

Piliriqatigiitta

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and Gender Based Violence in Nunavut Stakeholder Update: *Creating a Healthy Workplace, Together*



This past year has continued to prove to be an interesting journey for all of us. We have all learned to adjust to the constant changes driven by the global pandemic. There is no doubt that we have all felt the impact it has had on both our personal and professional lives. We hope that you, your family and friends are safe and healthy.

Like so many other organizations, the Law Society of Nunavut has also adapted to the ongoing challenges presented over the course of the last fourteen months. Regardless of these challenges, we have been able to successfully make progress with the [Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and Gender-Based Violence in Nunavut](#) project and are delighted to provide you with an update following our initial newsletter, **Piliriqatigiitta**, November 2021.

This newsletter presents an opportunity to stay connected and continue to build a strong network in supporting organizations in their efforts to prevent harassment and gender-based violence in the workplace. By continuing to collaborate, together we can support Nunavummiut in gaining a better understanding of their rights and empower all of us to take steps, and seek support, to address barriers to a healthy workplace.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nalini Vaddapalli".

Nalini Vaddapalli, CEO – Deputy Secretary
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BACKGROUND

Gendered violence is a very prominent issue throughout Nunavut, both at home and at work. Almost two-thirds of police-reported victims in Nunavut were female in 2016, which is the highest percentage among the different jurisdictions in Canada. Further, 95% of victims of sexual offences are female. The issue of sexual harassment and violence in the workplace has garnered the attention of an increasingly higher number of established organizations, including the territorial government.

Since September 2019, the Law Society of Nunavut through the [Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and Gender-Based Violence in Nunavut project](#), has done much to raise awareness, educate and provide free legal advice to Nunavummiut. The following highlights project achievements to date and outlines what's next for 2021.

PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION AND INFORMATION WORKSHOPS

The goals of the Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI) workshops are to share public legal information, distribute plain language tools and provide free basic legal advice to help Nunavummiut create healthy workplaces free of sexual and other forms of harassment.

These workshops are divided into three modules:

MODULE 1: Inuit and Western approaches to creating a healthy workplace

MODULE 2: Laws that address violence and harassment in the workplace

MODULE 3: Workplace violence and harassment policies and procedures



[The Community Training Program Manual is available online](#)

Communities are invited to choose from either one module, up to all three modules, based on their unique needs. The workshops are open to anyone in the community with each module running approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Following the PLEI workshops, Community Legal Clinics are held where participants and community members are able to meet privately with a lawyer to receive free basic legal advice and referrals about workplace harassment and other employment-related issues.

The Law Society of Nunavut also held training on the **applicable legislation** and a **trauma-informed approach** training based on Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principles for its lawyer Members in October. We thank our partners Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (Ottawa) and ilinniapaa Skills Development Centre for their support and contribution to the development of workshop resources.

[Both trainings are available online](#)

[Legal Resources Manual is also available online](#)

FIRST WORKSHOPS - MARCH 2020

While the goal of the workshops is to provide legal information related to harassment in the workplace, workshop participants are encouraged to engage with the lawyer and ask questions. The intended outcome:

- to have participants leave with a better understanding of what defines a workplace,
- what would be considered harassment, violence or discrimination, and
- how they can help contribute to healthy workplaces.

Each workshop is delivered based on the needs of the audience and discovered to be most beneficial when delivered at the place of work of the participants. Using this approach helped make the conversation more relevant to the work place / type of work of the workshop participants.

Community Legal Clinics were held in each of the communities visited in collaboration with the Nunavut Legal Services Board. Using local radio, community members as well as workshop participants were invited to meet with the Legal Aid lawyer as part of the Clinic. Considering access to lawyers and legal information can be challenging in many communities, it was no surprise that the lawyers were well received with the Clinics turning out to be a big success.

The first workshop occurred in Clyde River on March 24th. Hosted at Ilisaqsivik, the workshop was facilitated by legal aid lawyer, Keith Cruz. Twelve participants attended — the majority being community counsellors working at Ilisaqsivik as well as Elders from the community. Participants were invited to share their stories. The format of this workshop focused on discussions between participants.

For Keith Cruz, his *ah ha moment* was when he was able to expand the participants' understanding of the workplace to also include areas outside of the physical space, such as social media; if someone sends harassing texts or emails, that is also workplace harassment.

The second community visit was to Pangnirtung the week of March 27th to April 2nd. While in Pangnirtung, there were three workshops with the first one held at the Government of Nunavut (GN) Regional Office. Fourteen GN employees attended the workshop and discussions focused on workplace harassment in an office setting. The second workshop was held at Attagoyuk Ilisavik secondary school where seven educators attended. Here, much of the discussion was related to parents harassing teachers. A third workshop was held at the Hamlet where six community members attended and questions being broad in nature given the general audience.



On April 5th, the team visited the third community of Qikiqtarjuaq. Legal aid lawyer Victoria Perrie facilitated a public workshop at the Hamlet with five community members in attendance.

Additional workshops scheduled for Rankin Inlet and Baker Lake had to be deferred based on the recent COVID-19 restrictions. Future dates will be announced in the fall in response to the Orders from the Chief Public Health Officer.

If you wish to welcome our travelling team in your community and/or organization, please let us know so we can confirm dates and begin planning.



AVAILABLE PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

Three of the PLEI resources that are currently available electronically are the [Poster](#), an [Information Sheet for Service Providers](#), as well as a [Wellness Booklet](#).

The Wellness Booklet provides information on what to do if individuals are experiencing workplace harassment and support resources; the poster clearly identifies what harassment is with a “call to action”.

The Information Sheet for Service Providers provides information on where to refer clients experiencing workplace harassment.

Another PLEI resource currently being developed is a **series of short informational videos** that will help individuals identify harassment, understand what to do if experiencing workplace harassment, and provide resources. These eight videos will be hosted on the Law Society of Nunavut website, [Access to Legal Knowledge](#) page and shared through the workshops.

The first in the video series, **Violence in the Workplace**, is currently available on the [Law Society of Nunavut-website](#). Another two informational videos will be released before the end of 2021.



We look forward to hearing from you if you have any comments or questions; and to visit your community and organization in the future.

CONTACT US

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Please watch for the next [newsletter](#) in October 2021. New PLEI resources will be posted on the Law Society of Nunavut’s [website](#).