



Access to Justice

Family Violence Prevention

ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE IN NUNAVUT

OVERVIEW

PHASE I – RESEARCH PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

In the spring of 2019, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada (Pauktuutit) and the Law Society of Nunavut (LSN) joined forces to undertake a project that would break the silence on family violence in Nunavut. The goal was to better understand the legal barriers and needs of Inuit women dealing with family violence. The project consisted of a research study that would inform a follow-up awareness campaign. With guidance from an advisory committee and with the support of both government and community-based partners, Pauktuutit and the LSN aimed to better understand the effectiveness of the *Family Abuse Intervention Act*.

Over the period of four months, qualitative data was gathered through 38 interviews with individual Inuit women with lived experience along with seven focus groups consisting of Inuit and non-Inuit service providers. The Phase I Report on preliminary findings shares their stories and perspectives on family violence in Nunavut and the legal system as it relates to the *Family Abuse Intervention Act (FAIA)*.

An early emerging theme was the important role of Inuit society. The interviews revealed that women with lived experiences often turned to the family and community first for help or support. This included turning to Elders for more traditional Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit advice and guidance. The stories shared by these women interviewed spoke to how often the support offered by the family, community and the Elders were not aligned.

"It touches upon community well-being. I'm happy about this Act being reviewed because the IQ portion really needs to be factored into the Act."

–Woman with lived experience

Inuit service providers also echoed the importance of the role of Inuit society as it relates to dealing with family violence. In their opinion, the way forward must carefully incorporate Inuit Societal Values; the legal system and the Inuit way must build a common path to come together.



INUIT SOCIETAL VALUES

Inuuqatigiitsiarniq



Respecting others, relationships and caring for people.

Pijitsirniq



Serving and providing for family and/or community.

Pilimmaksarniq/ Pijariuqsarniq



Development of skills through observation, mentoring, practice, and effort.

Piliriqatigiinni/ Ikajuqtigiinni



Working together for a common cause.

Tunnganarniq



Fostering good spirits by being open, welcoming and inclusive.

Aajiiqatigiinni



Decision making through discussion and consensus.

Qanuqtuarniq



Being innovative and resourceful.

Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq



Respect and care for the land, animals and the environment.

Both the women with lived experiences and the service providers expressed their views on the need for more than a law to solve family violence in Nunavut. The problem of family violence is complex and requires a more wholistic approach. Through the interviews and focus groups, Pauktuutit and the LSN heard that there also needs to be other forms of support and programming. For example, this includes safe housing for both the abuser as well as women and their children. The topic of Inuit specific healing services and wellness programs was increased also brought up as a gap that needs to be addressed. Service providers also requested more training to better understand Inuit culture so that they could more effectively address family violence in Nunavut.

It is equally important to note, positive stories were also shared from both women with lived experiences and services providers. While there are gaps in the system, FAIA has offered support to women experiencing family violence. These successes have also been captured and shared in this Report. Learning from their experience to guide next steps that will help bridge the gaps will be invaluable.

Moving forward, Pauktuutit and the LSN will continue to collaborate and develop a mass media awareness campaign to break the silence on family violence in Nunavut. Through these interviews with women with lived experiences and focus groups with service providers, there is a better understanding of the legal barriers and needs of Inuit women dealing with family violence in Nunavut. These findings will inform key messages. This mass media awareness campaign will bring this topic to the forefront, helping to end family violence in Nunavut.

