



Access to Justice Family Violence Prevention

John MacLean – President, Law Society of Nunavut
Public Awareness Campaign Launch in Iqaluit

Good afternoon and (once again) welcome.

The Law Society of Nunavut's Access to Justice mandate is to build connections using a collaborative approach. This mandate is helping us to better respond to the legal needs and interests of all Nunavummiut.

In particular, we wanted to support Nunavummiut in recognizing family violence and understand the legal barriers and needs of Inuit women dealing with family violence in Nunavut. More so, we want to provide Nunavummiut with a better understanding of what they can do to deal with family violence, including gaining a better understanding of available options.

Building on Pauktuutit's work on family violence, and past work through our Access to Justice program and public legal education initiatives, we formed a partnership to address the issue. The Law Society is an organization with a governing mandate to regulate lawyers in the public interest. We believe that providing legal information and support to find the appropriate legal or law-related resources is part of our mandate. Working together, we wanted to open a dialogue among Nunavummiut about what constitutes family violence, how to recognize family violence and what can be done to address family violence.

The research study component helped establish baseline information on unmet legal needs. Building on this information, the awareness campaign was developed in a collaborative approach – to break the silence on family violence in Nunavut.

What we are launching here today will play a crucial role in promoting access to justice for family violence prevention.

We are grateful to advisory committee members, and the many individuals and organizations who have contributed to this project so far.

First and foremost, we extend our most sincere gratitude to the 38 courageous Inuit women from three regions of Nunavut who participated in this study. Without their self-described determination to improve their safety and the safety of women in similar circumstances, the qualitative research component of this project would not have been possible. We remain genuinely humbled and tremendously appreciative that they chose to share their experiences with us.

As well, we are incredibly grateful for the contributions of the service providers and community members who took the time to attend the focus group in each community. We truly appreciate them sharing their knowledge and perspectives about the successes and challenges encountered when responding to gender-based violence against Inuit women.

I am here today to re-affirm that the Law Society of Nunavut is committed to continuing to work with all our partners and stakeholders and we will continue to support their efforts to collaboratively find solutions to end the cycle of family violence in Nunavut.