



Mental Health and wellness is defined as “self-esteem and personal dignity flowing from the presence of harmonious physical, emotional, mental, spiritual wellness and cultural identity.”

- Inuit-specific Mental Wellness Framework, 2021



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Manitoba Inuit Association's Mental Health Program

The Manitoba Inuit Association's Mental Health Program embraces Inuit cultural values and traditions while fostering collaboration between clients and the mental health worker. Rooted in a strength-based and holistic approach, the program provides a safe, supportive, and nonjudgmental environment where individuals and the community can work through challenges, embark on their healing journey, and achieve their goals.

Grounded in Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ), the program integrates traditional knowledge, sewing and beading practices, storytelling, and land-based practices alongside modern mental health support. Through active engagement, mutual trust, and cultural connection, the Mental Health Program empowers individuals to navigate their healing journey, strengthening resilience, well-being, and a deep sense of identity within their culture and community.



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1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report provides an overview of the Manitoba Inuit Association's (MIA) Mental Health Program, highlighting its growth, impact, and future direction. As the demand for culturally responsive mental health services continues to increase, this report outlines key developments in the program, including the number of clients served, policies and procedures, participation in committees, and the integration of Inuit cultural practices in healing.

The Mental Health Program at MIA is designed to provide accessible, trauma-informed, and culturally grounded support to Inuit in Manitoba. By fostering community connections, offering holistic counselling approaches, and strengthening partnerships, the program aims to address mental health challenges in a way that is reflective of Inuit values and lived experiences.

This report will:

- **Evaluate Program Growth** – Assess the number of clients served, frequency of meetings, and overall engagement trends.
- **Review Policies and Procedures** – Outline program policies, remote work approaches, ethical guidelines, and confidentiality protocols.
- **Highlight Cultural Integration** – Explore the role of traditional practices such as sewing, beading, Elder involvement, and lighting the qulliq in healing.
- **Examine Committee and Project Involvement** – Detail the mental health worker's participation in various committees and collaborative initiatives.
- **Assess Program Challenges and Opportunities** – Identify areas for improvement and opportunities for expansion to better serve the community.



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1.2 Overview and Outline of the Mental Health Program

The Manitoba Inuit Association's (MIA) Mental Health Program is dedicated to providing culturally safe, trauma-informed, and holistic support for Inuit living in Manitoba. Rooted in Inuit values and traditions, the program fosters a welcoming, nonjudgmental environment where individuals and families can navigate their healing journey with guidance from the mental health professional and community supports.

This program was developed in response to the growing need for mental health services that acknowledge the unique experiences of Inuit, including the impacts of colonization, intergenerational trauma, and the challenges of urban living. The program integrates Western mental health practices with Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ), ensuring that healing is approached in a way that respects Inuit identity, knowledge, and ways of being.

Key Components of the Program:

- **Client-Centered Support** – The program provides individualized mental health support, meeting clients where they are in their healing journey. Services include one-on-one counselling, group sessions, elder access, group programming, and referrals to additional supports as needed.
- **Cultural Connection** – Recognizing the vital role of culture in mental wellness, the program incorporates traditional Inuit practices such as sewing, beading, storytelling, and Elders' teachings. The lighting of the qulliq before counselling sessions serves as a symbol of strength, resilience, and healing.
- **Community Engagement & Advocacy** – The mental health worker participates in various committees, collaborates with partner organizations, and advocates for culturally relevant mental health policies.
- **Remote and In-Person Support** – With many Inuit facing barriers to accessing services, the program provides both in-person, virtual counselling and travel to rural areas for counselling services, ensuring flexibility, accessibility and connection.
- **Growth & Impact** – The program continues to expand, serving an increasing number of clients and strengthening its policies and procedures to enhance service delivery.

Through this program, MIA remains committed to empowering Inuit to heal, reconnect with their culture, and build resilience within themselves and their community.



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Creating an outline for the mental health program involves considering the unique cultural, social, and environmental factors that impact Inuit communities. Here is a comprehensive outline:

Outline

1. Introduction

- *Background*
 - Overview of Inuit communities and mental health challenges.
- *Objectives*
 - Promote mental health and well-being.
 - Provide culturally relevant support.
 - Address specific mental health issues prevalent in Inuit populations.

2. Assessment and Planning

- *Community Needs Assessment*
 - Conduct surveys and focus groups.
 - Identify key mental health issues.
- *Resource Mapping*
 - Identify existing mental health services and gaps.
- *Stakeholder Engagement*
 - Collaborate with community leaders, elders, and local organizations.

3. Training and Capacity Building

- *Cultural Competency Training*
 - For mental health workers from outside the community.
- *Skill Development Workshops*
 - For local health workers and community members.



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4. Service Delivery

- *Individual Counselling*
 - Provide one-on-one sessions.
- *Group Therapy*
 - Facilitate support groups.
 - Women's Group
 - Men's Group
- *Crisis Intervention*
 - Offer immediate support for urgent cases.
- *Outreach Programs*
 - Engage with remote areas.
 - Churchill

5. Prevention and Education

- *Mental Health Awareness Campaigns*
 - Educate on mental health topics.
- *Workshops and Seminars*
 - Focus on stress management, substance abuse prevention, coping mechanisms etc.
- *School Programs*
 - Engage youth in mental health education.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Tracking Progress
 - Regularly assess the effectiveness of interventions.
- Monthly Stats Collecting
 - Daily stats tracker
 - Monthly stats tracker
- Feedback Mechanisms
 - Collect feedback from clients and stakeholders.
- Adjustments and Improvements
 - Modify approaches based on evaluation results.

This outline aims to create a sustainable and effective mental health support system tailored to the needs of Inuit communities, ensuring cultural relevance and community involvement at every stage.



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1.3 Program Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Provide Culturally Safe and Trauma-Informed Mental Health Support

- Objective 1.1: Offer individualized, culturally appropriate counseling services that are sensitive to the unique mental health challenges faced by Inuit individuals and families.
- Objective 1.2: Ensure that all mental health workers are trained in trauma-informed care, cultural safety, and Inuit-specific healing practices.
- Objective 1.3: Maintain a nonjudgmental and safe space where clients can feel empowered to share their experiences and access healing without fear of stigma or discrimination.

Goal 2: Integrate Decolonizing Trauma Work into Mental Health Practices

- Objective 2.1: Use a holistic approach that recognizes the intergenerational impacts of colonization and trauma, addressing mental health through a lens that combines both traditional Inuit knowledge and modern therapeutic techniques.
- Objective 2.2: Incorporate cultural practices such as storytelling, land-based healing, beading, and working with Elders to facilitate healing and promote resilience.
- Objective 2.3: Provide clients with opportunities to reconnect with their culture and traditions, using these practices as integral components of the healing process.

Goal 3: Empower Inuit Clients to Heal and Reclaim Their Well-Being

- Objective 3.1: Support clients in developing personal goals for mental and emotional healing, focusing on fostering self-esteem, resilience, and a strong sense of identity within their culture.
- Objective 3.2: Create programs that promote community engagement and collective healing, ensuring that the program serves not only individual clients but also the broader Inuit community.
- Objective 3.3: Foster an environment where clients feel supported in taking ownership of their healing journey, ensuring that they have access to resources and tools to manage their mental health.



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Goal 4: Heal Through Community and Cultural Reconnection

- Objective 4.1: Recognize that healing does not only occur in the confines of a counseling room but also through the strength of community, cultural practices, and reconnection to self.
- Objective 4.2: Facilitate opportunities for clients to engage in community-based activities, such as storytelling circles, art workshops, and traditional practices like sewing, beading, and Elders' teachings.
- Objective 4.3: Strengthen community bonds through group programs and collective healing, understanding that shared experiences and support foster resilience and personal growth.
- Objective 4.4: Ensure that healing practices emphasize a holistic approach that connects individuals to their culture, community, and the broader collective well-being, as part of a deep, transformative healing journey.

Goal 5: Build Stronger Connections between the Mental Health Program and the Inuit Community

- Objective 5.1: Engage community members, including Elders, leaders, and other key stakeholders, in the development and continuous improvement of the program.
- Objective 5.2: Work collaboratively with other organizations and services to ensure that Inuit clients have access to a comprehensive network of support that addresses their diverse needs.
- Objective 5.3: Advocate for policies and practices that reflect the values of Inuit culture and prioritize the well-being of Inuit individuals and families.

Goal 6: Continuous Adaptation and Growth of the Mental Health Program

- Objective 6.1: Regularly assess the needs of the Inuit community to ensure that the program remains relevant and responsive to changing mental health challenges and priorities.
- Objective 6.2: Adjust goals and objectives as necessary based on feedback from clients, community members, and program staff, ensuring the program evolves to meet emerging needs and opportunities for healing.
- Objective 6.3: Ensure that the program remains flexible and adaptable in its approach, responding to both internal and external changes to best support the ongoing mental health and well-being of Inuit individuals and families.



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Conclusion Introduction

These goals and objectives guide the Manitoba Inuit Association’s Mental Health Program in providing holistic, culturally safe support while fostering empowerment, healing, and resilience within the Inuit community—recognizing that true healing is rooted in community, culture, and self. The program will continue to adapt in response to emerging challenges, community feedback, and ongoing evaluation to ensure that it remains effective in supporting Inuit individuals and families in their healing journey.



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Policies and Procedures

These policies and procedures establish a structured framework for developing and implementing a comprehensive Inuit Mental Health Program. This program is designed to meet the unique needs of Inuit individuals, families, and communities by integrating culturally responsive, community-driven, and trauma-informed approaches to mental health and well-being.

Recognizing the distinct experiences, strengths, and challenges faced by the Inuit community—including the impacts of historical and intergenerational trauma, colonial policies, and systemic barriers to care—this program prioritizes holistic healing, cultural identity, and community resilience.

Through a foundation of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) (Inuit traditional knowledge), the program fosters mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being by blending Indigenous healing practices with evidence-based mental health care.



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Inuit Mental Health Program Policies and Procedures Rooted in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Principles

1. **ᐃᓄᐃᑦᐅᓄᐅᑦᐅᑦᐅᑦᐅᑦᐅᑦ** - ***Inuuqatigiütsiarniq - Respecting others, relationships and caring for people.*** The concept of respect and treating others equally are characteristics the elders have always stressed in their words of advice (uqaujjuusiat).
2. **ᐅᓄᑦᐅᐅᑦᐅᑦᐅᑦ** - ***Tunnganarniq - Fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and inclusive.*** The concept of making the workplace people-friendly by being welcoming and accepting to our community, elders, colleagues and others. Removing language and cultural barriers is important in welcoming people.
3. **ᐱᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ** - ***Pijitsirniq - Concept of serving.*** The concept of serving is central to the Inuit style of leadership as is the measure of the maturity and wisdom of an Inuk. Key here is the understanding that each person has a contribution to make and is a valued contributor to his/her community. Staff will be expected to demonstrate this kind of leadership and commitment to serving the common good.
4. **ᐱᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ** - ***Aajiiqatigiinni - Consensus Decision Making.*** Decision making through discussion and consensus - the concept of consensus decision-making relies on strong communication skills and a strong belief in shared goals. All staff are expected to become contributing members of their community and to participate actively in building the strength of Inuit in Manitoba. Being able to think and act collaboratively, to assist with the development of shared understandings, to resolve conflict in consensus-building ways, and to consult respecting various perspectives and worldviews, are expectations that cross all working areas.
5. **ᐱᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ** - ***Pilimmaksarniq/Pijariuqsarniq - Concept of Skills and Knowledge Acquisition.*** Development of skills through observation, mentoring, practice, and effort - the concept of skills and knowledge acquisition and capacity building is central to the success of Inuit in a harsh environment. Building personal capacity in Inuit ways of knowing and doing are key expectations for staff. Demonstrating empowerment to lead a successful and productive life, that is respectful of all, is a powerful end goal of our working environment.
6. **ᐃᓄᐃᑦᐅᓄᐅᑦᐅᑦᐅᑦᐅᑦ** - ***Ikajuqtiigiinni/Piliriqatigiinni - Concept of Collaborative Relationship or Working Together for a Common purpose.*** The essential Inuit belief that stresses the importance of the group over the individual should pervade all our work. Expectations for staff will reflect working for the common good, collaboration, shared leadership and volunteerism. Piliriqatigiinni also sets expectations for supportive behaviour development, strong relationship-building and consensus-building.
7. **ᐅᓄᑦᐅᐅᑦᐅᑦᐅᑦᐅᑦ** - ***Qanuqtuurniq - Concept of Being Resourceful to Solve problems.*** Being innovative and resourceful - the concept of being resourceful to solve problems, through innovative and creative use of resources and demonstrating adaptability and flexibility in response to a rapidly changing world, are strengths all our staff should develop. Resourcefulness should be demonstrated in all work areas and also thinking that seeks to improve the context in which Inuit live.
8. **ᐱᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ** - ***Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq - Concept of Environmental Stewardship.*** Respect and care for the land, animals and the environment - the concept of environmental stewardship stresses the key relationship Inuit have with their environment and with the world in which they live. Staff will be expected to articulate respect for this mutually interdependent relationship and to demonstrate responsible behaviours that seek to improve and protect the relationship in ways that meet global challenges to environmental wellness.



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2.1. Inuit-Specific Guidelines

- Services must be grounded in Inuit culture, language, and values.
- Programs must respect regional differences, dialects, and community needs.
- Traditional healing practices must be considered equal to Western medical approaches.

2.2. Client Intake and Assessment Process

- Intake must be non-clinical, relationship-focused, and culturally appropriate.
 - Upon entering the counselling space, clients have the option to light the qulliq alongside the mental health worker or participate in smudging. This practice fosters a sense of comfort, cultural connection, and emotional grounding, creating a safe and welcoming environment for healing.
- Assessments consider spiritual, emotional, social, and historical factors rather than just symptoms.
- Clients have the option to involve Elders, family members, or community supports in their assessment.

2.3. Confidentiality and Privacy Policies

- Establishing strict protocols to maintain client confidentiality and trust, while also respecting cultural norms around sharing personal information.
- Clients' privacy must be protected under legal and ethical guidelines.
- Consent-based and community-sensitive information-sharing practices must be followed.
- The mental health program has developed a tailored confidentiality agreement, which is provided below.



MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM CONSENT FORM
MANITOBA INUIT ASSOCIATION / IKAYUQIT INC.

Manitoba Inuit's Mental Health Program is a collaborative process between the community mental health worker and client. The community mental health worker provides a supportive and non-judgmental environment to help clients and community to work through their challenges and achieve their goals. This informed consent document will provide important information about the mental health program, the benefits and risks, and your rights as a client.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

DOB _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ RELATIONSHIP _____

PHONE _____

MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM SERVICES

I understand that I will be receiving services from the Community Mental Health Worker Kelsey Jacques. Mental health services may include counselling, group programs, reconnection / connection to culture and community, and collaboration. The purpose of the Mental Health Program is to address mental, emotional, and behavioural concerns, and to help develop strategies, manage concerns and improve your overall well-being.


CONFIDENTIALITY

I understand that all information shared during sessions will be kept confidential, except in the following situations:

- If it is determined that I am an immediate danger to myself or others, the community mental health worker may have a duty to warn or protect those who may be at risk.
- If it is suspected that child abuse, elder abuse, or dependent adult abuse is occurring, the community mental health worker is required by law to report this to the appropriate authorities.
- If I sign a release of information form, the community mental health worker may share information with other healthcare providers, family members, or other individuals at my request.

I understand that the community mental health worker may consult with other professionals or supervisors to provide the best possible care to me.

I acknowledge that any further utilization or sharing of personal information provided will not occur without my explicit consent, as outlined by the Privacy Act, Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), Personal Health Information Act (PHIA), and The Freedom of Information and Protection Act (FIPPA).



CONSENT FOR THE USE AND DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

I authorize the sharing of my personal information among the listed organizations/agencies on a need-to-know basis. The sharing of information is intended to enable service providers from each agency to collaborate on developing a comprehensive service plan tailored to address my unique needs in the most quick and efficient manner.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS/AGENCIES

Manitoba Inuit Association/Ikayugit Inc.
Detox/Rehab Centres
Manitoba Justice
Legal Aid
Healthcare Professionals
Other: _____

LIMITS OF THE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM


I understand that working with the mental health worker is not a substitute for medical or psychiatric treatment, and my mental health worker is not a medical doctor or psychiatrist. I understand that the counselling provided is not a guarantee of specific results or outcomes and that I am responsible for my own progress and success when working with the mental health worker.

RISK AND BENEFITS

I understand that working with the mental health worker may involve discussing unpleasant topics, and that I may experience uncomfortable emotions during the counselling provided. However I understand that working through these conversations may help me improve my coping skills, develop stronger relationships, and achieve my goals.

EXPIRY OF CONSENT

I understand that I may revoke this consent at any time. I further understand that this consent will expire one (1) year from the date signed or will expire once file is closed. I know that I can withdraw my consent or make changes to it at any time by contacting Manitoba Inuit Association/Ikayugit Inc. Mental Health Worker.



COPY OF FORM

I understand a copy of this form will be provided to me.

AUTHORIZING SIGNATURES

I have read the consent form and I understand it and it has been explained to me enough in order to provide my signature.

PRINT AND SIGN NAME _____ DATE _____

VERBAL CONSENT OBTAINED INSTEAD OF WRITTEN CONSENT _____

MENTAL HEALTH WORKER PRINT AND SIGN NAME _____ DATE _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

If there are any questions or concerns about the collection, use, sharing or disclosure of personal information, please contact the Manitoba Inuit Association/Ikayugit Inc. Community Mental Health Worker.

Community Mental Health Worker: Kelsey Jacques
 Email: kelsey.jacques@manitobainuit.ca
 Office Phone: 204-774-6848
 Cell Phone: 431-335-9816



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2.4. Ethical Guidelines and Informed Consent

- Services must follow ethical principles of respect, autonomy, and cultural humility.
- Clients must provide informed consent, with clear communication in Inuktitut and English.
- Confidentiality policies must be adapted to both Western privacy laws and Inuit cultural values.

2.5. Framework and Approaches

- The Inuit Mental Health Program is built upon decolonizing trauma work, holistic healing, and culturally safe service delivery. Key principles include:
 - Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ): Inuit knowledge and values guide the structure of mental health services.
- Decolonizing Trauma Work
 - Addressing historical and intergenerational trauma by reclaiming Inuit healing traditions and challenging colonial mental health models.
- Healing Through Counselling and Traditional Practices:
 - Clients have access to both Western psychological therapy and Inuit-specific healing approaches.
 - Elder mentorship, talking circles, storytelling, and land-based therapy are central to healing.
- Spiritual and cultural identity are integrated into wellness planning.
- Strength-Based and Community-Driven Care
 - Programs focus on empowering individuals rather than pathologizing symptoms.
- Interconnected Well-Being
 - Mental health is linked to spiritual, physical, and environmental wellness, emphasizing land-based and family-oriented healing.

2.6. Client Assessment and Goal Setting

- Treatment plans should be client-centered and strengths-based.
- Goals must align with Inuit cultural values and long-term wellness.

2.7. Documentation Procedures

- Secure and confidential record-keeping must comply with privacy laws and cultural considerations.
 - Mental health workers' notes are securely stored in locked filing cabinets to ensure confidentiality and privacy.
- Reports should reflect client strengths, progress, and healing approaches.



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2.8. Professional Boundaries

- Mental health workers must maintain clear, ethical boundaries while fostering trust.
- Staff should receive training on community relationships and dual roles.
- Self-care and debriefing should be included in workplace policies.

2.9. Cultural Competence

- Mental health services will be culturally appropriate, respecting traditional knowledge, language, and healing practices of Inuit Communities.
- All staff receive mandatory training in Inuit history, traditions, and healing practices.
- Mental health workers must respect Inuit worldviews and cultural identity.
- Services must be available in Inuktitut, English, and French.

2.10. Holistic and Trauma-Informed Care

- Mental health services must recognize the interconnectedness of emotional, physical, spiritual, and community well-being.
- Programs must address the impacts of colonial trauma and focus on healing through reconnection to culture.
- Healing approaches must blend Indigenous and Western methods based on client needs.
 - This is achieved through culturally rooted programming such as sewing, beading, hot lunches, and community connection initiatives.

2.11. Accessibility and Equitable Services

- Must be available in Inuit communities, reducing barriers such as travel, cost, and stigma.
 - This is achieved by travelling to rural communities in Manitoba such as Churchill.
- Virtual care and land-based programs should increase accessibility.
- Programs must be inclusive, non-discriminatory, and adapted to individuals with disabilities.

2.12. Crisis Intervention, Safety Planning and Emergency Protocol

- Immediate response staff must be available for suicide prevention, crisis stabilization, and emergency support.
- Safety plans should integrate traditional supports, family involvement, and land-based healing.
- Mental Health Worker must be trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and other culturally relevant crisis-response models.



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2.13. Risk Assessment Protocol

- Every client undergoes a culturally adapted risk assessment to evaluate safety concerns.
- Harm reduction and de-escalation strategies are prioritized over hospitalization.
- Risk assessments should include family, community, and Elder perspectives.

2.14. Treatment and Healing Pathways

- Clients have access to both Western counselling and Inuit healing approaches, including:
 - Talk therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), and trauma processing
 - Talking circles, Elder-guided healing, and community support networks
 - Land-based therapy, ceremonies, and traditional storytelling
 - Healing must be collaborative, adaptable, and client-centered.
- Further details will be explored in the Counselling Approaches section.

2.15. Community Collaboration

- Community members, Elders, and leaders will actively participate in program development, implementation and evaluation processes.
- Programs will be tailored to meet the unique needs and priorities of each community, with flexibility to adapt to local contexts.
- Collaboration with schools, justice systems, social services, and local organizations strengthens holistic support.

2.16. Preventive Care

- Mental wellness education and early intervention programs should be prioritized.
- School-based programs, parenting workshops, and youth mentorship should be developed.
 - This initiative is not yet in progress but is included in the goals for future implementation by the mental health worker.
- Cultural and land-based activities should be integrated into mental health promotion.

2.17. Referral Process and Community Partnerships

- Clients should be connected to specialized services, traditional healers, and external mental health supports when needed.
- Referrals must be culturally safe, community-driven, and trauma-informed.
- Community partnerships are essential for the Mental Health Worker to build a strong support network, facilitate external referrals, and enhance access to resources for the Inuit community while increasing awareness of MIA's services.
 - Some examples of partnerships made are WRHA, Tamarak Recovery Center, University of Manitoba and March of Dimes



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2.18. Advocacy Process

- Mental health workers should advocate for Inuit self-determination, policy changes, and equitable funding.
 - When necessary, the Mental Health Worker will provide advocacy letters to support clients in accessing essential services, resources, and accommodations.
 - These letters may be used for housing applications, employment support, educational opportunities, medical services, or legal matters, ensuring that clients receive the assistance they need while advocating for their rights and well-being.
- Clients should be empowered to self-advocate through education and mentorship.

2.19. Integrated Care

- Mental health services must be linked with primary healthcare, traditional healing, and social supports.
- Clients should receive wraparound care that includes both clinical and cultural resources.

2.20. Continuity of Care and Aftercare

- Clients must receive ongoing mental health support beyond treatment or crisis intervention.
- Peer support networks, follow-up counselling, and community-based aftercare should be prioritized.
- Housing, employment, and education support should be included in long-term care planning.
 - This involves delivering comprehensive, wraparound services in collaboration with the Mental Health Worker, including outreach support, justice advocacy, and community-based assistance. By working closely with other MIA resources these services ensure a holistic and coordinated approach to mental health and well-being.



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Conclusion Policies and Procedures

This policy framework ensures that the Inuit Mental Health Program remains culturally safe, accessible, and Inuit-led. By centering traditional healing, decolonizing trauma work, and integrating Western and Inuit approaches, the program fosters resilience, empowerment, and holistic well-being for Inuit individuals, families, and communities.



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3. Remote Work Policies and Approaches

- *3.1 Guidelines for Remote Client Support*
 - *3.1.1 In-Person and Electronic Support*
- *3.2 Digital Confidentiality and Security Measures*
- *3.3 Virtual Counselling Best Practices*
- *3.4 Balancing In-Person and Remote Services*
- *3.5 Remote Work Challenges and Solutions*



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Remote Work Approaches and Guidelines

Providing mental health services remotely presents unique challenges and opportunities, particularly when working with Inuit clients in rural and remote areas of Manitoba. The following policies and approaches ensure that the Inuit mental health workers can deliver culturally safe, confidential, and effective care while maintaining professional boundaries and addressing barriers to service access.



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3.1 Guidelines for Remote Client Support

Providing mental health support remotely requires flexibility, cultural sensitivity, and a strong support network. Inuit mental health workers must ensure that clients feel safe, heard, and supported, even when services are provided through phone, video, or text-based communication.

Key Guidelines:

- *Culturally Safe Engagement*
 - Open each session by offering culturally grounding practices such as lighting the Qulliq, smudging, or storytelling to foster comfort and connection.
- *Flexible Communication Methods*
 - Clients should have the option to receive support through phone calls, video sessions, or messaging based on their comfort level and access to technology.
- *Trauma-Informed Approach*
 - Acknowledge the impact of colonial trauma, systemic barriers, and geographical isolation on Inuit mental health.
- *Crisis Response Planning*
 - Every client should have a personalized safety plan, including local emergency contacts and crisis intervention options.
 - Integration of Land-Based Healing
 - Encourage clients to engage in outdoor, land-based activities as part of their healing process.



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3.1.1 In-Person and Electronic Support

The Manitoba Inuit Association Inuit Mental Health Worker, serving the Inuit Community in urban and remote communities, utilize both in-person and electronic methods to provide care. This dual approach ensures accessibility and continuity of support, despite geographic challenges.

• In-Person Support

- *Community Engagement:* Being physically present in communities allows mental health workers to build stronger, trust-based relationships with clients and their families. This is essential in cultures where personal connections and face-to-face interactions are highly valued.
- *Cultural Activities:* In-person interactions enable the incorporation of traditional Inuit practices, such as storytelling, drumming, and land-based activities, directly into the counselling process. These activities help clients reconnect with their heritage and promote holistic healing.
- *Immediate Support:* In-person counselling can provide immediate, hands-on support in crisis situations, which is crucial for addressing urgent mental health needs effectively.

• Electronic Support

- *Telehealth Services:* Using video calls, phone calls, and other digital communication tools, mental health workers can reach clients in remote areas where in-person visits might be infrequent due to logistical challenges. This ensures that clients receive regular support without long delays.
- *Flexibility and Convenience:* Electronic methods offer clients flexibility, allowing them to access counselling services from their homes or other convenient locations. This can be particularly beneficial for those with mobility issues or other constraints.
- *Continuity of Care:* By combining in-person and electronic support, mental health workers can maintain continuity of care. Regular check-ins via electronic means can complement less frequent in-person visits, ensuring ongoing support and monitoring.
- *Resource Sharing:* Digital platforms enable the sharing of educational materials, self-help resources, and other supportive content that clients can access between sessions, enhancing their ability to manage their mental health independently.



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3.2 Digital Confidentiality and Security Measures

Ensuring confidentiality and data security in remote counselling is crucial, particularly when working with vulnerable populations in shared or unsafe living environments.

Best Practices for Digital Confidentiality:

- *Secure Communication Platforms*
 - Whenever possible, use encrypted video conferencing tools and secure phone lines to protect client information.
- *Client Privacy Awareness*
 - Educate clients on how to create a private space for remote sessions and inform them of potential risks (e.g., shared phones or internet surveillance in unsafe situations).
- *Secure Record-Keeping*
 - Store client notes in locked physical filing systems or encrypted digital files.
 - Avoid discussing confidential information via unsecured email or messaging apps.
- *Informed Consent for Remote Sessions*
 - Ensure clients fully understand the confidentiality limitations of remote counselling and obtain verbal or written consent before beginning virtual services.



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3.3 Virtual Counselling Best Practices

Virtual counselling presents unique challenges, such as limited non-verbal cues, technology barriers, and potential client discomfort with digital platforms. Mental Health Workers must adapt their approach to ensure effective and meaningful client engagement.

Strategies for Effective Virtual Counselling

- *Building Connection Remotely*
 - Begin each session with grounding exercises, storytelling, or a cultural practice to establish a sense of safety.
 - Use warm, empathetic language and check in regularly about how the client is feeling.
- *Managing Technology Barriers*
 - Offer phone-based sessions for clients with unreliable internet access.
 - Be patient with delays, connection issues, and limited digital literacy.
- *Active Listening and Engagement*
 - Use clear verbal affirmations and ask open-ended questions to compensate for the lack of body language in video or phone sessions.
 - Allow silence when needed to give space for emotional processing.
- *Adapting Techniques for Virtual Settings*
 - Use guided mindfulness exercises, storytelling, or journaling prompts as therapeutic tools.
 - Encourage clients to use cultural activities (e.g., beading, sewing, land-based practices) to support their healing.
 - When necessary, the Mental Health Worker will arrange for cultural supplies to be sent to clients, ensuring they have access to materials that support traditional healing and wellness practices.
 - This initiative helps clients engage in land-based and hands-on cultural activities, which are essential for mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. By providing these resources, the Mental Health Worker fosters connection to Inuit traditions, self-expression, and a sense of identity, even in remote or isolated settings.
 - Whenever possible, the Mental Health Worker will also offer guidance on how to use these materials through virtual demonstrations, instructional videos, or connections with Elders and knowledge keepers to support meaningful engagement in cultural practices.



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3.4 Balancing In-Person and Remote Services

While remote counselling increases accessibility, certain situations require in-person connection and community-based support. Mental health workers must determine when in-person care is necessary and ensure a balanced approach to service delivery.

Guidelines for Balancing Services:

- *When to Prioritize In-Person Support*
 - Clients in crisis or high-risk situations (e.g., suicide risk, severe mental health distress).
 - When land-based, hands-on healing approaches are most effective.
 - For group therapy, cultural workshops, and community events.
- *When Remote Services Are Appropriate*
 - Clients in isolated areas without access to local mental health resources.
 - When travel barriers prevent in-person meetings (e.g., weather, financial constraints).
 - For follow-ups, check-ins, and ongoing support.
- *Hybrid Approach*
 - Offer blended care by alternating between in-person and virtual sessions based on client needs.
 - Encourage clients to engage in community-based supports even when receiving virtual care.
 - Helps maintain connection and relationship-building even when the Mental Health Worker cannot be physically present.
 - Regular virtual check-ins, phone calls, and the provision of cultural supplies allow clients to continue their healing journey while fostering a consistent and supportive therapeutic relationship.
 - By integrating land-based and cultural activities into remote care, clients remain engaged in their healing process, reinforcing their sense of belonging, identity, and connection to Inuit traditions.
 - This approach ensures that even in geographically isolated areas, clients feel seen, supported, and valued, strengthening trust and reducing the barriers created by distance.



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3.5 Common Challenges & Solutions:

CHALLENGES	SOULTIONS
Limited internet or phone access in rural areas	Offer phone-based check-ins as an alternative to video sessions. Collaborate with local community centers to provide internet access.
Clients struggling with digital literacy	Provide simple step-by-step instructions for accessing remote services. Be patient and flexible with communication methods.
Confidentiality concerns (e.g., clients in shared living spaces)	Educate clients on privacy options (e.g., using headphones, finding a quiet space, or scheduling sessions at a safe time).
Mental health worker isolation & burnout	Ensure regular team check-ins, debriefing sessions, and self-care strategies. Seek peer support and professional supervision.
Difficulties building trust remotely	Start with relationship-building techniques, such as storytelling and cultural discussions, before addressing deeper issues.
Navigating crisis situations remotely	Create detailed crisis safety plans and establish local support contacts in each client’s community.



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Conclusion Remote Work Approaches and Guidelines

Remote mental health work is essential for serving Inuit communities in rural Manitoba. By following these guidelines for culturally safe, secure, and effective virtual support, Inuit mental health workers can provide accessible, high-quality care that respects cultural identity, traditional healing, and community connections.



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4. Counselling Approaches

- *4.1 Counselling Approaches*
- *4.2 Strength-Based and Trauma-Informed Care*
- *4.3 Decolonizing Mental Health Practices*
- *4.4 One-on-One and Group Counselling Methods*
- *4.5 Culturally Responsive and Land-Based Healing*



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Counselling Approaches

The Inuit Mental Health Program utilizes a range of culturally safe and trauma-informed counselling approaches that recognize the unique experiences of Inuit individuals and families. These approaches emphasize healing through community, cultural reconnection, and holistic well-being rather than relying solely on Western-based talk therapy models. Each method is designed to support Inuit clients in reclaiming their mental wellness by integrating Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ), cultural teachings, and community-based healing practices.



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4.1 Counselling Approaches

The Inuit mental health worker utilizes culturally specific counselling approaches that incorporate traditional knowledge, community-based practices, and holistic healing methods.

Some key elements of these approaches are:

- **Incorporation of Inuit Traditional Knowledge:** Inuit mental health workers integrate traditional knowledge and practices, such as storytelling, quillq lighting, saging, drumming, and ceremonies, to create a culturally relevant context for healing.
- **Community-Based Approach:** Mental health services are often community-centered, focusing on collective well-being rather than just individual therapy. This approach acknowledges the importance of family and community ties in the healing process.
- **Holistic Perspective:** Inuit counselling approaches consider the whole person, including their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. This holistic perspective aligns with traditional Inuit beliefs about balance and wellness.
- **Land-Based Healing:** Activities such as hunting, fishing, and spending time on the land are incorporated into the mental health program. These activities connect individuals to their ancestors, traditional knowledge and natural environment, fostering a sense of identity and grounding.
- **Elders' Involvement:** Elders play a crucial role in mental health work, providing wisdom, guidance, and traditional teachings. Their involvement helps bridge generational gaps and supports the transmission of cultural knowledge.
- **Language and Cultural Sensitivity:** There is an option to have counselling provided in Inuktitut, ensuring that cultural nuances and meanings are preserved. This approach enhances communication and trust between the counsellor, Elder, and the client.
- **Collaborative and Strength-Based Approaches:** Rather than focusing on deficits, the Inuit mental health worker emphasizes the strengths and resilience of individuals and communities. Collaboration with clients and their families is key to developing effective and empowering strategies for healing.
- **Addressing Historical and Intergenerational Trauma:** Acknowledging the impact of colonization, residential schools, and other forms of systemic oppression is essential. Counselling approaches often include strategies for healing historical and intergenerational trauma, fostering a sense of collective recovery and resilience.



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- **Client Centred Approach:** The Inuit mental health worker acknowledges that each client has unique experiences, values, and needs. It is essential to understand and respect the client's cultural background, personal history, and current circumstances when adapting a counselling approach. Together, the client and mental health worker collaborate to determine the most effective strategies for the client's well-being.
- **Decolonizing Trauma Work:** The Inuit mental health worker aims to decolonize trauma work by acknowledging the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization. Decolonizing efforts focus on reviving and integrating traditional Inuit practices and knowledge systems into mental health care. This involves questioning and rejecting Western mental health paradigms that may not align with Inuit values and experiences. Instead, the Inuit mental health worker adopts a two-eyed seeing approach, which combines the strengths of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing with those of Western knowledge, creating a more effective and meaningful framework for Inuit clients.

These counselling approaches emphasize the critical role of cultural competence and sensitivity in delivering effective mental health care within Inuit communities. Recognizing the deep connections between cultural identity and well-being, the Inuit mental health worker integrates traditional practices and knowledge systems into their counselling methods. By doing so, they respect and honor the cultural backgrounds and values of their clients, making the support they provide more relevant, meaningful, and effective. This culturally grounded approach not only enhances the therapeutic relationship, but also empowers clients by validating their cultural heritage and incorporating it into their healing process.



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4.2 Strength-Based and Trauma-Informed Care

- Focuses on clients' inherent strengths, resilience, and ability to heal rather than solely on their challenges or trauma.
- Recognizes the impact of intergenerational trauma while empowering clients to build coping strategies and self-determination.
- Ensures a safe, nonjudgmental environment where clients feel supported in their healing journey.
- Encourages self-identity, self-worth, and cultural pride as protective factors in mental wellness.



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4.3 Decolonizing Mental Health Practices

- Acknowledges that mainstream mental health services are rooted in Western frameworks that do not always align with Inuit ways of healing.
- Shifts from a clinical, Western model of therapy to a holistic, community-based healing approach that incorporates Inuit knowledge and traditions.
- Healing does not happen within four white walls or solely through talking to a mental health worker—true healing happens through reconnection to community, the land, and cultural practices.
 - **Building Relationships as the Foundation for Healing**
 - Establishing a strong, trusting relationship between the mental health worker and the client is essential in creating a safe and supportive environment for healing.
 - This connection allows the mental health worker to integrate culturally grounded healing practices into counselling sessions in a way that respects and honors each client’s journey.
 - By fostering mutual trust, clients feel empowered to engage in healing that extends beyond traditional counselling methods, incorporating cultural activities and land-based practices as part of their wellness plan.
 - **Combining Counselling with Cultural and Land-Based Healing**
 - *Reconnection to Culture*
 - Healing should always involve cultural identity, ensuring that clients have access to traditional Inuit practices that promote well-being.
 - Sessions may incorporate lighting the qulliq, storytelling, beading, sewing, or working with Elders as a way to integrate culture into the healing process.
 - *Reconnection to Community*
 - Healing happens collectively—by engaging with the broader Inuit community, clients can build relationships that foster strength, resilience, and shared healing.
 - Group counselling, healing circles, and community-based programs offer spaces where clients can support one another through shared experiences.
 - *Reconnection to the Land*
 - Inuit well-being is deeply tied to the land, and engaging in traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, or gathering strengthens identity and provides therapeutic benefits.
 - The mental health worker supports clients in accessing land-based healing opportunities, understanding that spending time on the land can be just as valuable as one-on-one counselling.



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- Culture should be involved in every aspect of the Mental Health Program, ensuring that clients have access to traditional Inuit healing methods such as storytelling, beading, sewing, and Elders' teachings.
- Encourages clients to reconnect with their roots, language, and land as a form of healing, recognizing that Inuit identity and mental well-being are deeply interconnected.
- Advocates for systemic changes that make mental health services more accessible, culturally relevant, and inclusive of Inuit perspectives.

By prioritizing these connections, the Mental Health Program ensures that counselling is not an isolated experience but a holistic, culturally relevant process that empowers clients to heal in ways that align with their identity and traditions.



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4.4 One-on-One and Group Counselling/Programming Methods

- **One-on-One Counselling**
 - Provides a confidential space for clients to explore personal challenges and healing strategies.
 - Uses a client-centered approach that respects individual experiences, strengths, and goals.
 - May incorporate cultural practices such as lighting the qulliq to create a sacred healing space.
- **Group Counselling, Community Healing Circles, and Programming**
 - Emphasizes collective healing, recognizing that Inuit culture is deeply rooted in community and shared experiences.
 - Provides opportunities for peer support, reducing isolation and fostering a sense of belonging.
 - Can include storytelling, drumming, singing, sewing, beading or arts-based therapy to facilitate expression and healing.



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4.5 Culturally Responsive and Land-Based Healing

- Recognizes the deep connection between Inuit well-being and the land, integrating nature-based healing activities.
- Encourages clients to engage in traditional practices such as hunting, fishing, or gathering on the land as a means of reconnecting with identity and grounding mental health.
- Utilizes land-based programs to foster resilience, self-sufficiency, and cultural continuity, helping clients strengthen their sense of self.
- Involves Elders and Knowledge Keepers to share wisdom, traditional teachings, and Inuit values as part of the healing journey.
- Incorporates cultural arts (e.g., beading, sewing, drum-making, throat singing) as a therapeutic tool for expression and healing.
- Ensures that clients have access to healing spaces beyond a clinical setting, reinforcing that true healing is a lived, collective, and cultural experience.



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Conclusion Counselling Approaches

This Inuit Mental Health Program acknowledges that healing is not a one-size-fits-all process. By integrating cultural practices, land-based healing, and decolonizing trauma work, the program ensures that Inuit individuals and families receive mental health support that is deeply rooted in identity, tradition, and community.



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5. Client Engagement and Support

- *5.1 Number of Clients Served*
- *5.2 Frequency of Client Meetings*
- *5.3 Client Progress Tracking and Success Stories*



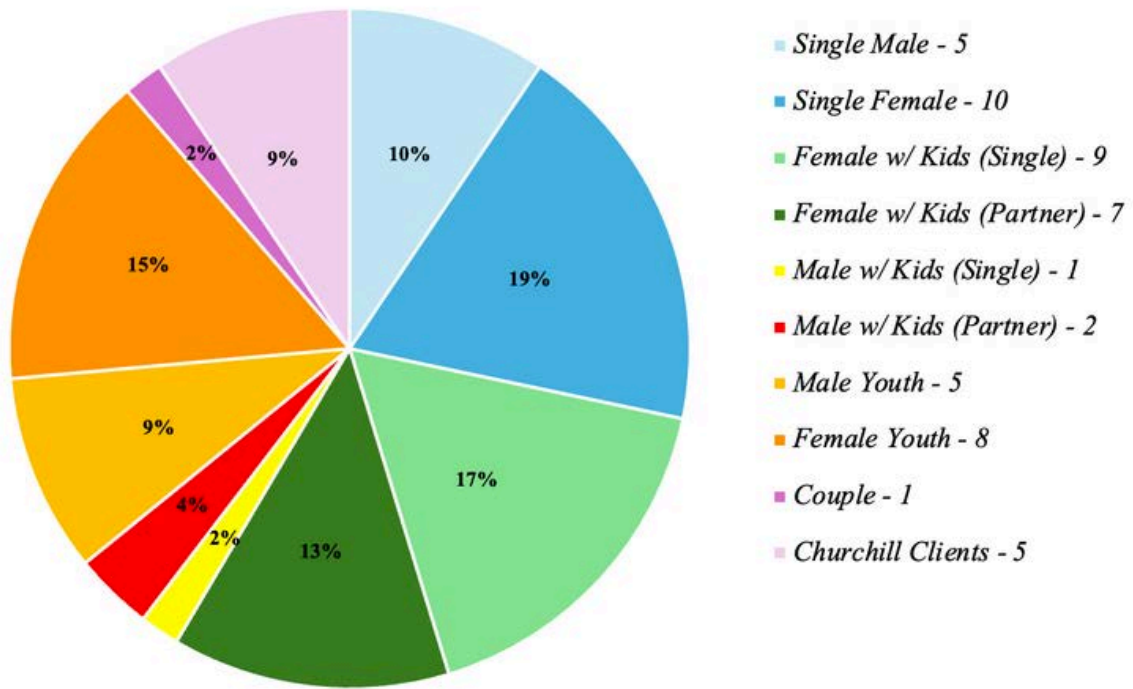
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Mental Health Program Summary Dashboard - Client Numbers and Demographic

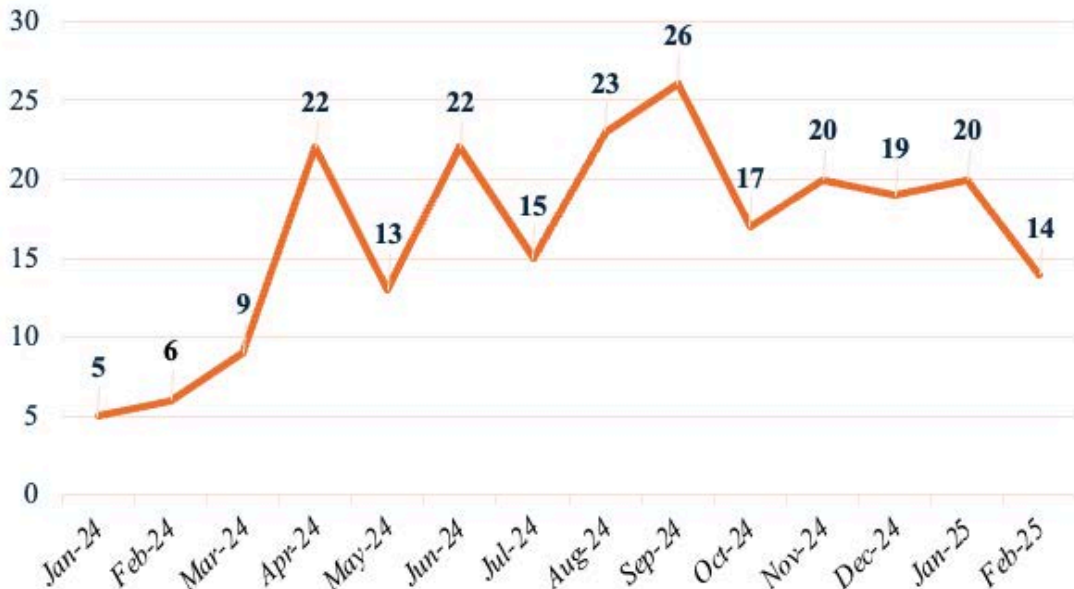
5.1 Number of Clients Served

Client Demographic
Total Number of Clients 51



5.2 Frequency of Client Meeting

Counselling Sessions Per Month



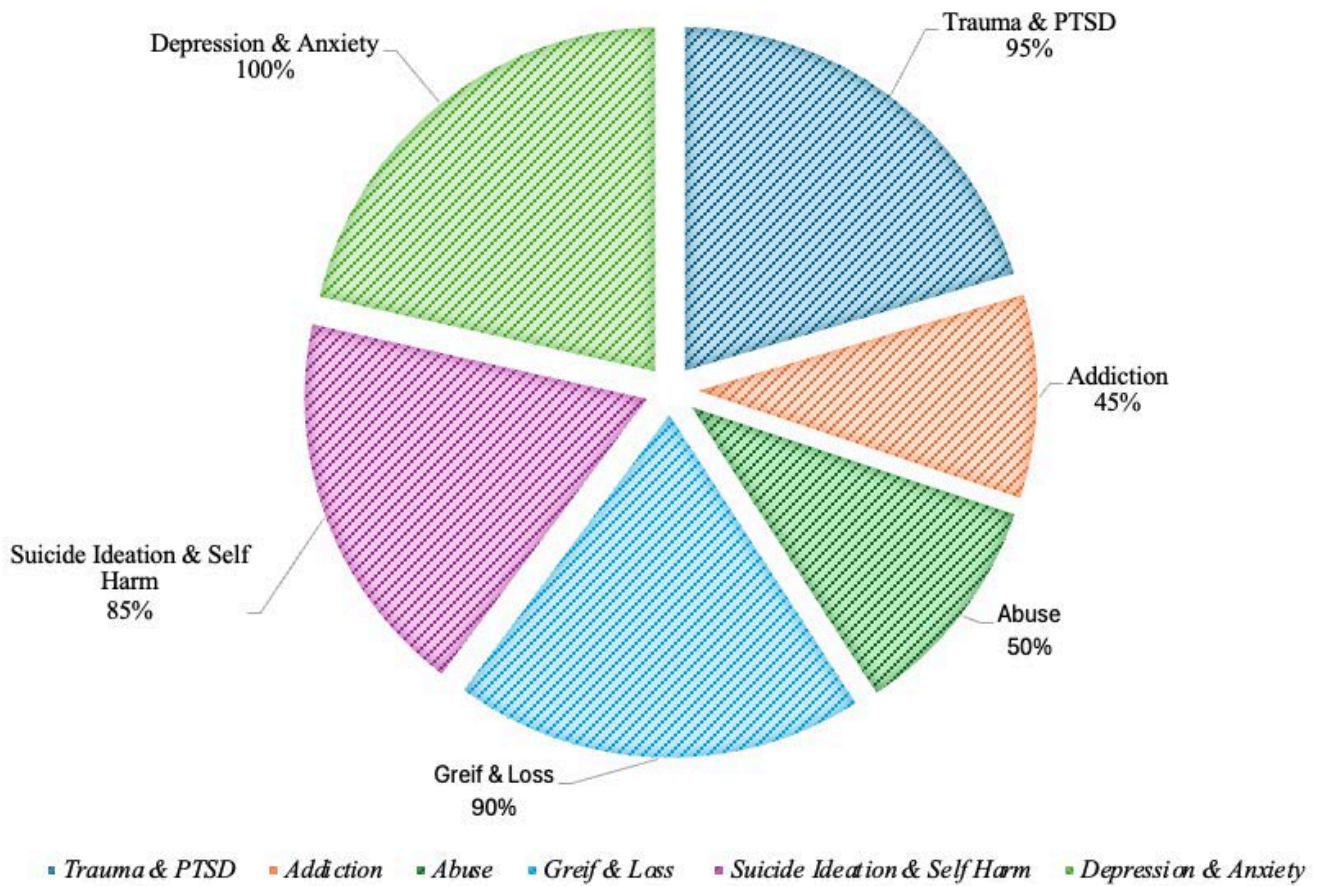


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Mental Health Program Summary Dashboard - Programs and Supports Accessed

Common Mental Health Supports
52 Mental Health Clients

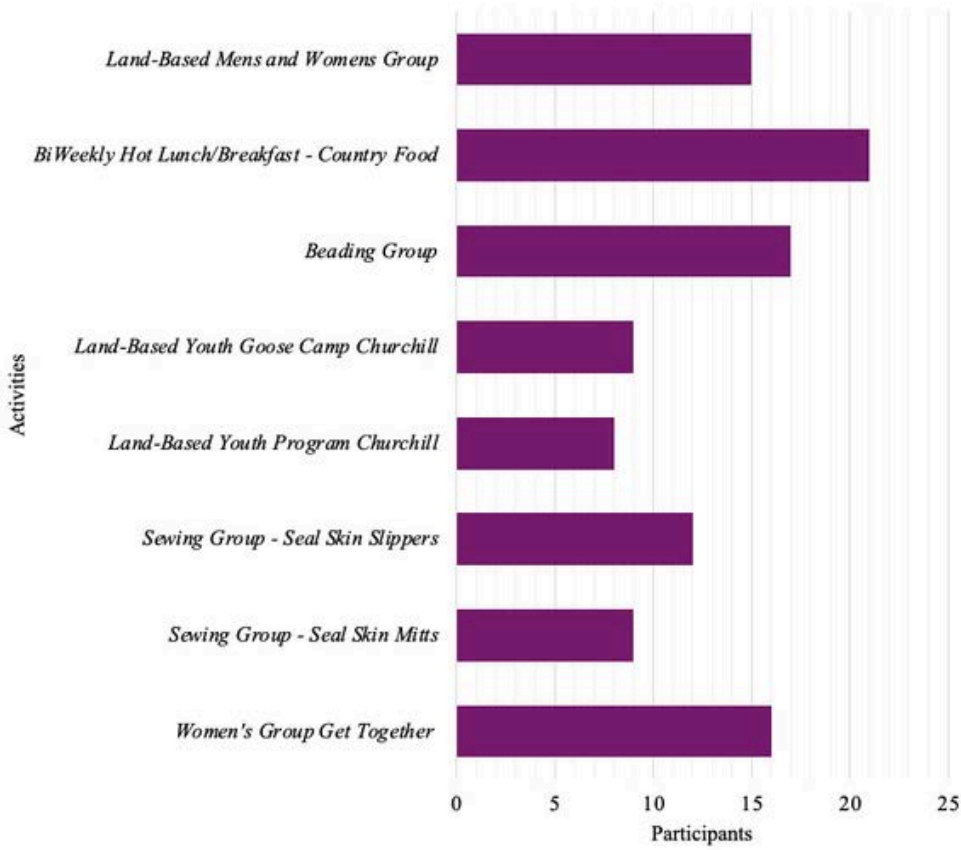




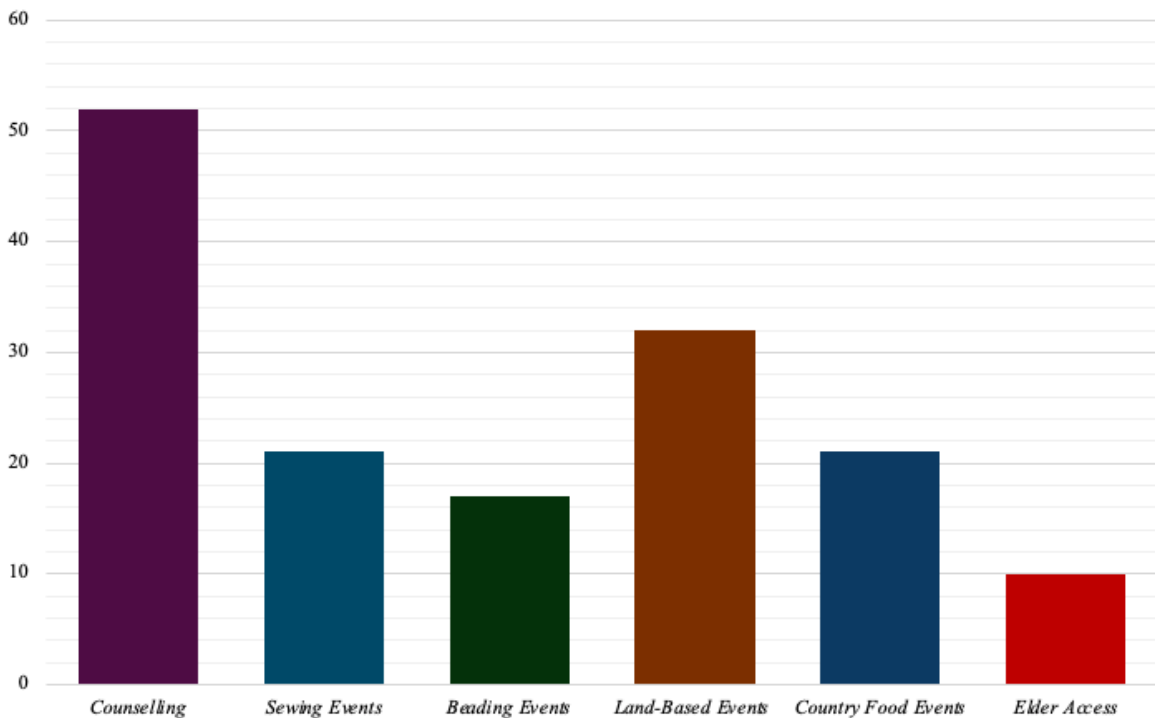
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Mental Health Program Summary Dashboard - Programs and Supports Accessed

Cultural Engagement Activities



Types of Healing Practices Used





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5.3 Client Progress Tracking and Success Stories

Tracking Client Progress in Inuit Mental Health Counselling

- Ensuring effective mental health support requires a structured yet client-centered approach to tracking progress. In the Inuit Mental Health Program, client progress is carefully monitored through mental health care worker notes and a client-based feedback model, ensuring that services remain responsive to each individual's needs.

Mental Health Care Worker Notes

- Mental health workers maintain detailed case notes after each session, documenting key aspects of a client's progress, challenges, and any shifts in their emotional or psychological state. These notes typically include:
 - *Session summaries*
 - Outlining the topics discussed and any significant insights or breakthroughs.
 - *Observed changes*
 - Noting improvements or setbacks in mood, behavior, or coping mechanisms.
 - *Interventions used*
 - Tracking which therapeutic approaches were applied and their effectiveness.
 - *Client goals*
 - Recording short-term and long-term goals, as well as any progress toward achieving them.
 - Follow-up plans
 - Establishing next steps based on the session's outcomes and any additional support required.

By keeping structured notes, mental health workers can ensure continuity of care, identify trends over time, and adjust strategies as needed.

Client-Based Approach: Centring the Client's Voice

- Beyond professional observation, the program emphasizes a client-driven model, where clients are actively encouraged to assess their own progress. Instead of assuming what works best, mental health workers rely on direct feedback from the client, asking:
 - What strategies have been most helpful?
 - What aspects of care are not working or need adjustment?
 - How do they feel about their progress?
 - Are there external factors affecting their mental health that need to be addressed?



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This approach empowers clients to take an active role in their healing process. It also ensures that interventions are not just clinically effective but personally meaningful. If a particular coping strategy, therapy method, or support plan isn't working, adjustments can be made in real-time based on the client's lived experience.

Why This Approach Matters

- Combining professional observation with client self-assessment ensures that care remains flexible, personalized, and culturally relevant. Mental health is not a one-size-fits-all process, and by continuously engaging the client in their progress tracking, the program fosters trust, autonomy, and long-term resilience in those seeking support.

A Success Story

Unfortunately, due to confidentiality, many stories cannot be shared, but Jeanette Angoo has given me permission to share part of her journey. In 2024, Jeanette reached out to MIA after struggling with homelessness, addiction, CFS, and charges within the justice system. She worked closely with a mental health worker throughout her recovery. Jeanette went through detox and rehab twice, with the support of MIA's mental health worker and engaging in MIA's cultural programs, she successfully completed the program. Despite her progress, she still found it difficult to remain in the same environment in Winnipeg. Choosing a fresh start, Jeanette decided to return home to Iqaluit. The mental health worker assisted with her flight, and now Jeanette works at a daycare in Iqaluit, reconnecting with the land and community. She is also working toward regaining custody of her child and hopes to return to Winnipeg to continue that journey.





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6. Decolonizing Trauma Work

- *6.1 Understanding Intergenerational Trauma*
- *6.2 Reconnection to Culture as Healing*
- *6.3 Sewing, Beading, and Traditional Arts*
- *6.4 Elder Guidance and Teachings*
- *6.5 Lighting the Qulliq: Ceremony and Reflection*



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Decolonizing Trauma Work

Healing is not just about addressing the mind; it is about nurturing the body and spirit as well. For Inuit, culture is inseparable from well-being. It shapes identity, strengthens resilience, and fosters a deep sense of belonging. Healing must be rooted in Inuit traditions, knowledge, and values, ensuring that cultural practices are embedded in every aspect of trauma recovery.

Mental health services alone cannot fully address the impacts of intergenerational trauma. Western counselling, while valuable, must be complemented by Inuit ways of healing that consider the whole person—mind, body, and soul. This means that reconnecting with the land, engaging in traditional arts, listening to Elders, and participating in ceremonies must be central to healing processes. Culture is not an addition to healing—it is the foundation of it.



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6.1 Understanding Intergenerational Trauma

Intergenerational trauma is deeply rooted in the colonial history of the Inuit. Forced relocations, residential schools, the loss of language and cultural suppression have created lasting wounds that continue to affect individuals, families, and communities. Trauma is not just personal; it is collective. The pain carried by one generation can shape the experiences of the next, leading to cycles of grief, disconnection, and hardship.

Healing from this trauma requires more than just clinical approaches. It demands an acknowledgment of the past and a reclamation of Inuit identity. Understanding intergenerational trauma within an Inuit worldview allows individuals to see that their pain is not a personal failing but a result of historical injustice. By integrating cultural knowledge into counselling, healing becomes a process of restoring balance—honoring the struggles of ancestors while reclaiming the strength that has allowed Inuit to survive for generations.



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6.2 Reconnection to Culture as Healing

Culture is medicine. Inuit traditions, teachings, and ways of life are not just part of history—they are active sources of healing. Many who experience trauma feel disconnected from who they are, their language, and their community. Rebuilding this connection is essential to healing.

Traditional knowledge, land-based practices, and storytelling should be embedded in every aspect of mental health care. Land provides healing, whether through hunting, fishing, gathering, or simply being on the land to reconnect with its rhythms. Learning and speaking Inuktitut strengthens identity and sense of belonging. Storytelling carries forward the wisdom of ancestors, providing guidance and purpose. These practices are not just cultural activities; they are pathways to wellness that should be incorporated into all healing programs and help to restore a sense of belonging and purpose.

In healing programs, cultural reconnection should be integrated with counselling to create a holistic approach. This can include engaging with Elders, participating in language revitalization, and practicing subsistence activities like hunting, fishing, sewing, beading, and berry picking. These cultural experiences provide a foundation of resilience, allowing individuals to reclaim their Inuit identity while working through trauma in a way that is meaningful to them.



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6.3 Sewing, Beading, Traditional Arts, and Throat Singing

Inuit traditional arts, such as sewing, beading, and throat singing, are deeply therapeutic practices that offer emotional and spiritual healing. They are passed down through generations serving as acts of resilience, cultural continuity, and healing. These traditional arts are deeply tied to Inuit identity and serve as powerful tools for emotional expression, reflection, and connection.

Sewing and beading require patience and mindfulness, allowing individuals to enter a meditative state where they can process emotions in a safe and gentle way. These skills have been passed down for generations, carrying stories, survival knowledge, and deep meaning. They also reinforce a sense of accomplishment and pride, as individuals create something with their hands that carries cultural significance. When a person creates something with their hands, they are not only making an object—they are reconnecting with their ancestors, their culture, and themselves.

Throat singing is another vital cultural practice that fosters healing. The deep, rhythmic breathing involved can help regulate emotions, release tension, and strengthen social bonds. Originally performed as a game between two people, throat singing brings laughter and joy, reinforcing the idea that healing is not only about processing pain but also about reclaiming happiness and connection.

These cultural practices must be integrated into mental health programming. They offer alternative ways for individuals to heal—ways that align with Inuit knowledge and ways of being. By incorporating these traditions into healing, individuals can process trauma in non-verbal, sensory, and deeply personal ways.



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6.4 Elder Guidance and Teachings

Elders hold the knowledge of generations. They are living libraries of Inuit history, teachings, and ways of being. Their wisdom is critical in guiding individuals through healing, offering perspectives that are rooted in cultural strength and lived experience. Through storytelling, sharing life lessons, and providing cultural mentorship, Elders play a crucial role in helping individuals navigate trauma and rediscover their sense of self.

Western counselling often relies on individual talk therapy, but Inuit healing is collective. Elders play a key role in this, sharing traditional knowledge, teachings, and advice that help individuals navigate trauma within a cultural framework. Whether through storytelling, lessons about survival on the land, or direct mentorship, Elders provide the kind of support that no textbook or clinical practice can replicate.

Incorporating Elders into mental health programming ensures that healing is rooted in Inuit knowledge systems and that cultural knowledge is not lost and that future generations can heal through the wisdom of the past. Counsellors and mental health professionals should collaborate with Elders to create culturally safe spaces where individuals feel supported through both Western and Inuit approaches to healing. Elder involvement provides intergenerational connection, reinforcing the strength and continuity of Inuit ways of knowing, they remind individuals that they are never alone—healing is a shared journey.



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6.5 Lighting the Qulliq: Ceremony and Reflection

The Qulliq, the traditional Inuit oil lamp, symbolizes warmth, light, and community. Historically, it provided physical warmth and was central to survival, but it also holds deep spiritual significance. Lighting the Qulliq in healing spaces serves as a powerful ceremony of reflection, grounding individuals in their cultural roots and honoring their healing journeys.

In mental health programming, qulliq lighting ceremonies can be integrated into counselling sessions, group gatherings, or personal reflection times. The act of lighting the Qulliq is a moment of grounding, a way to centre oneself in Inuit culture and spirituality. It offers individuals an opportunity to set intentions, release pain, and honour their journey. These ceremonies offer moments to set intentions, acknowledge struggles, and celebrate progress. The flame of the Qulliq represents resilience, guidance, and the strength of Inuit ancestors, serving as a reminder that healing is a collective and ongoing process.

Healing programs should incorporate qulliq lighting as part of their process, using it to mark important moments—whether at the beginning of a healing circle, during personal reflection, or as a way to acknowledge milestones in one’s journey. By combining these cultural practices with counselling, Inuit individuals can engage in holistic healing that respects their identity, acknowledges their trauma, and empowers them to reclaim their well-being in a culturally meaningful way. This ceremony reinforces the idea that healing is not linear but ongoing, and that light can always be found, even in the darkest times.



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Conclusion Decolonizing Trauma Work

Healing cannot be separated from culture. To truly support Inuit individuals on their healing journeys, mental health programs must go beyond Western models of care. They must integrate Inuit ways of knowing, being, and doing at every level—ensuring that mind, body, and soul are nurtured together.

Culture is not an afterthought in healing; it is the foundation. It provides identity, strength, and purpose. Through reconnecting with traditions, learning from Elders, engaging in artistic expression, and practicing ceremony, Inuit can reclaim their well-being in ways that honor their ancestors and empower future generations. Healing is not just about overcoming trauma—it is about restoring balance, reaffirming identity, and ensuring that Inuit ways of healing continue to thrive.



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7. Projects and Committees

- *7.1 Active Projects Led by the Mental Health Program*
 - *7.1.1 Future Projects Being Worked On*
- *7.2 Committees the Mental Health Worker Sits On*
- *7.3 Collaborative Initiatives with Partner Organizations*
- *7.4 Community Advocacy and Policy Development*



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Projects and Committees

The Mental Health Program at the Manitoba Inuit Association is actively engaged in various projects, committees, and partnerships aimed at supporting Inuit mental wellness. Through culturally relevant programming, collaboration with community organizations, and advocacy efforts, the program continues to expand opportunities for Inuit to access mental health services rooted in their identity, traditions, and lived experiences.



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7.1 Active Projects Led by the Mental Health Program

The Mental Health Program is currently leading several initiatives designed to promote healing, resilience, and community connection. These projects focus on integrating Inuit culture into mental health supports, increasing access to services, and addressing the specific needs of the Inuit community.

Sewing Group

The Sewing Group provides a safe and welcoming space for Inuit to gather, learn traditional sewing techniques, and engage in cultural storytelling. Elders and experienced seamstresses guide participants in making traditional clothing and accessories, such as mittens, parkas, and kamiks.

- *Goals*
 - To strengthen cultural identity, provide a therapeutic outlet for mental wellness, and create a sense of community.
- *Target Audience*
 - Inuit community members of all ages, particularly those looking to reconnect with cultural practices.
- *Expected Impact*
 - Participants gain valuable sewing skills, build supportive relationships, and experience the healing benefits of cultural engagement.

Qulliq Making/Lighting Workshop

This workshop teaches participants how to craft and light a qulliq, the traditional Inuit oil lamp, which symbolizes warmth, survival, and cultural resilience. Elders share teachings on the Qulliq's significance, fostering intergenerational knowledge transfer.

- *Goals*
 - To reconnect participants with Inuit traditions, provide a space for cultural reflection, and promote emotional and spiritual well-being.
- *Target Audience*
 - Specifically for youth but evolving for Inuit individuals and families interested in learning about traditional practices.
- *Expected Impact*
 - Participants develop a deeper understanding of Inuit traditions, experience cultural pride, and find comfort in traditional healing practices.



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Hot Breakfast/Country Food Bi-Weekly

This initiative provides Inuit community members with access to traditional country foods and hot meals in a communal setting. These gatherings serve as an opportunity for social connection, cultural learning, and nutritional support.

- *Goals*
 - To promote food security, foster a sense of belonging, and support overall health and wellness through access to traditional foods.
- *Target Audience*
 - Inuit individuals and families, particularly those experiencing food insecurity or isolation.
- *Expected Impact*
 - Improved physical and mental well-being through nutritious meals, strengthened community bonds, and increased appreciation for Inuit food traditions.

One-on-One Counselling (Churchill and Winnipeg)

The Mental Health Program offers confidential one-on-one counselling with a culturally informed mental health worker. This service provides emotional support, coping strategies, and a safe space to discuss personal challenges.

- *Goals*
 - To provide individualized mental health support, promote healing, and empower Inuit in their wellness journey.
- *Target Audience*
 - Inuit individuals seeking emotional support and guidance.
- *Expected Impact*
 - Participants gain tools to navigate mental health challenges, build resilience, and feel supported in their healing process.

Each of these projects integrates Inuit culture and traditions into mental wellness initiatives, ensuring that healing is rooted in identity, community, and lived experience.



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7.1.1 Future Projects Being Worked On

The Manitoba Inuit Association's Mental Health Program is continuously developing new initiatives to address the evolving needs of the Inuit community. These upcoming projects focus on grief support, addiction recovery, cultural revitalization, and land-based healing in urban and rural areas.

Once-a-Month Grief Group Counselling (Churchill and Winnipeg)

Recognizing the profound impact of grief and loss on the Inuit community, the Mental Health Program is introducing a monthly grief support group. This safe and supportive space will allow individuals to share their experiences, receive emotional support, and connect with others who have faced similar losses. Due to the high rates of loss from suicide in the community, this group will provide a supportive space where individuals can connect with others and find comfort in knowing they are not alone.

- *Goals*
 - To provide a culturally relevant support system for individuals navigating grief and loss, reducing isolation and promoting healing.
- *Target Audience*
 - Inuit individuals and families experiencing grief, loss, or trauma.
- *Expected Impact*
 - Participants will find comfort in shared experiences, develop coping strategies, and strengthen community bonds through collective healing.

Addiction Group

Substance use and addiction continue to be significant challenges in the Inuit community. This group will provide a judgment-free space for participants to share their experiences, learn about harm reduction strategies, and access culturally informed support.

- *Goals*
 - To offer a culturally grounded support system for those struggling with addiction, promoting healing through connection and traditional teachings.
- *Target Audience*
 - Inuit individuals seeking support in their journey toward sobriety, harm reduction, or healing from substance use.
- *Expected Impact*
 - Participants will gain tools to manage addiction, feel supported in their recovery, and connect with peers who understand their experiences.



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Throat Singing Workshop

Throat singing is a vital part of Inuit culture and identity. This workshop will provide participants with the opportunity to learn the history, techniques, and significance of throat singing while engaging in an interactive and healing experience.

- *Goals:*
 - To revitalize Inuit cultural practices, promote self-expression, and provide a therapeutic outlet through traditional music.
- *Target Audience*
 - Inuit youth and adults interested in learning or reconnecting with throat singing.
- *Expected Impact*
 - Increased cultural pride, strengthened connections between generations, and enhanced emotional well-being through music and storytelling.

Youth Sewing Groups (Churchill and Winnipeg)

Expanding on the existing sewing program, this initiative will focus specifically on engaging Inuit youth in learning traditional sewing skills. The program will incorporate mentorship from Elders and experienced sewers to ensure cultural knowledge is passed down.

- *Goals*
 - To provide Inuit youth with hands-on cultural learning opportunities, fostering pride in their heritage while developing practical skills.
- *Target Audience*
 - Inuit youth interested in learning traditional sewing techniques.
- *Expected Impact*
 - Youth will gain cultural and practical skills, build relationships with Elders and peers, and strengthen their connection to Inuit traditions.



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Summer Berry Picking / Fishing (Churchill/Winnipeg)

This land-based initiative will offer seasonal excursions where community members can practice traditional berry picking and fishing. These activities will provide a space for reconnecting with the land, learning traditional harvesting techniques, and promoting overall well-being.

- *Goals*
 - To encourage cultural and land-based healing practices, strengthen food security, and foster a deeper connection to Inuit traditions.
- *Target Audience*
 - Inuit individuals and families looking to engage in traditional land-based activities.
- *Expected Impact*
 - Participants will develop traditional harvesting skills, experience the mental and physical benefits of being on the land, and strengthen community relationships.

Sewing Group (Churchill)

The Sewing Group provides a safe and welcoming space for Inuit to gather, learn traditional sewing techniques, and engage in cultural storytelling. Elders and experienced seamstresses guide participants in making traditional clothing and accessories, such as mittens, parkas, and kamiks.

- *Goals*
 - To strengthen cultural identity, provide a therapeutic outlet for mental wellness, and create a sense of community.
- *Target Audience*
 - Inuit community members of all ages, particularly those looking to reconnect with cultural practices.
- *Expected Impact*
 - Participants gain valuable sewing skills, build supportive relationships, and experience the healing benefits of cultural engagement.

By developing these culturally relevant initiatives, Manitoba Inuit Association's Mental Health Program continues to provide meaningful opportunities for healing, connection, and cultural revitalization for community in urban and rural areas.



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7.2 Committees the Mental Health Worker Sits On

The Mental Health Worker at Manitoba Inuit Association actively participates in various committees that focus on mental health, wellness, and Indigenous-specific supports. These committees provide a platform for advocacy, knowledge-sharing, networking, and collaboration on policies and programs that impact Inuit mental, physical, and spiritual wellness.

Moving Towards Culturally Safe Services for Indigenous People in Forensic Mental Health: A Partnership Development Program

- This committee and project is a collaborative initiative aimed at enhancing cultural safety within forensic mental health services across Canada. In partnership with Indigenous communities, the project seeks to develop guidelines that define culturally safe practices in forensic mental health, assess local needs for implementing and evaluating Indigenous-led actions, tools, models, or programs, and ensure the sustainability of these practices by valuing Indigenous wisdom alongside established best practices. Currently, efforts are concentrated on developing a localized project to explore culturally safe forensic mental health care in Manitoba.
 - **Manitoba Inuit Associations Role:**
 - The Mental Health Worker's involvement in this committee is pivotal, offering an Inuit perspective that enriches the development of culturally safe guidelines. This participation not only ensures that Inuit voices are represented but also facilitates the expansion of networks within forensic mental health services. Collaborating with partners such as the University of Manitoba, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), the Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO), and the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), the Mental Health Worker contributes to a comprehensive approach that addresses the unique needs of Indigenous populations within the forensic mental health system.



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Indigenous Advisory Committee for The Partnering for Research Innovation in Mental Health eHealth Excellence (PRIME) Initiative.

This initiative is dedicated to developing innovative mental health programs for children, youth, and families in Manitoba and beyond. One of its key projects is “Building Emotional Awareness and Mental Wellbeing for Indigenous Families (BEAM): Cultural Adaptation of a Scalable Digital Mental Health Program to Support Intergenerational Wellness.”

The BEAM (Building Emotional Awareness and Mental Health) program is implemented to better serve Indigenous families. This involves modifying current content and creating new material that incorporates traditional teachings from various Nations and communities, particularly concerning parenting and mental health. The research team will collaborate closely with Knowledge Keepers and Elders to ensure the work is conducted with respect and reciprocity, maintaining the high standard of collaboration observed in previous projects.

• *Manitoba Inuit Associations Role*

- The Inuit Mental Health Worker plays a vital role in ensuring the program’s cultural relevance and effectiveness for Inuit communities. Their responsibilities include:
 - *Providing Inuit Cultural Insights*
 - They offer essential perspectives on Inuit traditions, values, and parenting practices, guiding the adaptation of program content to align with Inuit cultural contexts.
 - *Facilitating Community Engagement*
 - By leveraging their connections within Inuit communities, they assist in building trust and fostering meaningful collaborations with Knowledge Keepers, Elders, and community members, ensuring the program reflects community needs and wisdom.
 - *Ensuring Cultural Safety*
 - They advocate for culturally safe practices within the project, ensuring that the development and implementation of the program respect Inuit cultural protocols and promote a sense of safety and inclusivity for participants.
 - *Enhancing Accessibility*
 - Drawing from their understanding of the unique challenges faced by Inuit populations, they contribute to strategies that make the digital mental health program accessible and user-friendly for Inuit families, considering factors such as language, technology access, and cultural relevance.
- Through these roles, the Inuit Mental Health Worker ensures that the adapted BEAM program is culturally attuned, respectful, and effective in supporting the mental wellness of Inuit families.



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Inuit Webinar Planning Committee (CancerCare Manitoba)

The Inuit Webinar Planning Committee is dedicated to organizing quarterly webinars that provide culturally relevant support to Inuit patients undergoing cancer treatment and their families. These sessions feature speakers who address topics pertinent to the Inuit community, such as the recent presentation by Chantal Langlois on cancer and nutrition. Her practical approach to integrating traditional country foods with readily available grocery items in Nunavut highlighted the committee's commitment to acknowledging the unique challenges and opportunities within Inuit communities.

- ***Manitoba Inuit Associations Role***

- The Inuit Mental Health Worker plays a crucial role in this committee by offering insights into the mental health needs of Inuit patients, ensuring that the webinars address emotional and psychological aspects of cancer care. They advocate for the inclusion of culturally appropriate mental health resources and support systems, fostering a holistic approach to patient care. Additionally, they facilitate connections with community members and mental health professionals, enriching the webinars' content and outreach. Their involvement ensures that the committee's initiatives are both culturally sensitive and comprehensive, effectively supporting the well-being of Inuit cancer patients and their families.



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Provincial Disrupting Racism Steering Committee (Shared Health)

The Provincial Disrupting Racism Steering Committee, established in spring 2021 with the endorsement of the Health Senior Leadership Council (HSLC), is committed to developing, implementing, and evaluating strategies to disrupt and dismantle racism within Manitoba's health system. Reporting directly to the HSLC, the committee's primary objectives are to create safer healthcare environments for all stakeholders—including patients, families, staff, physicians, volunteers, and learners—and to improve health outcomes for Indigenous, Black, and racialized patients.

The committee comprises representatives from various health regions and organizations, including Winnipeg, Interlake-Eastern, Southern Health-Santé Sud, Prairie Mountain Health, Northern Health Region, Cancer Care Manitoba, Manitoba Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care, Housing, Addictions and Homelessness, Public Health, the Rady Faculty of Health Science's Office of Equity Transformation, Indigenous Services Canada First Nation and Inuit Health (Manitoba Branch), Ongomiizwin, Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations, Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin, Southern Chiefs Organization, Manitoba Metis Federation, Manitoba Inuit Association, Government of Nunavut – Uquutaq Medical Boarding Home, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and more

• ***Manitoba Inuit Associations Role:***

- The Inuit Mental Health Worker plays a crucial role by providing an Inuit-specific perspective to the committee's initiatives. Their responsibilities include:
 - *Advocacy for Inuit-Specific Policies*
 - Ensuring that strategies and policies developed by the committee address the unique challenges faced by Inuit communities, thereby promoting equitable healthcare access and outcomes.
 - *Cultural Competency Guidance*
 - Educating committee members and healthcare staff about Inuit cultural practices, values, and traditions to foster a more inclusive and respectful healthcare environment.
 - *Community Engagement*
 - Serving as a liaison between the committee and Inuit communities, facilitating open communication to ensure that community voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes.
 - *Support Mechanism Development*
 - Collaborating on the creation of culturally appropriate support systems and safe reporting channels for Inuit patients and staff who experience racism within the healthcare system.
- Through these contributions, the Inuit Mental Health Worker ensures that the committee's efforts are inclusive, culturally sensitive, and effective in addressing the specific needs of Inuit populations within Manitoba's healthcare system.



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7.3 Collaborative Initiatives with Partner Organizations

The Inuit Mental Health Program has established several collaborative initiatives with partner organizations to enhance support networks and resources for Inuit clients. These partnerships enable the Mental Health Worker to connect clients with a broader range of services, including access to professionals such as psychologists and psychiatrists.

- **End Homelessness Winnipeg**
 - By collaborating with End Homelessness Winnipeg, the program gains access to the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS), allowing for real-time awareness of the homeless Inuit population. This access facilitates targeted outreach and mental health services. Additionally, participation in the Gizhe Waa Ti-Sii-Win Service Expo enables the delivery of essential services to vulnerable communities in Winnipeg, further extending outreach efforts.
- **Pan Am Clinic – Dr. Michael Ellis and Team**
 - Dr. Ellis has developed a telehealth concussion clinic addressing intimate partner violence and provides mental health services to Inuit patients through Delma McLeod. Recognizing the need for comprehensive support, he reached out to the Manitoba Inuit Association (MIA) to explore partnerships. This collaboration aims to offer additional mental health and cultural resources to Inuit clients, particularly those relocating to Winnipeg.
- **Tamarack Recovery Centre**
 - A connection with Tamarack Recovery Centre ensures that when Inuit clients are admitted for treatment, the Mental Health Worker can provide culturally appropriate support, enhancing the effectiveness of recovery programs.
- **Detox Manitoba**
 - Establishing a relationship with Detox Manitoba streamlines the transition for Inuit clients entering detoxification programs, ensuring they receive necessary support during this critical phase.
- **Shared Health Churchill**
 - A partnership with Shared Health Churchill enables the Mental Health Worker to deliver culturally appropriate care to Inuit clients in the Churchill area, with provisions for accommodation and travel, ensuring accessible mental health services.



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- **Wellness Centre Churchill**

- Collaborating with the Wellness Centre in Churchill allows for the implementation of Inuit-specific programming, addressing the unique cultural needs of the local Inuit population.

- **Perinatal Mental Health**

- In response to a directive from Premier Wab Kinew, a proposal is being developed for a perinatal mental health hub. This initiative aims to reduce service silos, connect families to mental health and social supports, and offer system navigation assistance. Early involvement of MIA ensures that Inuit families are considered in the planning and implementation phases.

- **Correctional Service of Canada**

- Engagement with the Correctional Service of Canada has revealed a significant need for Inuit-specific resources within the Prairie Region, which currently has approximately 24 Inuit offenders. Many face challenges due to a lack of support, leading to higher rates of recidivism. The Mental Health Worker collaborates to provide access to Inuit Elders and culturally relevant support, aiming to improve reintegration outcomes.

- **Pauktuutit Public Safety Testimonials**

- Partnering with Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, the program facilitates opportunities for Manitoba Inuit to share their experiences regarding reporting abuse. This collaboration amplifies Inuit voices and contributes to the development of more effective support systems.

- **Health Sciences Centre Children's Hospital**

- Participation in the PRIME initiative with the Health Sciences Centre Children's Hospital focuses on supporting projects like "Building Emotional Awareness and Mental Wellbeing for Indigenous Families." This involves culturally adapting digital mental health programs to support intergenerational wellness among Inuit families.



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- **University of Manitoba**
 - Collaboration on the Cultural Safety Project aims to develop guidelines for culturally safe forensic mental health services. The Mental Health Worker provides an Inuit perspective, ensuring that the unique needs of Inuit clients are addressed in policy development and service delivery.
- **All Nations Coordinated Response Network (ANCR)**
 - The mental health program along with outreach and Child First Initiative has had meetings with social workers at ANCR to identify Inuit children in custody. This collaboration focuses on data collection and the development of strategies to support these children, ensuring they receive culturally appropriate care and services. This is still an ongoing process.

Through these strategic partnerships, the Inuit Mental Health Program expands its network, providing clients with comprehensive, culturally informed care. These collaborations not only enhance resource availability but also grant the Mental Health Worker access to a multidisciplinary team of professionals, including psychologists and psychiatrists, thereby enriching the support system for Inuit clients.



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7.4 Community Advocacy and Policy Development

Inuit communities face unique mental health challenges shaped by historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors. Addressing these challenges requires robust advocacy and policy development to ensure the voices of Inuit are heard and integrated into decision-making processes. The Inuit mental health program is committed to empowering communities by facilitating advocacy efforts that prioritize mental health support and wellness at local, regional, and national levels.

As part of this effort, the mental health worker plays a pivotal role in community advocacy, providing support to the committee by drafting advocacy letters that represent the needs and concerns of the Inuit community. These letters aim to influence policy changes and raise awareness of mental health issues within Inuit populations, both within the community and in broader contexts.

In addition to advocacy, the mental health worker actively participates in policy development for the Inuit mental health program. This work ensures that mental health policies are culturally relevant, reflect the needs of the community, and align with Inuit ways of knowing, healing, and understanding mental wellness. By collaborating with government agencies, healthcare providers, and Inuit organizations, the mental health worker helps shape policies that promote equitable access to care, incorporate traditional knowledge, and create culturally safe spaces for healing.

Through these combined efforts of advocacy and policy development, the program aims to create a mental health system that supports Inuit individuals and communities in a way that is both effective and culturally respectful.



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Conclusion Projects and Committees

In conclusion, the Inuit Mental Health Program at the Manitoba Inuit Association is dedicated to promoting the mental wellness of Inuit communities through advocacy, culturally relevant programming, and collaborative partnerships. By addressing the unique challenges faced by Inuit individuals, the program continues to create opportunities for healing, resilience, and community connection. Through ongoing efforts in policy development and advocacy, the program strives to ensure that mental health services are accessible, culturally safe, and tailored to the specific needs of Inuit communities, fostering a supportive environment for long-term mental wellness.



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8. Program Work Plan and Implementation

- *8.1 Annual Goals and Milestones*
- *8.2 Monthly and Weekly Task Breakdown*
- *8.3 Staff Roles and Responsibilities*
- *8.4 Program Evaluation and Adjustments*



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Program Work Plan and Implementation

The Inuit mental health worker program aims to provide comprehensive and culturally sensitive mental health services to Inuit communities, addressing the unique challenges and needs faced by individuals within these communities. The program integrates traditional Inuit healing practices with contemporary therapeutic approaches to ensure holistic care. It is designed to promote mental wellness, strengthen community bonds, and reduce stigma around mental health. This work plan outlines the annual goals, key milestones, monthly and weekly tasks, staff roles and responsibilities, and methods for program evaluation and adjustment, ensuring that the program is responsive, effective, and culturally relevant. Through continuous collaboration with community stakeholders, including staff at the Manitoba Inuit Association, the program will foster positive mental health outcomes for Inuit individuals and families.



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8.1 Annual Goals and Milestones

The annual goals for the Inuit mental health worker program will focus on enhancing the mental health and well-being of Inuit communities through culturally relevant and accessible services. Key milestones will include:

- *Quarter 1*
 - Establishing trust and rapport with community members and stakeholders. Begin providing culturally specific programming such as sewing and beading groups, and hot lunch programs.
- *Quarter 2*
 - Completing mental health assessments and initiating individualized care plans. Continue offering cultural programs to foster community connection.
- *Quarter 3*
 - Facilitating group therapy sessions and workshops focused on mental wellness, integrating traditional Inuit practices alongside modern therapeutic approaches.
- *Quarter 4*
 - Reviewing program outcomes, adjusting services to improve engagement, and collaborating with Manitoba Inuit Association staff to ensure program alignment with broader community goals.



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8.2 Monthly and Weekly Task Breakdown

Each month will focus on specific goals to ensure a comprehensive and consistent approach to mental health support, with an emphasis on cultural programming:

- Monthly:
 - Conduct mental health assessments for new clients.
 - Facilitate community engagement activities and educational workshops.
 - Take trainings in order to keep up to date with best mental health practices.
 - Implement culturally specific programming such as sewing groups, beading groups, and hot lunch programs to promote community bonding and mental wellness.

- Weekly:
 - Provide one-on-one counselling and therapy sessions to clients.
 - Organize and facilitate cultural activities, including group sewing and beading sessions.
 - Attend committee meetings and create resource guides
 - Provide crisis intervention as needed and collaborate with other service providers to coordinate care.



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8.3 Mental Health Worker Role and Responsibility

The Inuit mental health worker will have the following key responsibilities:

- *Direct Client Support*
 - Provide one-on-one counselling, group therapy, and crisis intervention services.
- *Cultural Programming*
 - Implement culturally relevant programming such as sewing groups, beading groups, and hot lunch programs to build community, encourage social interaction, and support mental health.
- *Collaboration*
 - Work closely with staff at the Manitoba Inuit Association to ensure program alignment with the larger organizational goals and community needs.
- *Community Outreach*
 - Engage with the community to raise awareness of mental health services and reduce stigma.
- *Cultural Integration*
 - Ensure services are culturally appropriate, combining traditional Inuit healing practices with Western therapeutic methods when appropriate.



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8.4 Program Evaluation and Adjustments

The program will be evaluated regularly to assess its effectiveness and ensure it meets the community's mental health needs. Evaluation will include:

- *Client Feedback*
 - Collect feedback from clients about their experiences and the quality of services.
- *Outcome Tracking*
 - Monitor improvements in mental health outcomes through regular assessments.
- *Stakeholder Input*
 - Gather feedback from community leaders, staff at the Manitoba Inuit Association, and other service providers to ensure comprehensive care.
- *Manager Meetings*
 - Conduct regular meetings with managers to review program performance, evaluate the mental health worker's impact, and make necessary adjustments.

Based on this evaluation, adjustments will be made to improve accessibility, effectiveness, and cultural relevance, ensuring the program remains responsive to the evolving needs of the Inuit community.



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Conclusion Program Work Plan and Implementation

The Inuit mental health worker program is designed to provide culturally tailored mental health support, fostering both individual healing and community well-being. By integrating traditional Inuit practices with modern therapeutic approaches, the program not only addresses mental health concerns but also strengthens community ties through cultural activities. Ongoing evaluation and collaboration with key stakeholders, such as the Manitoba Inuit Association, will ensure the program remains adaptable and effective. With a clear focus on cultural relevance and community empowerment, the program aims to promote long-term mental wellness within Inuit communities, contributing to a healthier and more resilient population.



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9. Past Reports and Program Evaluations

- *9.1 Summary of Previous Reports*
- *9.2 Findings and Recommendations*
- *9.3 Program Growth and Future Directions*



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Past Reports and Program Evaluations


The Inuit mental health program is a key initiative aimed at providing culturally relevant and accessible mental health services within Inuit communities. Over time, the program has grown in both scope and effectiveness, yet there are areas where further development and improvement are needed to ensure it best meets the needs of community members. This section highlights key findings from the program's current implementation, followed by recommendations for growth and future directions to enhance its impact. By understanding the program's current limitations and opportunities, we can continue to improve services, better engage the community, and ensure that mental wellness is accessible to all.




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9.1 Summary of Previous Reports



Mental health and wellness is defined as "self-esteem and personal dignity deriving from the presence of harmonious physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, religious, and cultural identities."
- Inuit-specific Mental Wellness Framework, 2021



THE KATIIVIK PROGRAM
MANITOBA INUIT ASSOCIATION MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM REPORT
MANITOBA INUIT ASSOCIATION / IKAYUQTIIIT INC.

Prepared by Katelyn Jacques, Manitoba Inuit Association Community Mental Health Worker and Corey Bangal, Community Support Worker

- The Manitoba Inuit Association recently expanded its presence beyond the Winnipeg office to reach out to Inuit residing in the small community of Churchill. The establishment of this satellite office in Churchill is designed to ensure that Inuit living in Northern Manitoba are recognized, acknowledged, and adequately supported, particularly in terms of their medical needs, access to cultural foods, and general welfare.
- The proposed project involves a journey up north to assess the existing services benefiting the Inuit community. The primary objectives include identifying gaps and specific services aligned with Inuit culture, across different age groups – adults, youths, and young adults.
- The project aims to understand the needs and preferences of the Inuit population, particularly focusing on issues such as youth suicide attempts, identity crises and substance abuse. A concerning number of our people are affected by violence, often linked to drugs and alcohol. There is also a recognized conflict between traditional and modern living, with the acknowledgement that certain aspects of what they are learning are beneficial in specific areas. However, the lack of attachment and meaning is evident, highlighting the need to incorporate more cultural teachings up north.



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"Encountering a healing journey that is grounded in culture and led by Inuit to inspire, protect, and support individual and collective well-being."

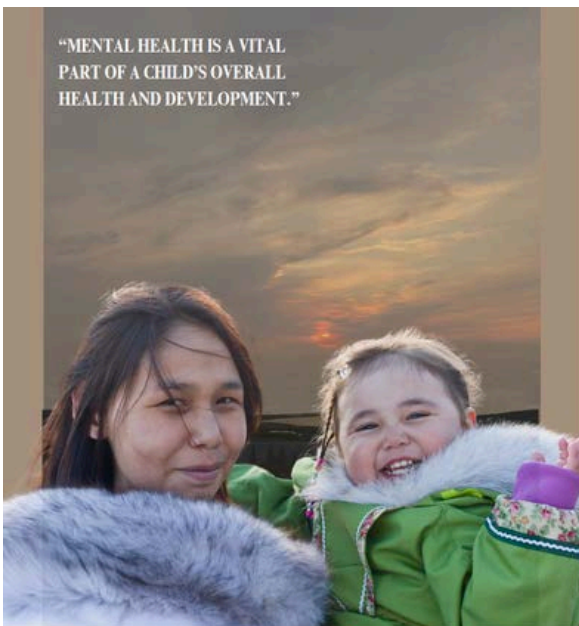


ANNUAL LAND-BASED HEALING EVENT - CHURCHILL

MANITOBA INUIT ASSOCIATION MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM X CFI REPORT
MANITOBA INUIT ASSOCIATION / IKAYUQTIT INC.

Prepared by Kelsey Jacques, Manitoba Inuit Association Community Mental Health Worker and Dominique Niquoy, Child First Initiative Liaison Manager - Churchill

- *The land-based healing event aimed to facilitate educational cultural practices and activities for Goose Camp in Churchill which will be taught by Inuk mentors to Inuit youth. This initiative aims to recognize traditional values like Pijitsirniq, nurturing relationships, to foster communal healing and resilience, Pilimmaksarniq/Pijariuqsarniq, developing skills through observation and knowledge acquisition and Avatittimik Kamatsiarniq, respecting and caring for the land, animals and environment through the experience.*
- *As part of our ongoing commitment to Inuit cultural preservation and community engagement, we have aimed to recognize Inuit mentors and knowledge keepers for their traditional cultural knowledge contributions to land-based education and cultural revitalization efforts. The Community Mental Health Worker and the Child First Initiative liaison manager have partnered together to offer mental health support and healing for youth in remote areas, emphasizing engagement with the land. Initially focusing on Churchill youth, we aim to troubleshoot and eventually expand inclusion to Winnipeg youth.*



"MENTAL HEALTH IS A VITAL PART OF A CHILD'S OVERALL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT."



YOUTH SUMMIT - CHURCHILL

MANITOBA INUIT ASSOCIATION / IKAYUQTIT INC. X CHURCHILL HEALTH CENTRE
MANITOBA INUIT ASSOCIATION MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM X CFI REPORT

Prepared by Kelsey Jacques, Dominique Niquoy, Core Zempel and Anissa Zepka

- *The youth gathering for Life Promotion Week, held in Churchill, Manitoba from July 24-29, was designed as a transformative and healing experience for young people aged 12-20. This event provided an invaluable opportunity for youth to develop leadership skills and build meaningful connections with peers from northern Manitoba and Nunavut. The week was filled with activities that fostered personal growth and cultural connection, including land-based experiences like beluga whale watching, shore lunches, and tundra hikes. Additionally, the youth were inspired by guest speakers and engaged in activities such as art, music, and sports, all aimed at enhancing their overall well-being.*
- *The gathering was proposed as a mental health initiative to empower youth, helping them become more confident and proud of their heritage. It also offered a supportive environment where they could connect with others facing similar challenges.*
- *Immersing the youth in different Indigenous cultures was a fundamental aspect of the event, designed to foster a profound sense of identity and belonging. By engaging in various cultural practices and traditions, the youth were able to reconnect with their own heritage in a meaningful way. This immersion allowed them to see the beauty and strength in their own cultural roots, while also opening their eyes to the diversity and richness of other Indigenous cultures.*



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9.2 Findings and Recommendations

Through ongoing assessment, feedback from clients, and input from community stakeholders, several key findings have emerged regarding the current status of the Inuit mental health program:

- *Need for More Mental Health Outreach:*
 - While one-on-one counselling sessions are crucial for addressing immediate mental health concerns, there is a recognized need for increased outreach efforts. Many community members, especially those outside of urban areas, may not be aware of the services available to them or feel comfortable seeking help. Expanding outreach, through community events and awareness campaigns, can help reduce stigma around mental health and ensure that more individuals access support. It is recommended that the program collaborate with local community centres, schools, and leaders to raise awareness and build trust within the community.
- *Importance of One-on-One Counselling:*
 - Despite the need for broader outreach, the value of one-on-one counseling sessions remains clear. Many individuals prefer a personalized approach to address their mental health concerns, and this individualized support allows the mental health worker to provide tailored care. However, there must be a balance between outreach and maintaining a manageable caseload for the counselor to ensure that the quality of care is not compromised. To address this, it is recommended that additional staff or volunteers be integrated into the program to support the mental health worker and expand service capacity.
- *Cultural Supports and Relationship Building:*
 - The presence of culturally specific supports, including traditional Inuit healing practices, is crucial for fostering trust and connection within the community. Clients feel more comfortable when mental health services acknowledge and integrate Inuit culture into treatment plans. Relationship-building between the mental health worker and clients is also vital for creating a safe, supportive environment. It is recommended that the program emphasize the importance of relationship-building through regular check-ins and creating opportunities for socialization through cultural activities like beading or sewing groups.



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9.3 Program Growth and Future Directions

To ensure the continued success and expansion of the Inuit mental health program, there are several key areas for growth and future directions:

- *Expansion of Regular Programming*
 - In order to meet the mental health needs of the community more effectively, it is essential to offer more consistent and frequent programming. This includes regular workshops and therapeutic groups, as well as a focus on expanding the program to target specific demographics such as youth and men. Currently, there is a gap in services for these groups, who often face unique mental health challenges and may be less likely to engage with traditional counseling services. Offering programming specifically designed for youth (such as mentorship or peer support groups) and men (such as fatherhood or wellness groups) can help bridge this gap and provide tailored support.
- *Youth Engagement*
 - There is a pressing need to focus on the mental health of Inuit youth. Due to high rates of suicide, depression, anxiety and schizophrenia. Many young people are navigating the challenges of identity, education, and belonging, making them vulnerable to mental health struggles. Future programming should include initiatives aimed at engaging youth through recreational activities, group counseling, and skill-building workshops. Mentorship programs or peer-led groups can also help young people feel supported by their peers while learning effective coping mechanisms and resilience skills.
- *Men's Mental Health*
 - Mental health support for Inuit men has often been overlooked, despite the fact that men in Inuit communities face unique challenges related to mental wellness, including societal pressures, substance abuse, and mental health stigma. It is recommended that the program develop more targeted services for men, such as wellness workshops, support groups, and programs focused on breaking down barriers to seeking help. Addressing these specific needs will ensure that men in the community are empowered to seek help when needed and build healthier emotional habits.
- *Cultural Programming and Integration*
 - The integration of cultural programming will continue to be a cornerstone of the program's success. It is recommended that more cultural events and group activities be incorporated into the program to foster a sense of community, reduce isolation, and promote healing. These activities not only provide therapeutic value but also act as a bridge to mental health services for those who may be hesitant to seek traditional counseling. The inclusion of traditional practices alongside modern approaches will remain an essential element of the program's future direction.



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Conclusion Past Reports and Program Evaluations

The Inuit mental health program has made significant strides in supporting the mental well-being of Inuit communities, but there is still work to be done. Findings from the program's ongoing evaluation highlight the need for expanded mental health outreach, the continued importance of one-on-one counselling, and greater emphasis on cultural supports and relationship-building. Moving forward, the program should focus on growth in areas such as youth and men's mental health, as well as the expansion of regular programming to increase accessibility and engagement. By implementing these recommendations and prioritizing cultural sensitivity, the program will continue to evolve and meet the changing needs of Inuit communities, ultimately fostering a healthier, more resilient population.



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10. Conclusion and Next Steps

- *10.1 Strengthening Cultural Mental Health Practices*
- *10.2 Client Testimonies*
- *10.3 Future Program Development*
- *10.4 Call to Action for Continued Support*



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Conclusion and Next Steps

The Inuit Mental Health Program has made significant strides in promoting mental wellness within Inuit communities by integrating culturally relevant practices and fostering strong community relationships. As we reflect on our journey, it becomes evident that our path forward involves deepening our commitment to cultural practices, amplifying client voices, and strategically planning for future growth. This holistic approach ensures that our services remain effective, inclusive, and grounded in the rich traditions of the Inuit people.



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10.1 Strengthening Cultural Mental Health Practices

Central to the success of our program is the integration of traditional Inuit healing methods with contemporary mental health practices. Elders have long emphasized the importance of maintaining cultural values amidst changing times. As one Elder wisely noted, “Although the context we live in is always dynamic, our beliefs never need to change.” This perspective underscores the necessity of embedding cultural practices into our mental health services.

To further strengthen these practices, we plan to:

- *Enhance Land-Based Healing Initiatives*
 - Recognizing the profound connection between the land and mental well-being, we will organize regular retreats and workshops that immerse participants in nature, facilitating healing and resilience.
- *Collaborate with Elders*
 - By involving Elders in program development and delivery, we ensure that traditional knowledge and practices are preserved and passed down, enriching the therapeutic process.
- *Cultural Skill-Building Workshops*
 - Offering sessions on traditional crafts, language, and storytelling not only fosters cultural pride but also serves as therapeutic outlets for expression and connection.



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10.2 Client Testimonies

The true impact of our program is best reflected in the experiences of our clients. Their journeys of healing and resilience inspire and guide our efforts. Below are some of their stories:

Quote:

- *“Kelsey has helped me and my family out so much. From having someone to just talk to when I didn't know who to talk to during some difficult moment's, to helping with my son being able to go to Churchill for a youth trip. My children and I also got a bit of help with getting some groceries. She's also helped with support letters. You've also helped by sending me housing leads, as my children and I need to move. She's also helped us out with a ride to get home after programs, also help with transportation to appointments/programs. Whether it was an uber, bus tickets, or asking the MIA/IAM driver for transportation. We're grateful for your support.”*

Quote:

- *“2024 I had the most trauma year! I moved from small community down to a city and I had absolutely no one in my grieving stage, so I was falling into depression and I didn't know what to do until I met kelsey, she has helped me get back on my 2 feet! And so thankful today where I am now with life. Absolutely a wonderful person! Today I am in college! If it wasn't for kelsey i don't know where I would be today. Thank you so much for what you do kelsey! You are one of a kind!”*

Quote:

- *“Working with Kelsey was great. She is very professional, caring and tries to understand what I'm going through then would give me suggestions and new ways of looking at problems and help me work through them in healthy ways.”*



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10.3 Future Program Development

Building upon the Mental Health Programs successes and insights, the Mental Health Worker is committed to expanding and refining their services to meet the evolving needs of the community. Future initiatives include:

- *Youth Engagement Programs*
 - Developing targeted interventions that address the unique challenges faced by Inuit youth, incorporating mentorship, peer support, and culturally relevant activities to foster resilience and a sense of belonging.
- *Men's Mental Health Initiatives*
 - Creating safe spaces and programs specifically designed for men, acknowledging and addressing the distinct mental health challenges they encounter, and encouraging open dialogue and support.
- *Mental Health Community Outreach and Education*
 - Expanding efforts to raise awareness about mental health, reduce stigma, and provide accessible resources through workshops, seminars, and collaborative events with local organizations.
- *Suicide Prevention Plan*
 - Recognizing the urgent need for suicide prevention efforts within the Inuit community, the mental health worker is looking at implementing a culturally responsive suicide prevention plan that will include, community-based crisis support, peer support networks culturally grounded coping strategies, 24/7 crisis response, collaboration with schools and youth programs.
- *Mental Health Resource Roadmap*
 - Many Inuit individuals living in or traveling to Winnipeg face difficulties accessing mental health services due to a lack of clear information about available resources. To address this gap, we will develop a Mental Health Resource Roadmap which will include map out key services, identify Inuit-specific supports, increase accessibility, provide navigation support.
 - By developing this roadmap, we aim to break down barriers to accessing mental health care, ensuring that Inuit individuals in Winnipeg can find the support they need quickly and efficiently.



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10.4 Call to Action for Continued Support

The journey toward holistic mental wellness is a collective endeavour that requires the unwavering support of the entire community and services at Manitoba Inuit Association. We call upon:

- *Community Members*
 - Engage with our programs, share your experiences, and support one another in the path to wellness.
- *Policy Makers and Funders*
 - Recognize the value of culturally integrated mental health services and allocate resources to sustain and expand these vital programs.
- *Healthcare Professionals*
 - Collaborate with us to blend traditional knowledge with modern practices, ensuring culturally competent and effective care.



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2025 Report Conclusion

The Inuit Mental Health Program has demonstrated the importance of culturally grounded approaches in fostering mental well-being within Inuit communities. By integrating traditional healing methods with modern therapeutic practices, the program has provided meaningful support to individuals while strengthening cultural identity and community ties. As we move forward, our focus remains on expanding outreach, enhancing youth and men’s mental health initiatives, and deepening the role of Elders in healing practices.

However, the success of this program depends on the continued engagement of the community, support from policymakers, and collaboration with healthcare professionals. By working together, we can ensure that mental health services remain accessible, effective, and culturally relevant for generations to come. Mental wellness is a journey that requires collective effort, and with ongoing dedication, we can create a stronger, healthier future for Inuit communities.

Kelsey Jacques
Inuit Mental Health Worker
Manitoba Inuit Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelsey Jacques". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed over a light grey rectangular background.