



National Newsletter on Inuit Social and Cultural Issues

Suvaguuq

PAUKTUUTIT INUIT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

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Why abuse remains a secret

Eight out of 10 Inuit girls are sexually abused, show studies and anecdotal evidence of child sexual abuse in the Western and Eastern Arctic. Half of all boys are victims, too.

Sadly, these numbers don't reveal the entire story. Pauktuutit's 1991 report, *No More Secrets – Acknowledging the problem of child sexual abuse in Inuit communities: The first step toward healing* found that very few victims report that they have been sexually abused.

There are different reasons for this. Some people are ashamed, or in a state of disbelief. It's hard to disclose such a personal trauma in a small community because everyone finds out about it. There is embarrassment, shame, guilt and repercussions from family members, friends and the community. The victim may fear becoming an outcast.

Since sexual abuse cases are usually settled in court, abuse may also go unreported because some families don't want the abuser to go to jail, losing a father and/or the breadwinner of the family, and suffering the stigma attached to court cases. Sometimes a mother will deny that child sexual abuse is happening in her family because in order to survive, she needs to remain married.

Abuse can carry on from one generation to the next. If adults haven't come to terms with their own experiences of abuse, they may have great trouble dealing with their child's problem.

People who are aware of instances of child sexual abuse may feel it's not their responsibility to report it. They don't want to get involved with social or child welfare services, the police or the courts.

But under the Criminal Code of Canada, **everyone** is legally obligated to report information or suspicions that a child has been sexually abused to a social worker with the local Department of Social Services. If you don't pass along this information, you're breaking the law.



Illustrations by MISHIBINJIMA

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Healing the Inuit way

A comparative analysis of 65 northern Canadian child sexual abuse treatment programs and services recommends bringing more Inuit elements and Inuktitut into the healing process to aid Inuit survivors of child sexual abuse. The analysis, entitled *There is a need so we help: Services for Inuit Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse*, aims to help improve regional policy development. It will be released this fall or winter. Like Pauktuutit's new list of services for child sexual abuse survivors, it was funded by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

Overall, child sexual abuse treatment services could be improved through:

- more Inuit content in programs
- more training specific to Inuit child sexual abuse
- ongoing support and networking for caregivers
- workshops for caregivers on child sexual abuse and cultural change issues
- additional staff and reduced workloads, and
- longer-term, adequate funding.

Right now, programs may focus on Inuit culture in different ways. Elders are often the crucial link, acting as counsellors or socializing with youth, sometimes through sewing and cooking classes. Traditional Inuit activities like Elders delivering cultural teachings, sewing and cooking, doing beadwork, making duffles, or musical instruments, eating Inuit food, hunting and going out on the land to learn survival skills all help survivors as they begin to mend. There may also be sessions with Inuit healers as facilitators.

Speaking in Inuktitut puts many Inuit at ease and permits better communication when there is counselling on Inuit ways, values and principles. Such values include talking openly with family members, respecting the individual, and offering a good support system. Caregivers urge that both the victim and offender be brought together at an appropriate point as part of the healing process. Parents should also be involved in things like healing circles.

The legacy of residential schools

Since the first charge of abuse suffered at a native residential school surfaced in 1990, nearly 12,000 claims have been filed by former students against the Canadian government and the four churches that operated the schools – the Roman Catholic, Anglican, United and Presbyterian churches. Sixty per cent of the claims allege sexual abuse, and more claims are expected to be filed.

Inuit and other aboriginal children aged five to 16 were isolated from their families and communities, and banned from speaking their own language at the schools. The 130 Indian residential schools, as they were called, were mainly in western and northern Canada. Inuit were sent to schools like Sir Alexander MacKenzie School in Inuvik, the Joseph Bernier Federal Day School in Chesterfield Inlet, Churchill Vocational Centre in Churchill, the Port Harrison/Federal Hostel in Inukjuak, and the Northwest River School/Dorms in Northwest River.

In the 1990s, former students began to reveal experiences of physical and sexual

abuse in residential schools. Sometimes, those who were abused as children went on to abuse others. In 1998, the federal government apologized, and provided \$350 million to be channelled to community-based healing projects through a new organization, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

There have been more than 700 settlements with former students to date, but the federal government has announced efforts to move claims away from the legal process, instead using alternative dispute resolutions, health supports and commemorative initiatives in the journey toward healing and reconciliation.



Above: Mealtime at the Anglican hostel in Inuvik, 1970

Photo courtesy of Wilkinson/NWT Archives

Below: School girls in Aklavik, 1944



Archibald Fleming/NWT Archives

Finding help: the first step to healing

At the root of many social problems tearing Inuit communities apart today is a terrible criminal activity that afflicts generation after generation – the sexual abuse of children.

Residential schools that were operated by the federal government and churches are often responsible for the high rate of child sexual abuse among Inuit. A number of Inuit students who attended from the 1940s to the late 1960s were sexually abused, and the cycle of abuse continues today, resulting in alcoholism, suicide and more.

Unfortunately, mental health services in many regions of Canada's North are strained. But help is at hand for survivors if they know where to look, and that's the purpose of Pauktuutit's new listing of 65 services in the Western Arctic, Nunavut, Nunavik and Labrador, due out this fall or winter.

"We've been looking into this for a long while," says Pauktuutit president Veronica Dewar. "When I travel to the regions and talk with some of the front-line workers about the victims and family violence and child sexual abuse, there's a lot of crying out there."

Often, caregivers and others in the community have no place to turn for additional material or professional

support. "I think it's time we produce something like this (these listings) with specific places to call, or names or contacts," says Dewar. "I think that the overall picture should be available to them."

Each listing has contact information, the service's hours of operation, the title of the contact person, whether referrals are required, the languages that services are offered in, to whom the services are geared, and a detailed description of the services provided.

Information from mental health organizations was collected via phone interviews. Meanwhile, detailed in-person interviews were conducted with caregivers from selected communities: Kuujjuaq (Nunavik), Clyde River (Nunavut) and Inuvik (Northwest Territories). Time, resources and bad weather scuttled interviews in Labrador.

The project, funded by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, was guided by a team of Inuit survivors of residential school abuse and Inuit child sexual abuse experts. In addition to providing information to Inuit in need, the listing helps service providers to network with others doing similar work, and unveils ideas to communities wishing to develop services for survivors of child sexual abuse.



The devastating effects

The sexual abuse of children is the culprit behind many other problems evident in Inuit communities:

- **depression**
- **emotional problems**
- **family violence**
- **alcohol and drug abuse**
- **physical, sexual and emotional abuse**
- **suicide**

Often when Inuit seek counselling for these problems, the truth of past child sexual abuse reveals itself. To learn more about child sexual abuse and services available to Inuit survivors, call Pauktuutit at 1-800-667-0749 for its publications. Or contact your local mental health/counselling services, or the services listed in this newsletter.



Pauktuutit would like to express its profound gratitude to the regional members of its steering committee for this project, some of whom preferred to remain anonymous. Their caring attitudes and guidance throughout were invaluable. Qujannamiimarialuk to Deborah Tagornak for conducting the research.

Some places to find help

Please note that the list below is only a SAMPLE of services. Pauktuutit's research project on services for survivors of child sexual abuse could only cover a limited number of communities. If your community is not listed, it does NOT mean that there aren't services available in your community. Please contact your health and social services centre for more information.

Labrador

Labrador Inuit Health Commission, North West River.

- Phone: (709) 497-8356 /8371 /8353 or (709) 896-9422
- Labrador Mental Health Services.
Phone: (709) 497-8356 /8371 /8353 or (709) 896-9422
 - Nain Mental Health Team.
Phone: (709) 922-2114 /2232
 - Hopedale Mental Health Therapist.
Phone: (709) 933-3834
 - Rigolet Mental Health Therapist.
Phone: (709) 947-3309 /3328
 - Saputjivik Treatment Centre / Ikajuttauivik.
Phone: (709) 497-8509 /8514
 - CSA Public Awareness Sessions.
Phone: (709) 497-8356

Nain Child, Youth and Family Services.

- Phone number for all services: (709) 922-2860
- Child Protection
 - Youth Corrections
 - Family and Rehabilitative Services

Northwest Territories

Hamlet of Holman.

- Phone: (867) 396-3511
- Wellness Centre. Phone: (867) 396-4417
 - Holman Help Line. Phone: (867) 396-3911

Inuvik: Caregivers

- Martin Carroll. Phone: (867) 777-2726
- Nellie J. Cournoyea. Phone: (867) 777-2737
- Ann Kasook. Phone: (867) 777-3877
- Paula Lannon. Phone: (867) 777-3723
- Patricia Pedersen. Phone: (867) 777-4148

Inuvik Family Counselling Centre.

- Phone number for all services: (867) 777-4148
- Canadian Mental Health Association, Inuvik Branch
 - Counselling Services
 - Residential School Counselling
 - Early Childhood Intervention Program

Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board.

- Phone: (867) 777-8000
- Hospital and Social Services. Phone: (867) 777-8112

Rosie Ovayyak Health Centre, Tuktoyaktuk.

- Phone: (867) 977-2321
- House of Hope. Phone: (867) 977-2176
 - Mental Health and Social Work Counselling.
Phone: (867) 977-2434 /2511

Nunavik

Aupaluk Nursing Station (CLSC).

- Phone number for all services: (819) 491-7023
- Crisis Intervention and General Counselling

Kuujuuaq: Caregivers

- Eddie Amagonalok. Phone: (819) 964-2592 or 1-866-964-9994 (toll-free)
- Lolley Annahatak. Phone: (819) 964-2905 ext. 268
- Lizzie T. Saunders. Phone: (819) 964-2727
- Eva Stevenson. Phone: (819) 964-2905 ext. 334
- Kitty Johannes. Phone: (819) 964-2762

Tasiujaq Social Services.

- Phone number for all services: (819) 633-5022
- Youth Protection Services
 - General Counselling
 - Outreach Work

Nunavut

Arctic Bay Health Centre.

- Phone number for all services: (867) 439-8816
- Health and Counselling Services

Baffin Regional Agvvik Society, Iqaluit.

- Phone number for all services: (867) 979-4566
- Iqaluit Victim Services
 - Qimaavik Transition House

Baffin Regional Health and Family Services, Iqaluit.

- Phone: (867) 979-7680 /2393
- Wellness Program. Phone: (867) 979-2533
 - Mental Health Outreach Program.
Phone: (867) 979-3067
 - Pulaarvik Mental Health Program.
Phone: (867) 979-2388

Cambridge Bay Community Wellness Centre.

- Phone: (867) 983-2133
- Alcohol and Drug Program. Phone: (867) 983-2133
 - Healing Program. Phone: (867) 983-2133
 - Family Violence Prevention Program.
Phone: (867) 924-6565
 - Brighter Futures. Phone: (867) 983-2133

Cape Dorset Community Healing Team / Nunalingni Mamisarniqmu Katutjiqatgii.

- Phone number for all services: (867) 897-8325

- Healing Circle
- Tagalikiitaaq Group
- Men's Group

Clyde River: Caregivers

- Jacobie Iqalukjuak. Phone: (867) 924-6381 /6147
- Rebecca Iqalukjuak. Phone: (867) 924-6381 /6117
- Sarah Killiktee. Phone: (867) 924-6095
- Jacobie Panipak. Phone: (867) 924-6026
- Rebecca Panipak. Phone: (867) 924-6026
- Leah Panniluk. Phone: (867) 924-6103

Clyde River Community Health Services.

- Phone: (867) 924-6012 /6014
- General Counselling Service. Phone: (867) 924-6012
 - National Addiction Awareness Week.
Phone: (867) 924-6012
 - Mental Health Counselling. Phone: (867) 979-7680

Igloolik Social Services.

- Phone: (867) 934-8825
- Child and Family Services.
Phone: (867) 934-8230 /8825
 - Community Corrections Services.
Phone: (867) 934-8825
 - Traditional Elders Counselling.
Phone: (867) 934-8825

Iliasaqivik Family Resource Centre, Clyde River.

- Phone: (867) 924-6565 /6095
- Individual Counselling. Phone: (867) 924-6565
 - Elders Traditional Counsellors.
Phone: (867) 924-6565
 - Support Network for Service Providers.
Phone: (867) 924-6565
 - Counselling Training Sessions. Phone: (867) 924-6565
 - Men's Group. Phone: (867) 924-6565 /6400

Kataujaq Society, Rankin Inlet.

- Phone: (867) 645-2214. Radio phone: 645-3343
- Safe Shelter. Phone: (867) 645-2214
 - Kataujaq Society Daycare. Phone: (867) 645-2685
 - Kataujaq Afterschool Program. Phone: (867) 645-2685
 - Kataujaq Counselling Service. Phone: (867) 645-2214
 - Workshop: Tools for Life. Phone: (867) 645-2214
 - Workshop: Gambling Addictions.
Phone: (867) 645-2214

Mianiqsijit, Baker Lake.

- Phone number for all services: (867) 793-2352
- Individual Counselling
 - Group Counselling. Additional phone number: (867) 793-2803
 - Educational Outreach

Nunavut Health and Social Services, Baffin Region.

- Phone: (867) 473-2659
- Physical Health Services. Phone: (867) 979-7682
 - Mental Health Services. Phone: (867) 473-2622
 - Addiction Services. Phone: (867) 473-2622
 - Social Services. Phone: (867) 473-2622

Nunavut Health and Social Services, Kivalliq Region.

- Phone: (867) 645-2171 or 1-800-282-1949
- Primary and Acute Care. Phone: (867) 645-2171 or 1-800-282-1949
 - Public Health Initiatives. Phone: (867) 645-2171 or 1-800-282-1949
 - Child Protection Service. Phone: (867) 645-2171 or 1-800-282-1949
 - Family Services and Mental Health Services.
Phone: (867) 645-2171 or 1-800-282-1949
 - Community Corrections. Phone: (867) 645-2171 or 1-800-282-1949
 - Referral Service. Phone: (867) 645-2171

New NWT Coalition

Before the division of the Northwest Territories in 1999, Pauktuutit and the NWT Status of Women Council formed a coalition on child sexual abuse, holding a major workshop and planning meeting in June 1997. Unfortunately, a presentation prepared for the NWT Legislature's Standing Committee on Social Programs never saw the light of day - the demands of creating a new political entity took precedence.

Now there is a new coalition focusing just on the Western Arctic. Participants at a January 2003 workshop on child sexual abuse decided to pick up where the last coalition left off. For more information, phone the NWT Status of Women Council toll-free at 1-888-234-4485.



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PAUKTUUTIT
Inuit Women's Association

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