inuit-way of counseling is effective for dealing with justice issues, as well as mental health issues. The counseling process is based on the “three stages” of the “Inuit-way of counseling”: 1. Counsel the person(s) individually to try to find the root cause of their actions.; 2. If the individual does not improve or correct their behaviour, than s/he be counseled by a non-family member.; 3. If the individual does not respond to counseling s/he will have to abide with Government of Nunavut laws. The Katimajit believe that if Inuit-way of counseling could be followed for “lesser cases”, “it would be of benefit to the individual and their families”, and “less people” would go on “medical travel and also less Inuit would be incarcerated”.

The Department of Justice is attempting to include Elders in their current structures. The Department explains that “Elders are helping with the court in Pond Inlet”. Despite these measures, the cultural gap between Elders and the younger generations of Inuit is highlighted in cases when the offender chooses the System over the counsel of an Elder. In pre-settlement days, it was assumed that if one were causing an issue in the community that s/he would meet with Elders, who would follow Inuit-way of counselling, with the aim to re-establish peace in the community. The Department explains that some people “are not comfortable meeting with an Elder. They choose to go through the court system”, even though meeting with an Elder would prevent a criminal record. A Katimajit member states that meeting with an Elder to go through Inuit-way of counselling should not be a choice, but protocol for those with lesser offences. The Katimajit believe if this were the case, “Baffin Correctional Centre, boarding homes in Ottawa and Iqaluit would have less people in ten years”.

## **Official Languages Division: consults Katimajit about issues of language protection and revitalization**

Inuktitut and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit are inseparable. Preserving and increasing the use of Inuktitut in Nunavut is foundational for the transmission of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. Inuktitut is the only language by which all aspects of Arctic life is communicated effectively. The division share that they sometimes chooses not to translate material into English even when requested, because when they do, the “meaning changes”. A Katimajit member observes that the “younger generation is mostly speaking in English”. It is of critical importance to address this language gap between generations for the transmission of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, which will be essential for addressing the health and wellness in Nunavut communities. This loss of fluent Inuktitut means a disabling loss of tradition-based knowledge accumulated over generations specific to Arctic conditions.

Echoing their desire to be included as counselors in justice issues, the Katimajit members also see Elders as essential in language preservation and revitalization processes. One member sees funding from the Department of Culture and Heritage as valuable for creating mentoring programs for those “who have no fathers, or [do] not have equipment to go out hunting”, to learn skills, such as “how to be warm out on the land, preparing to go out on the land” and “learning weather”, all of which can only be communicated accurately from Inuit perspective in Inuktitut. The funding available for language and culture programs through the Department of Culture and Heritage is complimentary with the suggestions by the Katimajit for programs, such as community radio programs in Inuktitut, and on-the-land programs with a unilingual person.

## **Family Services: Poverty division presents on the Poverty reduction and Anti-poverty legislation, and asks for advice and questions about the strategies**

A Katimajit member observes the effects of poverty in the “communities in Nunavut, and [the communities] need help” to deal with them. According to one member “poverty was not evident when [Inuit] were living out on the land”, but is something that is noticeable in his community. The negative effect on younger generations of Inuit because of dependence on government support is apparent to the Katimajit: “Elders are now helping their children and their family, to feed them” from their own government support, one member shares. She is thankful for the country food shared by hunters because it helps feed the children. Elders supporting the younger generation is the opposite of the expectation in Inuit culture previously when they lived on the land, which was “how to be independent”: the younger generations were responsible for caring for the Elders.

Lack of employment and dependence on income support are issues the Katimajit see in their communities and believe hunting programs are one of the best ways to address them. To decrease dependence on food flown from the South, and strive towards food sovereignty, the Katimajit want more hunter support initiatives. “Communities should receive two snowmobiles or a boat”, a member suggests, so “people in poverty can receive food from the land and sea”. A group of appointed “hunters could run this program”. Funding for equipment to hunt “walrus, seal and caribou” would help hunters who could “help feed people in the community”. Another member wants the “number” of people in “poverty ... to be reduced”. He proposes that community members need more forums to “share the areas where they need help in poverty”. Nunavut Anti-poverty suggests a country food distribution program where “hunters can drop off their catch” to be shared in the community could be a possibility. A Katimajit member believes a model that aims to “share what is needed in the community”, would help decrease poverty”. If government bodies support community-based initiatives regarding food security, the health and wellness in Nunavut communities would increase.

## **November 24-16, 2014 – Iqaluit**

1. Department of Executive Intergovernmental Affairs –The DM presented about the “Sivumut Abluqta” mandate to allow questions for Katimajit
2. Mental Health Act – Family Services asked the Katimajit for feedback regarding changes to the Mental Health Act
3. Department of Justice –The Department asked for knowledge regarding civil forfeiture, problem-solving courts and corrections outpost camp program.
4. Recommendations by Katimajit

## **Department of Executive Intergovernmental Affairs**

The DM presented about the Sivumut Abluqta mandate highlighting the four priorities: self-reliance and optimism through education and training, healthy families through strong and resilient communities, economic growth through responsible development across all sectors, good government through wise use of our resources.

Questions/comments from Katimajit:

The Katimajit would like to see the education system reflect Inuit ways and to incorporate *ukiuqtaqtumi maligaa/piquja*. They believe education should be bilingual, so “Inuktitut can be taught equally”. The Education Act from the “1970s is not effective”, and the Katimajit would like to see it updated to reflect Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.

## **Inuit Customary Law**

The Katimajit would like to see *Inuusiliriniq* counselling (three-stage Inuit counseling) used. The Inuit-way of counselling is based on the “three stages”:

- 1) Counsel the person(s) individually to try to find the root cause of their actions.
- 2) If the individual does not improving or correct their behaviour, than s/he be counseled by a non-family member.
- 3) If the individual does not respond to make changes, s/he faces their own consequences.

## **Mental Health Act**

The Department of Health asked the Katimajit for feedback regarding changes to the Mental Health Act, and about traditional ways of healing and mental wellness:

Elders want to assume their traditional role as counselors and mentors in their communities. One member said he wants to “handle cases that are not life threatening, to counsel them”. Another Elder observes that “Inuit-way of counselling and wellness is not being practiced”, and “would like to see elders being utilized with the assistance” of the RCMP. A Katimajit member has “often done counseling in the “community”, but “would like to participate in consultations” with Family Services.

## **Department of Justice**

The Department wished to consult the Katimajit on three issues: Civil Forfeiture, Problem Solving Courts and Corrections Outpost Camp Program.

The Katimajit believes Inuit-way of counselling is effective for dealing with justice issues, as well as mental health issues.

The current justice system, as observed by the Elders, is problematic because it focuses on helping the individual, which is not the Inuit way. The Inuit way is to help “all” people involved in the situation to restore balance in the larger community.



Majority of the members agree with Civil Forfeiture process.

Outpost camps, where an individual can serve his/her sentence on the land is a system that is in keeping with IQ teachings because the individual can “learn to be part of the community again”. It is observed by the Elders that “those ... returning from the correctional centre ... do not relate” well to people when reentering their community. The person “should feel welcomed” and “be taught Inuit-way of belonging to family and community”. The Elders’ hope that if Inuit-way of counseling would be followed, fewer families would split up, which, they believe, can also even help prevent some suicide.

## **March 17-19, 2015 – Iqaluit**

The Katimajit meeting was planned to take place in Clyde River, but that did not happen due to bad weather, so the meeting was held in Iqaluit. The members asked if they can promote the Katimajit through an IBC TV talk show. They want Nunavummiut to know that the IQ Katimajit are elders who do their best to advise the government on behalf of Nunavummiut. They feel their role and work are important to share.

1. Collect Inuit knowledge about health and wellness
2. Inuit Customary Law

## **Inuit Isumilirijjusinga/Inuusilirijjusinga – Inuit-Way of Counselling**

The Katimajit want the Inuit-way of counselling be used in the court system. They observe that the non-Inuit process currently used focuses on policy processes and not on the individual to find the root cause of their actions. One member proposed that in lesser cases an elder do the defense. In a situation when an offender is given a conditional sentence and is required to report to RCMP weekly, the Katimajit suggested that the person instead report to an elder weekly: the appointed elder would meet with the person and take them through Inuit-way of discipline and counsel to find the root cause of the person's issue: "the elder would guide the offender to realize what s/he has been doing and ... learn how to work on his/her life". Another member agreed, further suggesting that there could be a committee of "four-six elders who are older and respected" who would "advise about why laws are to be obeyed" and for what "reason (learn consequences)". This process would be conducted with "meaning and love", which the Katimajit observed is lacking in the current system and negatively impacts everyone involved. Another member suggested that when an "offender learns to be forgiving, and learns about consequences, they start to go into the healing process".

## **Health and Wellness**

The Katimajit believe the focus on suicide and suicide prevention methods in their communities should shift to “sharing the good way of living”. Current methods of dealing with suicide, such as suicide prevention campaigns, suicide awareness walks, and radio programs, are counter Inuit culture, according to the Katimajit. One member believes these methods can cause suicide: “when suicide prevention is talked about openly in the public, suicide is committed during that time in a community and another one in another community”. One Elder asked if suicide prevention methods “prevent suicide or support suicide” because “people commit suicide when there is a meeting on suicide prevention”.

The Katimajit suggest that health and wellness should be the focus, and should be promoted through teaching traditional skills as well as on-the-land skills, such as “how to care for an animal skin”, “how to cut up an animal”, and “how to make a qamutik”. Along with the sharing of traditional skills, they suggest other health and wellness measures, such as an increase of resources for elders in the communities, the involvement of elders when Family Services intervenes in a family, more cooperation between RCMP, Family services and elders when there is a family dispute, and a return to the use of Inuit-way of counselling and Inuit Customary Law.

## **Health and Wellness Inuit Calendar**

One member suggests the creation of a calendar with “elders’ messages to do with healthy living on the pages” as a resource. The calendar will have the “month names according to Inuit calendar” (rather than just a Gregorian calendar translated into Inuktitut), cycles of Arctic light, cycles of the animals and when to make different types of traditional clothing. A calendar such as this would be a daily resource that would promote Inuit culture and enforce ideas of health and wellness. The calendar would be comprised of inspiring words of wisdom to highlight our ancestors’ survival skills,

perseverance and IQ guiding principles. Here are some suggestions: *Qujalivvik* (gratitude) *alianait anaananut Inuutitaulaurama* (Grateful mother gave me life), *inunnit sivuliqaqpunga* (Proud my ancestors are Inuit), *Inuusiq annirnaqpuq* (Life is precious), *kinatuinnaq Inuuqatiminik aanniqsijariaqanngillaq*, *Piuqsuarniq*, *illiqtuiniq*, *katiqsuiniq*, *makimaniq*, *suqusijuinniq*.

### **Aftercare in Communities**

To increase health and wellness, the elders say there needs to be more aftercare resources for those who have suffered trauma. Aftercare is important because a focus on healing will help stop cycles of trauma that come from issues, such as violence in families and suicide. Those returning to their community after being incarcerated, for example, need to be welcomed into the community and into their family, so they do not feel shunned or “unloved and unwanted”. Places where people can talk about their “personal issues and help each other”, such as women’s groups or men’s group, and visits from the Community Health and Wellness Committee are examples of resources the Katimajit want to see more of in their communities.

### **Elder Health Care Centres**

Along with more aftercare resources, the Katimajit observed that there is a lack of resources and care for Elders in the communities. Some suggestions regarding Elder care are as follows:

- If an elder is not feeling well, there should be someone who is checking in on them regularly.
- Escorts for travel should be provided.
- More awareness regarding elder abuse is needed.
- One elder mentioned a successful program in Kugluktuk where homecare visits elders who cannot leave their home. This would be a good program for all communities.
- Elders in wheel chairs should be taken to gatherings in their community
- A van service should be available, so elders can be taken to church

- A care service for elders that provides house cleaning, laundry, and cooking services would be helpful.
- The Elders Home in Iqaluit should be expanded.

### **Ilisaqsivik Centre, Clyde River**

*Ilisaqsivik* – “recognizes one’s self”/a place where one identifies something or an issue

*The Katimajit watched a video about the Centre. Two Ilisaqsivik staff members held a conference call with Katimajit.*

The Ilisaqsivik Society was incorporated in 1997 as a non-profit, community-based organization dedicated to fostering personal and community development and healing initiatives for individuals and families in Clyde River. Ilisaqsivik was created through the vision and efforts of a group of concerned Inuit and community members in Clyde River. In 1996, they began to meet to discuss how they could find the resources needed to support locally-initiated cultural and social programs that would allow the community to develop according to its own needs and vision. In 1997, in collaboration with the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Hamlet of Clyde River, the Ilisaqsivik Society purchased former health centre building, and the Ilisaqsivik Family Resource Centre was established. By 2010, it had 20 fulltime employees, 87 half or part time employees, and an additional 67 casual workers. The building is bursting at the seams, and has to be creative to find enough space in other community facilities to run all of the programs. With strong support and collaboration with the Quluaq School, the Arctic College Community Resource Centre, and the Hamlet, Ilisaqsivik extends beyond the boundary of the Centre and has become integrated into the life of the community at large.

One support worker shared how when she was first employed the Centre was run using Qallunaat-way, but she could not work that way. She convinced the Centre that it had to be the Inuit-

way because that's the only way she knew how, and the people they serve are Inuit. She was given a full-time job to run it how she knew best, with support and guidance from the elders. She called on "Our Life Journey" – an Inuit-way of counselling training program – to help adapt the program. They worked together to find a balance – to choose the best practices in Inuit-way and also from Qallunaat-way. In 2002, they developed a program to have best practices developed into a program. She also shared about the land healing program that is provided during the summer. She is currently developing an Inuktitut program of counseling and healing workshops that will run in for four modules. The program will be completed with the first workshop planned for the fall of 2015.

Another support worker shared how she completed the "Our Life Journey" counselling training modules and is a counselor at Ilisaqsivik. She said there have been many people trained, and are now leading in their communities. Ilisaqsivik counselors are often asked to assist in other Nunavut communities when there is a need. There are volunteer counselors from the communities who want take the "Our Life Journey" program. These people go on to volunteer in their communities. The Ilisaqsivik and "Our Life Journey" counselors will also work alongside Mental Health to escort clients who are being sent to Selkirk in Winnipeg for further treatment.

### **Barriers to quality mental health care in the North (as observed by workers at Ilisaqsivik)**

When someone goes down south for mental health treatment there are barriers that can deter them from accessing treatment or to completing the treatment. It is hard, for example, to find a place that will take a whole family. The possibility of splitting up a family can be a hindrance for some when considering treatment.

The processes of the facilities are a challenge: the individual has to be seen by a mental health worker up to three or four times before they can be referred to an outside addictions center. They are

asked to fill out a questionnaire, which can be difficult because the questions are not culturally reflective. One counselor says it is frustrating because the people seeking help want to make a life change, but give up trying because the process takes so long and is not Nunavut-relevant.<sup>2</sup>

Cultural differences and misunderstanding have an effect on the care given by mental health workers. Mental health workers coming from the South often have expectations that are not from an Inuit-perspective. Newcomers should be given cultural orientation. Life issues and challenges in Nunavut are different from the southern way of life. There are barriers between the mental health worker and the individual who grew up the community.

Those suffering with mental health issues can face a challenge by the high staff turnover in the Government of Nunavut. A mental health worker will gain the trust of the community, and then they leave. Those individuals who are seeking help have to start all over again, having to gain trust all over again, including the paperwork. This frustration is also felt about the turnover of social workers. The process, cultural barriers and issues are similar.

### **Katimajit response**

Elders were impressed with Iisqsvik, and wish that every community had a similar wellness center. They are especially pleased because it follows the Inuit-way, and believe it should be modeled in every community. Iisqsvik offers an Inuit-way of counselling training program, which is accessed by Nunavummiut. The Centre provides employment and training. The Katimajit was impressed by how the Center takes a holistic approach to people's needs, providing opportunities for people to better their lives in all ways. The Katimajit members want to relay the messages they heard from Iisqsvik.

---

<sup>2</sup> One counsellor says that while in-community treatment would be best for Nunavummiut, there are reasons why someone might desire to receive treatment outside of their community. Often the reason is to access treatment that is not available in their community. Another reason is privacy: in a small community, everyone knows everyone's life. It helps when someone is able to receive counseling by someone the individual does not know.

## Summary of Recommendations by the Fourth Katimajit

1. The Katimajit urges the Government of Nunavut to advise all departments and agencies working toward community social wellbeing to recognize and implement the traditional Inuit practice of involving parents, elders and extended families with youth who are above the age of 18.
2. The Katimajit urges the Department of Health and Social Services to establish a protocol within their department so as to immediately inform parents, elders and in some cases extended family of children at risk before they go into foster care.
3. The Katimajit recommend that *ujjiqsuiniq* - “observation/discernment”– be added to the GN’s eight guiding principles.
4. The Katimajit would like to see a protocol in the justice system for those with lesser offenses to meet with an Elder to go through Inuit-way of counselling.
5. The Katimajit would like to see Inuktitut-only, on-the-land mentoring programs for parentless children and youth.
6. The Katimajit would like to see more hunter support initiatives, as well as support for community-based initiatives to address food security.
7. The Katimajit would like to see the education system reflect Inuit values.
8. The Katimajit would like to see the incorporation of *ukiuqtaqtumi maligaaq/piqujaq* in education.
9. The Katimajit want to see education be bilingual.
10. The Katimajit would like to see the Education Act updated to reflect Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.
11. The Katimajit would like to see *Inuusiliriniq* (Inuit-way of counselling) done by elders being utilized in assistance with the RCMP, and in consultations with Family Services.



12. The Katimajit believe suicide prevention campaigns are potentially harmful because of the focus on suicide, which is not Inuit-way. The focus should be on strategies for healthy living.
13. The Katimajit suggest the creation of a calendar as a health and wellness resource. This calendar would highlight elders' advice and messages about healthy living.
14. The Katimajit want to see an increase in resources and care for elders in the communities.
15. The Katimajit want to see more cooperation between RCMP, Family services and elders when there is a family dispute.
16. The Katimajit want to see more aftercare resources in all communities, such as women's and men's group, and visits from the Community Health and Wellness Committee for those who have suffered trauma.
17. The Katimajit would like to see every community with a wellness centre like Ilisaqsivik.

