



RECLAIMING THE CAPABLE PERSON: WE ARE ALL CAPABLE PERSONS WHEN WE HAVE COMMUNITY

A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING FAMILY VIOLENCE IN THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

SE RÉAPPROPRIER LA PERSONNE COMPÉTENTE : NOUS SOMMES TOUS DES PERSONNES COMPÉTENTES LORSQUE LA COMMUNAUTÉ EST DERRIÈRE NOUS

CADRE STRATÉGIQUE POUR LUTTER CONTRE LA VIOLENCE
FAMILIALE AUX TERRITOIRES DU NORD-OUEST

Le present document contient la traduction française du sommaire et du message du première ministre.

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A Message from the Minister

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is committed to implementing a strategic framework across government that supports large-scale social change to effectively lower the rates of family violence in the Northwest Territories (NWT). The overarching purpose of this strategic framework is to outline a strategy that will:

- Create a clear vision within government and agencies about the direction the GNWT will take to address family violence;
- Strengthen and deepen the GNWT's efforts to prevent family violence;
- Enhance and expand services and supports to provide a full and inclusive continuum of response options for survivors and perpetrators of family violence; and,
- Promote and coordinate a system-wide, collaborative approach to confronting factors that contribute to family violence.

This strategic framework will allow the GNWT to further its mission by meeting the safety needs of survivors and rehabilitative needs of perpetrators—participating in transformative change that will better equip the GNWT and its partners to respond to family violence in the North. Everyone has the right to feel safe in their own home, and action from the GNWT plays a critical role in making this a reality. This framework recognizes that every single resident of the territory is a capable person, and that the GNWT has a responsibility to approach Indigenous partners as equals.

In coordination with Indigenous organizations and people, the goal is to stop the cycle of intergenerational trauma that has created a pattern of family violence across the NWT. The inclusion of Indigenous perspectives to address family violence is not intended to characterize family violence as an Indigenous problem, but as an acknowledgement of the affects the past has had on where we are today.

Indigenous partners, Elders, Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals are equipped with the knowledge to lead systems-wide change that is transformative and profound. We must address the root causes of gender-based and family violence if we are to live well together in the future.

We know that there is no quick fix to ending family violence. Enhancing prevention and intervention efforts will take time and consistent effort. We will use a monitoring and evaluation framework to hold ourselves to account, measuring our progress as we work together towards success.

Caroline Wawzonek
Minister responsible for the Status of Women

Message de la ministre

Le gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (TNO) s'est engagé à mettre en œuvre un cadre stratégique dans l'ensemble du gouvernement qui favorise un changement social à grande échelle afin de réduire efficacement les taux de violence familiale aux Territoires du Nord-Ouest (TNO). L'objectif principal de ce cadre stratégique est de définir une stratégie qui permettra :

- de créer une vision claire au sein du gouvernement et des organismes quant à l'orientation que prendra le GTNO pour lutter contre la violence familiale;
- d'intensifier et d'approfondir les efforts du GTNO dans le domaine de la prévention de la violence familiale;
- d'améliorer et d'étendre les services et les mesures de soutien afin d'offrir un continuum complet et inclusif d'options de réponse aux survivants et aux auteurs de violences familiales;
- de promouvoir et de coordonner une approche collaborative à l'échelle du système pour lutter contre les facteurs qui contribuent à la violence familiale.

Ce cadre stratégique permettra au GTNO de poursuivre sa mission en répondant aux besoins de sécurité des survivants et aux besoins de réhabilitation des auteurs de violence, tout en participant à un changement transformateur qui permettra au GTNO et à ses partenaires de mieux lutter contre la violence familiale dans le Nord. Chacun a le droit de se sentir en sécurité à la maison, et les mesures prises par le GTNO jouent un rôle essentiel pour faire de ce droit une réalité. Ce cadre reconnaît que chaque résident du territoire est une personne compétente et que le GTNO a la responsabilité d'aborder les partenaires autochtones sur un pied d'égalité.

En coordination avec les organisations et les populations autochtones, l'objectif est d'arrêter le cycle des traumatismes intergénérationnels qui a créé un modèle de violence familiale aux TNO. L'inclusion des perspectives autochtones dans le traitement de la violence familiale ne vise pas à caractériser la violence familiale comme un problème autochtone, mais plutôt à reconnaître les répercussions du passé sur notre situation actuelle.

Les partenaires autochtones, les aînés, les femmes autochtones et les personnes 2ELGBTQQIA+ possèdent les connaissances nécessaires pour susciter un changement profond et transformateur dans l'ensemble du système. Nous devons nous attaquer aux causes profondes de la violence familiale et fondée sur le genre si nous voulons bien vivre ensemble.

Nous savons qu'il n'existe pas de solution miracle pour mettre fin à la violence familiale. L'amélioration des efforts de prévention et d'intervention nécessitera du temps et des efforts constants. Nous utiliserons un cadre de suivi et d'évaluation pour nous rendre compte de notre action, en mesurant nos progrès pendant notre collaboration.

Caroline Wawzonek
Ministre responsable de la condition de la femme

Executive Summary

The GNWT has developed a draft strategic framework to address family violence in the NWT to meet the safety needs of survivors and the rehabilitative needs of perpetrators by providing equitable access to a continuum of integrated GNWT services that are preventative, supportive, and rehabilitative, while building strong partnerships with community organizations to strengthen the overall service provision for Northerners.

Family and gender-based violence contributed to women in the NWT experiencing intimate partner violence at 12 times the national rate from 2018 to 2019 (Statistics Canada, 2020). Recognition of the role that gender can play for both survivors and perpetrators of family violence indicates that the strategic priorities outlined in this framework must be designed through the lens of gender, and culture. This framework acknowledges that a holistic approach to family violence must take priority moving forward.

The following five pillars of this strategic framework are designed to encompass a fully holistic response to family violence in the NWT, and to align with the pillars featured in the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (Government of Canada, 2020).

The draft framework outlines a holistic approach to family violence that focuses on five pillars:

1. **Support for victims, survivors, and families** that is immediate, responsive, competent, stable, equitable, trauma-informed, and culturally appropriate.
2. **Prevention** that reduces barriers to getting help and the normalization of family violence by educating children and communities on family violence issues, providing trauma-informed training for professionals, and engaging men and boys in gender-based violence preventative programming.
3. **A responsive justice system** that addresses the underlying factors that lead to family violence and adjusts standard practices that can retraumatize survivors.
4. **Indigenous-led approaches** that address the ongoing effects of colonization in the NWT and allows individuals to take control of their own healing.
5. **Social infrastructure and enabling environments** that focus on equitable person-centred service delivery.

The GNWT is sharing the draft framework with Indigenous and community governments and other key stakeholders for input before it is finalized. Once the strategic framework is finalized, the GNWT will create an action plan to implement new initiatives and enhance existing programs and services.

Sommaire

Le GTNO a élaboré un projet de cadre stratégique pour lutter contre la violence familiale aux TNO afin de répondre aux besoins de sécurité des survivants et aux besoins de réhabilitation des auteurs de violence en offrant un accès équitable à un continuum de services intégrés du GTNO qui visent la prévention, le soutien et la réhabilitation, tout en établissant des partenariats solides avec les organisations communautaires afin de solidifier la prestation globale de services pour les habitants du Nord.

De 2018 à 2019, les femmes des TNO ont subi la violence familiale et fondée sur le genre à un taux 12 fois supérieur au taux national (Statistique Canada, 2020). La reconnaissance du rôle que le genre peut jouer tant pour les survivants que pour les auteurs de violence familiale démontre que les priorités stratégiques décrites dans le présent cadre doivent être conçues en tenant compte du genre, de l'équité, de la guérison collective et de la culture. Ce cadre confirme qu'il faut privilégier une approche holistique de la violence familiale.

Les cinq piliers suivants de ce cadre stratégique sont conçus pour offrir une réponse holistique à la violence familiale aux TNO, et pour s'aligner sur les piliers présentés dans le Plan d'action national pour mettre fin à la violence fondée sur le genre (gouvernement du Canada, 2020).

Le projet de cadre définit une approche globale de la violence familiale qui s'articule autour de cinq piliers :

1. **Un soutien aux victimes, aux survivants et aux familles** qui soit immédiat, réactif, compétent, stable, équitable, tenant compte des traumatismes et culturellement approprié.
2. **Des efforts de prévention** qui réduisent les obstacles à l'obtention d'une aide et empêchent la normalisation de la violence familiale en éduquant les enfants et les collectivités sur les questions de violence familiale, en offrant aux professionnels une formation tenant compte des traumatismes et en faisant participer les hommes et les garçons à des programmes de prévention de la violence fondée sur le sexe.
3. **Un système judiciaire réactif** qui s'attaque aux facteurs sous-jacents de la violence familiale et adapte les pratiques courantes susceptibles de traumatiser à nouveau les survivants.
4. **Des approches autochtones** qui s'attaquent aux effets persistants de la colonisation aux TNO et qui permettent aux individus de prendre en main leur propre guérison.
5. **Des infrastructures sociales et des environnements favorables** qui mettent l'accent sur la fourniture de services équitables et centrés sur la personne.

Le cadre de travail sur la violence familiale a été distribué aux intervenants clés et aux gouvernements autochtones, dont les commentaires ont été intégrés au document. La Division de l'équité des genres travaillera avec les ministères pour élaborer des plans de mise en œuvre comprenant des améliorations aux programmes et services existants, ainsi que pour déterminer de nouvelles initiatives à mettre en œuvre.

Mission and Value Statement

The mission of this strategic framework, and the action plan that will follow, is to empower residents of the NWT to make choices that reflect who they want to be and what they want to achieve by providing equitable access to a continuum of integrated GNWT services that are preventative, supportive, and rehabilitative, while building strong partnerships with community organizations to strengthen overall service provision for Northerners. Everyone deserves to be free from family violence and to be free to experience rich, healthy relationships.

Introduction

The NWT is a mosaic of beautiful lands, communities, peoples, cultures, and languages. It has long been the traditional homeland of the Dene, Metis, and Inuit, and many of its residents have been and continue to be touched by the effects of colonization. While family violence affects all people in the NWT, it has disproportionately impacted Indigenous peoples. Intergenerational trauma and inequities across support services perpetuate the cycle of violence.

Family violence is complex; we know that any gains in preventing or reducing family violence will not come from a single organization or department, but will involve individuals, families, neighbours, service providers, formal and informal leadership, and all levels of government. We also know that to be successful in addressing family violence, all these players must have their efforts coordinated and integrated.

Services must meet each client where they are because each person is born capable with the need for personal growth and discovery that is present throughout their life. People don't need to be fixed, they need to be supported in accessing the tools required to meet their survival needs, heal their hearts, and set their sights on the goals they have that are in alignment with the person they want to be.

The GNWT acknowledges, however, that this framework was specifically developed to provide direction to the work that the GNWT is doing, and though we may desire a collaborative working relationship with organizations and governments outside of the GNWT to get this work done, we are not implying that participation is mandatory.

While all forms of violence are unacceptable, the aim of this strategic framework is to address family violence, specifically, and outline what the GNWT will do to address the causes and impacts of family violence. Families are often exposed to multiple forms of violence and abuse at the same time, and research tells us that this exposure significantly increases the chance of ongoing violence (Wilkins et. al., 2014). The GNWT acknowledges that other forms of violence and abuse, such as senior abuse, financial abuse, and gender-based violence, have factors that intersect at multiple levels and iterations with family violence. The GNWT holds that the action plan items that result from this strategic framework will apply across all these intersections and population groups and once implemented, will have positive impacts on all violence rates and across intersecting factors.

Family violence is a deeply gendered issue that requires initiatives and supports developed through an intersectional lens, keeping in mind the roles that gender, sexuality, and ethnicity play in the cycle of violence. These intersections are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

What the Research Tells Us

There have been several NWT-specific research reports released in the last few years that highlight the need for a comprehensive response to address family violence rates in the NWT. These include, but are not limited to:

- The Aurora Research Institute (ARI), which developed a three-part research series to elicit recommendations toward a comprehensive GNWT approach to family violence with a focus on best practice, alignment of efforts and identification of priority areas for investment over the coming years. The ARI held a series of sharing circles to ensure survivor's voices were included in the research.
- The Status of Women Council of the NWT's release of *"We Hear You: A call for caring co-action to improve services for women experiencing intimate partner violence"*, which described the results of a three-year research project focused on the lived experience of survivors navigating programs following incidents of intimate partner violence in the territory.
- The YWCA released a report entitled *"The Nature of Emergency Protection Orders (EPOs) in the Northwest Territories, Canada: A Case Study."* This study, covering 2017-2019, outlines views of survivor applicants and front-line workers on the use of EPOs to address intimate partner violence and recommendations to promote safety for women across the NWT.

These reports, along with one-on-one service provider engagement, and engagement completed as part of the GNWT's Final Action Plan in Response to the Calls for Justice on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual plus (2SLGBTQQA+) people, were used to inform the development of this strategic framework, as well as the table of proposed actions found below.

What is Family Violence?

The Aurora Research Institute's (ARI) *"Scoping Review of Family Violence"* recognizes that family violence in the NWT must be viewed through a Northern lens with the necessary Northern context, defining family violence as:

behaviour, across the lifespan, from a person to a family member that is physically, sexually, psychologically, economically, or spiritually abusive, threatening, coercive, uses surveillance, or in any other way controls and dominates the family member (ARI, 2019).

For the purposes of this document, the GNWT is adopting the ARI's definition of family violence. This strategic framework uses the term family violence instead of domestic violence or intimate partner violence as an acknowledgement that any form of violence that involves children—whether they experience it first-hand or witness it—has serious consequences. Family violence is a holistic term which encompasses survivors of abuse that are not always considered when discussing violence in a relationship, including children and elderly family members. While it is expected that the execution of this strategy will address all forms of violence and abuse, they were not specified directly in this framework.

Why Do We Need a Strategic Framework and Action Plan?

Background

The latest statistical data we have available to us on family violence rates in the NWT is from a 2019 Statistics Canada data analysis entitled *Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2019*. It reports that the NWT has the second highest rate of police-reported family violence in Canada, second only to Nunavut, with 1,203 victims reporting family violence to police. In 2019, the rate of police-reported family violence in the NWT was 1,989 per 100,000 residents. In comparison, the national average was 276 per 100,000. This statistic refers to violence committed by spouses (legally married, separated, divorced and common-law), parents (biological, step, adopted and foster), children (biological, step, adopted and foster), siblings (biological, step, half, adopted and foster) and extended family members (e.g.: grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and in-laws) (Conroy, 2021).

The NWT also has the second highest rate of police-reported intimate partner violence in Canada. Intimate partner violence refers to violence committed by legally married, separated or divorced spouses, common-law partners (current and former), dating partners (current and former) and other intimate partners between the ages of 15-89 years. In 2019, the intimate partner victimization rate in the NWT was 3,890 per 100,000 residents (Canada: 310 per 100,000) (Conroy, 2021). Between 2011 and 2021, police reported 1,125 gender-related homicides of women and girls in Canada. Of these homicides, two-thirds (66%) were perpetrated by an intimate partner, 28% a family member, 5% a friend or acquaintance and the remaining 1% a stranger. Of these victims, the largest proportion were killed by their legally married spouse (30%), followed by a common-law partner (28%) and a non-spousal intimate partner (26%). The remaining 15% were killed by a former legal spouse or common-law partner. In 2021, the territories recorded the highest rate of gender-related homicide of women and girls (3.20 per 100,000 women and girls), much higher than the rate of homicides in the highest rate found in the provinces (Saskatchewan - 1.03, Manitoba - 0.72 and Alberta - 0.68) (Sutton, 2023).

Police-reported data are likely conservative estimates, as family violence is underreported based on the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (2016). Self-reported data, which is data gathered directly from survivors about the violence they have endured, assists us in better understanding the rate of family violence as we can compare the numbers against data received from police reports. According to the Government of Canada's 2019 General Social Survey (GSS) on Canadians' Safety (victimization) only one in five (19%) spousal violence victims in Canada reported any spousal victimization that occurred in the previous five years to the police.

Across the Lifespan

Child abuse and family violence are prevalent issues in Canada and in the NWT. In a self-report Canadian survey, more than 9 in 10 (93%) people who experienced childhood physical or sexual abuse said that it was never reported to police, child protective services, or another agency (Statistics Canada, 2019). Children who are exposed to violence in the home are consistently at risk of immediate and permanent physical harm, including death, and have considerably higher risk of developing short and long-term emotional, behavioural, and developmental issues. Child abuse has been linked to depression, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies. Extensive research has revealed childhood trauma impacts more than psychological development; it can lead to an increased risk of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, asthma, kidney disease, stroke, coronary heart disease, cancer, and obesity across a lifespan (Merrick, Ford, Ports, et al., 2019). In the NWT, the rate of children and youth experiencing family violence rose 12 per cent from 2018 to 2019 (Conroy, 2021).

Furthermore, children who witness or experience abuse are more likely to continue the cycle of violence and become perpetrators or victims of abuse themselves in the future. This intersection between child statistics and family violence underscores the need for interventions that address both the children and their families.

Between 2018 and 2019, intimate partner violence rose 28 per cent in the Northwest Territories —12 times the national average. Women are twice as likely to experience family violence in comparison to men and represent 79 per cent of the survivors of intimate partner violence in the NWT (Conroy, 2021).

Violence against seniors (aged 65-89, using the Statistics Canada measure), often occurs in the home and by family members. Seniors experience varying types of abuse by family members, such as physical and sexual assault, emotional and financial abuse and neglect and abandonment. Between 2018 and 2019, rates of family violence against seniors in the NWT decreased by nine per cent. While the rate did lower, it is still 19.5 times the national average. Seniors are at an increased risk of family violence as vulnerable members of the community who may depend on the perpetrator as a caregiver (Conroy, 2021).

Intersectionality also plays a significant role in the risk of senior abuse. Senior women, Indigenous elders, and elder members of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community are particularly vulnerable to senior abuse within the family. A significant number of cases of senior abuse remain unreported due to factors such as fear, shame, wanting to protect the perpetrator and lack of awareness about available resources.

Inequitable distribution and access to the appropriate resources that help survivors and perpetrators contributes to the cycle of violence across the territory because it allows more vulnerable groups to remain static or stuck in their situations longer than those who have the capacity for internal agency. Inequities in this context encompass the notion that people are not starting from the same place when dealing with family violence, so supports and services should not be equally distributed, but rather person-centred, and responsive to individual needs.

Attitudes and Normalization

The persistent normalization of family violence in the NWT contributes to the intergenerational cycle of trauma. Attitudes and perspectives on consent, healthy relationships, and the lack of intervention from witnesses exacerbate the prevalence of violence, creating an environment where violent behaviours are seen as understandable and even normal within a community, family, or relationship (ARI, 2019; NWT Bureau of Statistics, 2008). According to a *2007 Family Violence Survey* conducted by the NWT Bureau of Statistics, high proportions of respondents across the NWT did not consider actions proposed to them in the survey as characteristic of family violence, including behaviour such as siblings hitting each other during a fight. The prevalence of the normalization of violence was evident in the survey, as 34.8 per cent of respondents in NWT's small communities (communities other than Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik and Fort Smith) reported that physical violence between a couple is a private matter (NWT Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Although these survey results are dated, the normalization of violence in the NWT is a notion that is widely acknowledged, as learned anecdotally through ARI's (2019) community engagement. Early intervention and prevention for children and youth regarding healthy relationships, both in and out of school, has been effective in reducing the normalization of family violence in communities (ARI, 2019).

Factors that Protect Against and Contribute to Family Violence

There are several factors that affect the frequency and degree of family violence for both survivors and perpetrators in the NWT. The presence or absence of these factors contribute to the cycle of abuse across a lifespan. Circumstances, such as the acceptance of equitable gender roles, positive community connection, strong social supports, equitable access to resources, choices and opportunities, strong and positive cultural identities, a sense of belonging, emotional literacy and competence, stable mental health, and support for parenting and caregiving, all function to protect against family violence. Factors such as inequitable system design, gender, and race inequity, ingrained systemic racism, ingrained shame and internal belief systems, drug and alcohol abuse, institutional bias and oppression, poverty, and lack of appropriate and equitable system responses, all perpetuate family violence.

These factors do not operate in isolation, and the presence of more than one contributing factor will impact an individual's capacity to act, just as the presence of more than one protective factor will work to prevent and heal both survivors and perpetrators. Survivors and perpetrators involved in the family violence cycle will go through periods of stability and instability; it is with this in mind that the GNWT aims to equip families and individuals with the necessary tools to maintain stability in the face of adversity.

Connection Between Past and Present

As more than half of the NWT's population identifies as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, the GNWT is committed to the ongoing process of decolonization and reconciliation in the interest of creating a future

where everyone lives well together. As Indigenous peoples have lived on this land since time immemorial, this strategy looks to Indigenous knowledge in recognition of healing as a holistic practice, acknowledging that moving forward in a good and healing way together today means an investment in our collective wellbeing for the future.

Across the NWT, Elders from various cultures and communities recount traditional knowledge of what has been translated as the 'capable person' (James, 2016). Some of the words used to describe the capable person are no longer used in contemporary language, but the lesson remains in each Indigenous culture, preserved through traditional storytelling practices, and embodied by Elders. The teachings of these Elders reinforce that every child—and every person—is born capable. Embedded within these teachings is the collective responsibility to nurture and provide opportunities, guidance, and experiences that help individuals in the process of becoming their own capable person.

Strength-based and person-centred practices are modern iterations of ancient Indigenous teachings in the NWT. Strength-based pedagogy involves using the interests and strengths of an individual to improve areas of need in their lives; in the same way, person-centred service delivery emphasizes empowering the individual to be proactive in their life decisions and recognizes that everyone accessing a service is their own person. This strategic framework focuses on individual agency and the importance of empowering those individuals affected by family violence to make decisions for themselves to embody the capacity within to heal and elevate themselves into a fulfilled life; whatever that may subjectively look like. In doing so, this strategy envisions all survivors and perpetrators of family violence as capable persons. The GNWT envisions its role as a provider of resources to better equip survivors and perpetrators to make empowered decisions for themselves, their families, and their communities.

The inclusion of Indigenous perspectives to address family violence is **not** intended to characterize family violence as an Indigenous problem.

Despite the passage of time, the ongoing legacy of colonization, genocide, and intergenerational trauma continues to impact Indigenous peoples in the NWT. Long before the adoption of the Indian Act, Indigenous peoples across Canada suffered as a result of first contact with Europeans. Ongoing and past acts of settler colonial violence continue to affect First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples across the country; these include but are not limited to:

- land dispossession;
- the Residential School system;
- cultural genocide;
- language erasure;
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirit (MMIWG2S);
- the Sixties Scoop;
- child apprehension and hospital alerts;
- forced sterilization;
- child welfare system involvement;
- systemic racism;
- the Tuberculosis (TB) epidemic;
- poverty and homelessness;
- limited economic opportunities;
- the reserve system;
- systemic barriers to housing;
- income assistance;
- lack of mental health supports;
- exclusionary education, employment and training;
- food insecurity; and
- inaccessible substance abuse recovery programs.

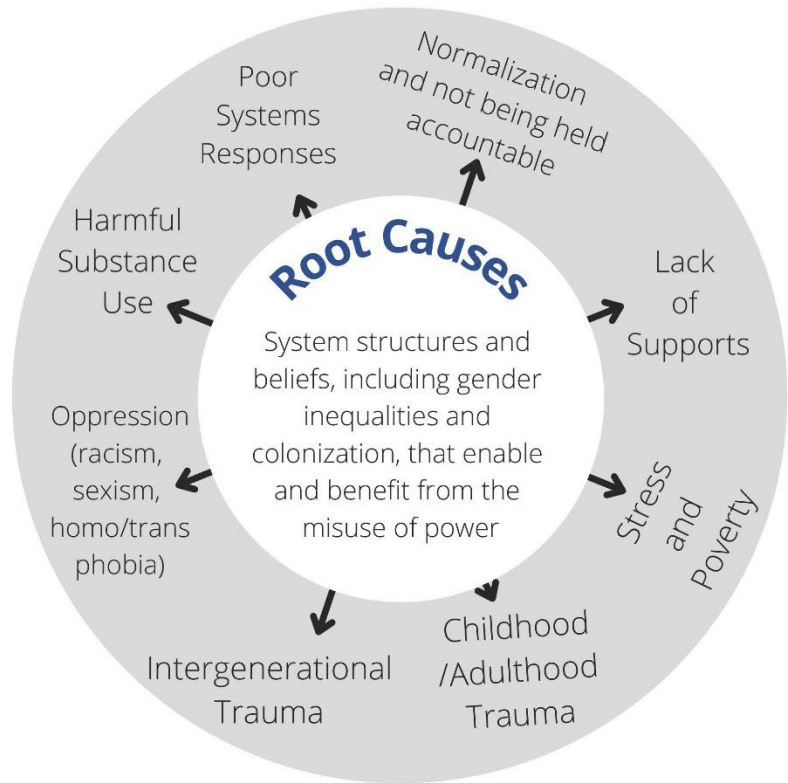
The intersection of age, race, gender, and sexuality further perpetuates this systemic violence against Indigenous women, girls, and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Canada's colonial legacy includes a longstanding history of removing Indigenous children and youth from their communities and families, often placing them under the care of non-Indigenous strangers. The destruction of the Indigenous family unit directly contributes to family violence in the NWT and across Canada. In addition to this, the intersection of unmet needs experienced by vulnerable populations creates barriers to receiving help. Government services require navigating different rules, policies, and procedures, which can overwhelm and discourage individuals from getting the help they need, contributing to underlying feelings of system distrust.

Communities and families across the NWT expressed a strong desire to heal from the traumas that impact their daily living. The GNWT recognizes this need for healing as a necessary and immediate step toward changing the future and creating a safe space for all. Like any wound, the injuries to our families need time and energy to mend. By incorporating a more holistic approach to recovery, this strategic framework hopes to address both societal and family healing as we navigate the broader social issues that contribute to family violence in the North.

FACTORS THAT INTENSIFY FAMILY VIOLENCE



Leading to more trauma, hopelessness, frustration and violence **and the cycle continues**



Family Violence Intersections

Diversity within the NWT's population means that people's lives are complex and not defined by any single factor. People's experiences are shaped by the intersection of a number of social conditions, such as gender, class, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, gender identity, religion and age. Each of these factors, or identity attributes, influences, and has an impact on our lives and our experiences. Social structures and systems, and the way they intersect, play a large role in creating social conditions that result in power and privilege or discrimination and oppression, thus shaping the ways in which people experience inequity, disadvantage, and violence.

It is important to understand the intersections between family violence and other factors that cause, contribute to, and exacerbate a survivor's exposure to violence. Factors such as housing, income accessibility, mental health and many others contribute to how survivors respond to the exposure to violence.

For example, family violence can lead to homelessness and experiencing homelessness can lead to further violence and traumatization, in a cycle that becomes difficult to break. The need for safe and affordable housing is one of the most pressing concerns for survivors of violence and abuse. Many survivors face unique barriers to accessing shelter and affordable housing, due to the power and control dynamics involved in these types of abuse and the economic and trauma impacts that result. These barriers are often exacerbated for those most marginalized in our society and with the least access to resources, including 2SLGBTQQIA+ and female survivors, racialized survivors, those living in poverty and in geographic and social isolation, survivors with disabilities, survivors with children, and more. In addition, systemic factors such as discrimination and the lack of housing options create further challenges for many survivors. At the same time, housing programs that are integrated with other support services can provide critical wrap-around support for survivors, which is a key component in helping survivors find safety and stability.

Income accessibility is another factor that intersects with family violence. Limiting or controlling assets is a common tactic used by perpetrators of family violence to gain power and control in a relationship. In some cases, financial abuse is present throughout the relationship; in other cases, financial abuse becomes present when the survivor is attempting to leave or has left the relationship.

Financial abuse can have terrible short- and long-term consequences. In the short term, having access to assets is critical to staying secure. Without resources, survivors are often unable to secure safe and affordable housing or the finances to provide even basic needs for themselves or their children. With serious fears of experiencing homelessness and food insecurity, it is not surprising that some survivors return to an abusive partner. Lack of financial means prolongs the abuse cycle by limiting survivors' ability to meet their, and often their children's, basic needs, creating compounded instability.

When services and supports are easy to access and are integrated to ensure various needs are met in a

timely manner, survivors are better equipped to make the choice to stay or leave, with the fear of further instability and hardship if they choose to leave reduced. However, even when their basic needs are met, individuals who choose to flee the abuse and move toward recovery continue to face on-going challenges in gaining long-term stability. Ruined credit ratings, debt, sporadic employment histories, and legal troubles created by abuse makes gaining full independence, safety, and long-term stability extremely difficult. Some survivors will require more ongoing support than others and ensuring that supports are tailored to the individual and their specific needs is paramount to survivor success.

Family violence has been central to the reality for many in the NWT, including those who identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+. The marginalization, oppression, and stigma experienced by people in the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community puts them at a greater risk of staying in family and gender-based violence situations. There are added fears about reaching out for help that are more relevant to the realities of identifying as 2SLGBTQQIA+, such as being 'outed' before they are ready, fear of the abuse reflecting negatively upon the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, perceptions that they could have a negative experience with a service provider, and many more.

Family violence is one of the primary factors leading to homelessness among 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth. 2SLGBTQQIA+ people between the ages of 17-25 are more likely to face family violence than their non-2SLGBTQQIA+ counterparts. Some families ostracize their children for being 2SLGBTQQIA+, which leads to homelessness. Homeless 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth report higher levels of violence, sexual abuse, and harassment compared to other homeless youth, leading to serious adverse psychological and mental health outcomes.

Not only is violence in the home on its' own difficult, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people face the additional challenge of not fitting into the set service provision boxes that are designed for heterosexual service users, which hinders 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's ability to access safe services when trying to leave an abusive living situation. In the NWT, this issue is particularly prevalent as there are no housing services that are inclusive of gender-diverse needs.

Newcomers to Canada—and the North—may experience barriers related to language, awareness of the legal and social norms in Canada, and knowledge of resources available to help. Suggested solutions made by newcomers to Canada in the engagement circles conducted by the Aurora Research Institute (2019) include education about the law and Northern societal norms relating to gender roles in relationships, consistency in community service provider presence, access to seniors and Elders, and court-mandated programming for those who use violence in their relationships.

The above-mentioned factors are just a handful of several, intersecting aspects that impact and complicate family violence risk. The GNWT understands that with complex issues such as family violence, where intersecting factors contribute to and exacerbate rates, it is imperative that an integrated response is used if efforts are to be successful. Currently, the GNWT is working on the development and implementation of an NWT-wide program termed *Integrated Service Delivery* (ISD) to acknowledge these

intersections at the service delivery level. ISD is a whole-of-government approach that aims to seamlessly connect these intersections, reduce gaps in service delivery and ensure the needs of all residents of the NWT are addressed holistically.

Additionally, ensuring perpetrators have access to rehabilitative services is of top importance to healing families across the NWT and is often part of what survivors want. The GNWT acknowledges the importance of traditional healing practices, such as on-the-land healing initiatives, including practices specific to men's healing, that allow for communities to develop their own ways of healing that feel right. The GNWT recognizes that communities are the experts in knowing and understanding what is required to get families back to a way of being that is safe for everyone.

This strategic framework has taken this knowledge at face value and made the underlying message of healing central to its core.

GNWT Action to Date

The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs (EIA) was tasked with addressing the high rate of family violence in the NWT. As family violence involves each department in different ways, a Family Violence Coordinator position was created to coordinate initiatives across the GNWT. The Interdepartmental Family Violence Working Group assists in the development of a comprehensive approach to address family violence. The goal of this work is to identify wise practices, align existing GNWT work, and identify priority areas for investment over the coming years.

Gender-based violence, family violence, and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls are overlapping and intersecting issues. To be effective, the GNWT approach must address each of these, as well as the underlying issues of gender equality and discrimination against 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons in the NWT. *The Final Action Plan in Response to the Calls for Justice on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People* was tabled in the 19th Legislative Assembly on November 2, 2022, as a step in this direction.

Intended to dismantle colonialism and eliminate racial and gendered discrimination from all levels of government and public institutions, the Action Plan explains how the GNWT will work to change the relationship between the GNWT's departments, agencies, employees, policies, and processes; and their daily encounters with Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

The GNWT currently implements a variety of programs and policies to address family violence (Appendix B). These fall into three broad categories: prevention, support for survivors, and interventions for perpetrators.

Although many of these programs and policies are working as intended, the GNWT recognizes that enhancements to current initiatives are needed to meet the holistic needs of survivors and perpetrators.

Additionally, the GNWT acknowledges that there are gaps in service availability and siloed approaches to service delivery in the North and that support services are not delivered in an equitable way. Some government service interactions cause undue stress and barriers to service access, impacting survivor and perpetrator resiliency, leading to frustrations with the systems and internal personal immobility. The GNWT aims to resolve these issues by working toward integrating intersecting government services to ensure a person-centred, whole-of-government approach that reduces gaps in service and best serves those in need, as and when they need.

This strategic framework serves to outline where the GNWT can best focus future resources toward improving services available in the North, based on research conducted specific to the NWT.

Strategic Priorities

Gender-based violence contributed to women in the NWT experiencing intimate partner violence at 12 times the national rate from 2018 to 2019 (Statistics Canada, 2020). Recognition of the role that gender can play for both survivors and perpetrators of family violence indicates that the strategic priorities outlined in this framework must be designed through the lens of gender and culture. This framework acknowledges that a holistic approach to family violence must take priority moving forward.

The following five pillars of this strategic framework are designed to encompass a fully holistic response to family violence in the NWT, and to align with the pillars featured in the *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence* (Government of Canada, 2020).

1. Support for victims, survivors, and their families
2. Prevention
3. Responsive justice system
4. Implementing Indigenous-led approaches
5. Social infrastructure and enabling environment

It is important to note that the initiatives outlined below flow directly from the voices of survivors and the service providers that walk alongside them, as they are laid out in the NWT-specific research conducted by stakeholders, all of which can be found in the reference sections. Additionally, many informal, one-on-one conversations between the GNWT and service providers took place to ensure that the recommendations listed in the tables noted below remained relevant to the needs of Northerners.

Pillar One: Support for Survivors and their Families

It is paramount that individuals experiencing family violence receive the support that they need. Receiving support, however, is not enough. Ending family violence involves the ability for survivors and their families to access immediate, responsive, competent, stable, equitable, trauma-informed, and culturally appropriate supports within the community they live in. The inability to access services in such a way often results in re-traumatization for many survivors, and the GNWT recognizes that minimizing re-traumatization must be prioritized.

Survivors depend on accessing these critical, lifesaving services, often during periods of high stress and trauma. For many individuals, these supports provide the only safe spaces they have access to. Front-line service providers deliver a variety of social, health, justice, and community programming that helps support and empower survivors in addition to offering protection. All individuals experiencing family violence deserve adequate care. Family violence affects everyone, including women, girls, and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. This pillar recognizes that members of these groups are

disproportionately impacted by family violence and will need sufficient support to move forward. There is a strong need for action informed by both the organizations and service providers working in each community, as they are equipped with knowledge surrounding the unique needs of residents, along with systemic barriers, and the solutions needed that may differ from community to community. The GNWT takes a person-centred approach to ensure survivors have the tools to feel safe and heal.

Initiative	Initiative Goal	Potential Actions	Action Rationale
<p>Development of capital infrastructure</p> <p>Development of new social programs, and enhancement of current social programs</p>	<p>Support and manage the ongoing needs of survivors and their families.</p> <p>Provide new and innovative ways for service providers to meet the needs of their clients.</p>	Support the development of local family treatment spaces.	<p>The healing and safe spaces we have now are operating well. However, they are over capacity and cannot adequately meet the growing needs of Northerners.</p>
		Support the development of healing spaces in communities.	
		Support the development of transitional and supportive housing units in every region.	<p>The NWT often lacks alternative resources when a helping organization is at, or over, capacity. This puts organizations in a position where they are delivering services beyond their capacity, as the alternative is denial of service.</p> <p>Elders are evidence and knowledge-based community resources that require financial and organizational support to be safely utilized.</p> <p>Communities say that there is a need for deep healing. However, many communities lack the physical space, resources, or capacity to be able to offer healing support services.</p> <p>Service providers and those with lived experience are sharing that the need for family treatment options for households facing family and gender-based violence is what is most desired/required.</p> <p>Northerners need support accessing equitable services that meet them where they are at. It is not enough to simply tell someone what is required of them; sometimes more support and guidance is required. For example, someone experiencing trauma may find it difficult to even deal with minor tasks.</p>
		Develop specialized sexual assault support services that include service provision for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal/Policing and Criminal Justice System • Counselling/Mental Health/Family Wellness Supports • Case Management to support access to housing and income assistance 	
		Work with partners to expand emergency family violence shelter access and ensure shelters can cater to a wider service user demographic, including shelters for families with older, male children, 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals, men and elders.	
		Develop supportive housing positions for the public housing program	
Establish a clear pathway for survivors fleeing violence to access financial resources to get themselves established			

Pillar Two: Prevention

Many of the actions addressing family violence revolve around responding to family violence once it has already occurred. The need for preventative practices is also clear. Prevention involves educating children and communities on family violence, healthy relationships, gender identity and expression, sexuality and consent education, resources and supports, trauma-informed training for professionals, and engaging men and boys in gender-based violence preventative programming. While we acknowledge that children are not responsible for creating and maintaining safe environments, research tells us that the introduction of this material at a young age reduces the prevalence of future family violence. When children learn what they should expect out of their own intimate relationships, they are less likely to fall into unhealthy cycles of abuse. Additionally, those who use violence in their relationships require distress tolerance training and healing to address the root issues within.

An increased awareness of family violence issues in communities across the NWT will aid in reducing both barriers to getting help and the normalization of family violence. These programs must be informed by the principles of intersectionality if they are to address the systemic issues at the root of family violence.

Initiative	Initiative Goal	Potential Actions	Action Rationale
Awareness and prevention campaigning	De-normalization of violence at the home, family and community level, shifting attitudes to zero-tolerance and empowerment for survivors and perpetrators toward self-determination.	Create a prevention campaign to bolster public awareness about the dangers of normalizing of violence, shifting into what healthy relationships look like.	Invest in campaigns and outreach activities that work to address underlying beliefs and attitudes that perpetuate family and gender-based violence while intercepting normalization.

Initiative	Initiative Goal	Potential Actions	Action Rationale
Cross-training for front-line service providers	<p>Co-develop cross-training for all front-line service providers on assisting their clients with accessing available interrelated services.</p> <p>Create training opportunities that teach and instill the 'no wrong door' culture shift required for service provision.</p>	<p>Create regular job shadowing and cross-training opportunities that can be made available to all levels of government, NGOs and informal community helpers about local resources, pathways, and processes for service access. Training development must be community-informed and co-developed across all partner groups.</p> <p>Equivalencies should be considered when hiring GNWT positions so jobs can be created for community experts that have informally been doing the work.</p>	<p>We will create a system that is more integrated, person-centred, trauma- and violence-informed.</p> <p>Clients will develop increased trust in community programs and service providers, which will enable and empower them to access services at earlier stages.</p> <p>We will ensure capacity-building activities and opportunities for growth are regularly occurring within the community work forces to prevent re-traumatization and burn out.</p>
Revisit the Family Violence Protocol	<p>Ensure that departmental policies are developed and shared publicly, and staff are trained for situations that require expedited access to services.</p>	<p>Take a lessons-learned approach from previous models.</p> <p>Create information sharing amongst service providers that will also serve to strengthen interpersonal connections and expedite access to connected services.</p> <p>Create a mechanism for barrier reporting, departmental or organizational accountability and follow-up support.</p>	<p>Specialized protocols and identified pathways will increase the likelihood that survivors and perpetrators access supports. By collaboratively establishing these protocols and ensuring they are shared widely, service providers will be empowered and able to maintain the capacity required to offer a more sustainable, reliable continuum of care.</p>

Pillar Three: Responsive Justice System

Gaps within the justice system in the NWT help perpetuate the cycle of violence. For an adequate, responsive justice system to be implemented, it must address the underlying factors that lead to family violence. In addition, the justice system must adjust the standard practices that end up retraumatizing survivors. Individuals seeking support from the system should not face the barrier of additional trauma, as this experience may push survivors away from seeking support and back into vulnerable situations. Key coordination from law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, lawyers, crown witness coordinators and service providers must be undertaken to ensure that all players within the justice system are mindful of the intersectional needs of survivors and perpetrators. From reporting a crime to testifying in court, survivors are required to recount their trauma and endure the probing of their vulnerabilities. This experience can be even more traumatic if the individual, as with some 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals, has multiple intersections of identity factors at higher risk.

Initiative	Initiative Goal	Potential Actions	Action Rationale
Prioritize survivor centric court proceedings (legal aid and prosecution)	Lowering rates of survivor re-traumatization, survivor attrition, leading to higher prosecution rates.	Legislative or policy review. NWT Courts and the Crown to coordinate a protocol for how this would be achieved.	Survivors are retraumatized while waiting for their perpetrator’s court appearances, especially when required as witnesses, leading to lower reporting rates, higher rates of survivors recanting their statements and lower accountability for perpetrators.
Implement Restorative Justice Legislation	Allow/select low risk family violence cases to be dealt with extrajudicially	Restructure already existing restorative justice practices to fit the nuanced needs of potential family violence referrals.	Communities have indicated that the reconciliatory nature of restorative justice practices is appreciated, but survivor advocates in the communities believe that some communities lack the supportive programming needed to ensure the survivor remains safe during the period surrounding these proceedings. In order to use restorative justice practices in response to family violence, communities need the wrap-around support services to be made available to the family.
Implement Claire’s Law	To ensure there are effective measures in place to protect survivors.	Create legislation.	Supports the public in their right to know if their partner/potential partner has had a documented history of intimate partner violence.

Initiative	Initiative Goal	Potential Actions	Action Rationale
Review of existing legislation that impacts areas within the family violence scope	To be responsive to the specific recommendations and needs of families, communities, and support services.	Allow for EPOs to be amended extrajudicially.	To keep families together and provided with the support that is needed. Ensure that policies are inclusive of the principles of reconciliation.
Expand Domestic Violence Treatment Options Court across the NWT	Perpetrators and their families can have access to wrap-around supports, lowering the risk of reoffending while supporting families in accessing person-centered responses to their nuanced needs.	Enhance and expand access of Domestic Violence Treatment Options Court so that it is available across the territory.	All Northerners should have equitable access to specialized court services, including Domestic Violence Treatment Options Court.
Increase access to perpetrator healing programs Prioritize the provision of a wide range of healing programming for perpetrators serving custodial sentences, including families when appropriate	<i>Same as above</i>	Specialized individual and family counselling / programming. Transitional and safety planning prior to release/reunification for offenders leaving correctional placements and going back into their communities. Inclusion of families in healing and release planning.	Several healing options should be available for perpetrators, to meet any unique needs they might require for true, transformational healing change to occur. Many families experiencing family violence want to remain together, united and in loving relationships; they just want the violence to stop.
Maintain and prioritize legal aid access for survivors, including sexual assault survivors	To ensure survivors/witnesses are supported legally for the duration of their involvement in court proceedings.	Provide legal representation for survivors of family and sexual violence.	Survivors need legal representation to ensure they are aware of their rights and obligations under the law during this period. This will reduce re-traumatization and increase survivor empowerment.

Pillar Four: Implementing Indigenous-Led Approaches

The GNWT recognizes the work Indigenous organizations across the territory are engaged in, launching initiatives that address the ongoing effects of colonization in the NWT. Achieving truth and reconciliation involves the GNWT accepting accountability for the role that government played and continues to play in the intergenerational trauma impacting Indigenous peoples and communities. It is the collective right of Indigenous peoples, including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, to take control of their own healing. Self-determination is just one tool used to foster resiliency, and by listening to what Indigenous peoples are saying, we collectively take one more step towards decolonization.

Indigenous partners, Elders, Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ leaders are equipped with the knowledge to lead systems-wide change that is transformative and profound. We must address the root causes of gender-based and family violence if we are to live well together in the future. The GNWT acknowledges that the traditional relationship fostered between settler colonial and Indigenous governments has been paternalistic, with the assumption that settler colonial governments know better. This framework recognizes that every single resident of the territory is a capable person, and that the GNWT has a responsibility to approach Indigenous partners as equals and experts. In coordination with Indigenous organizations and people, the goal is to stop the cycle of intergenerational trauma that leads to a pattern of family violence across the NWT.

Initiative	Initiative Goal	Potential Actions	Action Rationale
Increased funding access to Indigenous-led initiatives	Dedicate more resources to community organizations and enable communities to develop a healing pathway for men, women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people to stop the cycles of intergenerational trauma from colonization, residential school experiences and lateral violence.	Ensure that funding application and reporting processes are based on an enhanced, barrier-free and streamlined approach	Revitalizing inclusive, traditional healthy parenting practices that include connecting Elders with families and youth.
		Development of a GNWT Funding Directory: Information about GNWT funding opportunities should be coordinated and organized into one location and shared with Indigenous partners and communities	Honour and invest in holistic healing approaches for and by Indigenous and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People, no matter where they live, including strength-based initiatives, programs and services. Shift the response to trauma in communities towards violence-free futures, through building social connectedness, social action, and cultural creativity.
		Simplified application and reporting process to access funding, providing core or multi-year funding agreements where possible	Provide adequate, equitable, sustainable, and barrier-free multi-year or core funding for existing and new Indigenous-led initiatives, programs, and services.
		Re-evaluation of some of the programs currently running to look for opportunities for enhancement or redistribution of funding	

Pillar Five: Social Infrastructure and Enabling Environment

Family violence occurs across the spectrum of society and affects individuals from all walks of life. However, systemic range inequities that exist in society can increase an individual’s risk of experiencing family violence. Individuals experiencing socioeconomic stressors (e.g., poverty, homelessness, inequitable service access) are at a much higher risk of becoming involved in the cycle of family violence. Systemic inequities also perpetuate root causes of family violence when families and individuals become trapped in unsafe circumstances. This framework acknowledges the importance of supporting the whole individual with comprehensive, wrap-around support when addressing family violence, while also challenging the normalization of family violence in relationships and the broader community.

Social infrastructure refers to health and social programs, services, and supports. The introduction of wrap-around services, integrated service delivery, widely accessible and user-friendly information, and trauma-informed approaches are examples of the social infrastructure required to address family violence.

Investment in the required social infrastructure is an investment in self-determination for survivors and perpetrators of family violence. Ensuring that the individual with adverse experiences is driving the decision-making through their healing journey is an empowering action that is vital in fostering the resiliency needed for healing. The GNWT recognizes the importance of person-centred service delivery that shifts program expertise from front-line public servants to the residents they serve. This includes increasing gender equity and providing more control to survivors of family and gender-based violence.

Initiative	Initiative Goal	Potential Actions	Action Rationale
Creation of a GNWT-wide Family Violence Service Website: A ‘one-stop shop’ for service users (supporting survivors, children, and perpetrators) and service providers <i>**Could lead to the development of a portal where service users can access their own accounts and manage their own program applications/accounts</i>	Enabling easy access to accurate/current information about events, programs, pathways for service access, meetings, community healing opportunities, etc., increasing empowerment and self-determination in Northerners.	Multi-departmental and organizational contributions to develop an accessible, comprehensive service website. Develop plain-language resources for service users and providers to improve the accessibility of GNWT services.	Increased awareness of and easier access to relevant information and available services and programs. Increased self-determination and empowerment. Takes the administrative tasks that service users may be capable of completing on their own out of the hands of service providers.

Initiative	Initiative Goal	Potential Actions	Action Rationale
One-Window Service Delivery: Whole of Government Approach (Social Envelope Secretariat/Central Agency/ISD, etc.)	Ensure integration and standardization of response across common programs.	Coordinated, one-window service provision.	Combining human and financial resources across government departments and identifying one government lead to ensure integrated supports are delivered in a consistent way across departments, with a common approach and unified goals to address family violence. Currently, responses to family and gender-based violence are siloed and create many gaps in service delivery, despite best efforts and departments working together at the policy level and wanting the same outcomes. Departments responsible for social areas must be cohesive in leadership and in the creation of a streamlined and unified response.
	Pool resources to eliminate duplication of human resources working toward achieving the same outcome.	Phased approach that would involve starting with a small pilot population and expand over time and phase progression.	
	Integrating trauma-informed, front-line service provision across the NWT, informed by a user-first culture in the delivery of services.	Smaller scale start: Revisit the Family Violence Protocol: taking lessons learned from a previous model, ensuring departmental policies are developed for situations that require expedited access to services or exceptions to other policies for survivors to access services. Create a mechanism for barrier reporting and departmental accountability.	
Identified 'Point Persons' in the GNWT that can provide direction to front-line service providers in communities.	To build capacity and empowerment within communities and organizations using GNWT resources that already exist.	Identify potential human resources within the GNWT who would be interested and provide incentives to those who actively participate.	Having a point person will increase capacity within communities using resources that already exist.

The GNWT is using these ideas and recommendations as a strategic framework towards the development of an action plan, which will follow in the coming months as we look to GNWT departments to see what additional resources and commitments they will be able to dedicate towards addressing family violence. The GNWT will not limit its actions to these initiatives, and this is a living document due to family violence being an evolving issue, in which we must be able to assess these actions for relevance and feasibility.

What is Next?

Over the next few months, the GNWT will develop an action and implementation workplan detailing the measurable actions and corresponding investment needed to implement the strategic framework for addressing family violence in the NWT over the short, medium, and long term. This will include prevention actions in line with this strategic framework as well as actions for enhancing and expanding programs and services. Each action will build on established efforts in family violence response and prevention, as well as refining, improving, and developing new and innovative activities in line with what has been presented above in the five pillars.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Creating a monitoring and evaluation framework provides the GNWT with an important accountability tool to ensure we are meeting our goals. Measuring outcomes allows us to see what works and what doesn't, ensuring we are focusing our efforts on effective ways of influencing individual and community attitudes and behaviours. This evolving document would be designed to allow for adjustments and revisions over time.

Once the action and implementation plan is developed, the GNWT will lay out a series of initial indicators and measurements to account for the progress that the action plan hopes to achieve. In addition, it will allow us insight into whether further research and evaluation is required. By proceeding in this intentional manner, the strategy remains meaningful as we build our knowledge and understanding of the primary prevention and intervention responses that are working or are not. It is important to note that the indicators we measure are meaningful for people from diverse communities.

We know that there is no quick fix to ending family violence. Enhancing prevention and intervention efforts will take time and consistent effort. We will use a monitoring and evaluation framework to hold ourselves to account, to measure our progress and to work towards success.

Conclusion

This strategic framework has been made possible by the collaborative works of many and as a foundation, reflects the voices of survivors, perpetrators and the service providers that walk alongside them. There is still much work to be done and this document should be considered an ongoing work in progress.

Family violence and gender-based violence in the NWT is preventable if a collective, healing approach is taken to address the cascading impacts that have been created by our history. Direct action against the drivers of violence must be at the forefront of the work that we take on as a Territory in our effort to end family violence. In order to heal, all of us must be involved in some way; all bystanders, survivors, people who use violence in their relationships, government and non-government service agencies, policy makers and all politicians.

We have to decide that violence in any capacity is not acceptable and instead, we must begin to normalize healing as a preferable response to the pain and suffering that is occurring in so many of us. We must come together in the spirit of support and understanding. We must move forward with the determination that we will rise above the use of violence because we can envision a better way. We are all capable people when we have community.

Appendix A

According to Women and Gender Equality, Canada (2021), family violence includes many forms of violence, including:

- Physical violence/abuse: intentional or threatened use of physical force against a family member or intimate partner
- Neglect: not meeting the basic needs to provide care for a dependent family member or intimate partner
- Sexual violence: sexual activity with a family member or intimate partner without their consent; any sexual activity with a child
- Gender-based violence: violence based on gender norms and unequal power dynamics, perpetrated against someone based on their gender, gender expression, gender identity, or perceived gender. It takes many forms, including physical, economic, sexual, as well as emotional (psychological) abuse.
- Emotional (psychological) abuse: words or actions to control or frighten a family member or intimate partner, or to lower their self-respect and self-esteem
- Financial abuse (also referred to as economic abuse): control, or misuse of a family member's or intimate partner's money, assets or property

There are also different types of family violence, including:

- Intimate partner violence (IPV): violence or abuse within a marriage, common-law or dating relationship that happens at any time during a relationship, including while it is breaking down or after it has ended
- Exposure to family violence is considered a form of child/ youth maltreatment. Exposure to family violence is considered when there is evidence of family violence between two or more adults in the household, and the child/youth's safety is of immediate concern.
- Violence against seniors: victimization of an older adult by a family member, or by a non-family member on whom the older adult is dependent

Appendix B: GNWT Family Violence Initiatives Inventory – 2022/2023

Prevention			
Program	Target audience	Description	Notes
What Will It Take	NWT residents	Bystander intervention workshops, social marketing campaign to shift attitudes and beliefs	DHSS
Family Violence Awareness Month	NWT residents	Grant to Status of Women Council to support community-level events and promotional mail-out	DHSS
Family Violence Awareness Month	NWT residents	Annual Funding from the Survivor Assistance Fund to Status of Women Council to provide funding to communities across the NWT to support this annual month-long event.	Justice
Family Violence Prevention Consultant – GNWT Position	HSS system	Supports front-line staff	DHSS
Elder Abuse Awareness Campaign	Public and service providers	Campaign to create foundational awareness of elder abuse, who typically commits elder abuse, common warning signs, the types of elder abuse, and help information	DHSS
Creating Safe Communities for Seniors	Community members	Funding to the NWT Seniors’ Society to provide workshops to educate participants on elder abuse, to empower participants to take action, and to support the creation of individual and community action plans to stop abuse	DHSS

Prevention			
Program	Target audience	Description	Notes
Family Preservation Program	NWT Residents	The Family Preservation Program uses a team-based planning process that helps to provide coordinated care to families. Through an approach that promotes family choice, family ownership, and family self-determination, services are tailored to meet the distinct needs of each family. The family is the active decision maker – invited to define their own strengths and needs, and to gather trusted team members (i.e., community members, extended family, and Elders) to be part of their circle of support.	DHSS
Healthy Family Program	NWT Residents with children 0-6 years	The renewed Healthy Family Program is a proactive, outreach-oriented, and strengths-based program and is available to all parents, caregivers and families with young children in the Northwest Territories. The renewed Healthy Family Program recognizes that families and children are at the centre of community and that all families should have access to support, information, and connection to culture. Services include home visiting, cultural programming, Collective Kitchen and other workshops and group programs.	DHSS
Manager, Survivor Supports – GNWT Position	NWT residents	Supports front-line community Survivor Services Providers to access supports and services for families dealing with family violence. Learning about barriers to services and working with other Government Departments to find solutions.	Justice
Family Violence Coordinator	NWT residents	Responsible for the Family Violence Strategy	EIA
Self-Regulation (optional training)	NWT schools	Self-regulation training opportunities are made available to education bodies on an optional basis. They focus on learning about regulation needs and how to implement strategies to help students manage stress and emotional and social interactions. Self-regulation is critical to learning, positive mental health and overall social and other successes in life.	ECE

Prevention			
Program	Target audience	Description	Notes
Self-Regulation (optional training)	NWT schools	Self-regulation training opportunities are made available to education bodies on an optional basis.	ECE
Safe Schools Regulations	NWT schools	Safe School Regulations outlines the needed components of Safe School Plans. These plans are also intended to address bullying, including cyberbullying, and must include healthy relationships programming for students.	ECE
To provide children and youth with specialists, safe spaces, and supports in communities	NWT Schools	<p>Child and Youth Care Counsellor (CYCC) initiative, shared by ECE and HSS.</p> <p>Training is offered on Trauma Informed Practices/ Trauma Sensitive Classrooms training for schools, for safe and secure student-teacher relationships.</p> <p>Territorial Based Support Team (TBST) support schools with system navigation and provide mental health literacy, training, and consultation.</p>	ECE

Supports for Survivors			
Program	Target audience	Description	Notes
Family violence shelters	Women and children fleeing violence	Five emergency shelters	DHSS
Crisis line	Family violence survivors	Delivered centrally from shelter in Yellowknife	DHSS
Shelter Support Network	Family violence shelters	Collaboration and capacity building	DHSS
Non-shelter Protocols/Response Teams	Front-line staff in communities without shelters	Collaboration, planning, capacity building	DHSS
Family Violence Shelter Standards	Front-line staff	Standards outline the minimum requirement for all HSS funded FV Shelters	DHSS

Supports for Survivors			
Program	Target audience	Description	Notes
"Children Who Witness Abuse" Funding	Children staying in shelters and/or outreach	Funding available for Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith	DHSS
Coordinator – NWT Survivor Services – GNWT Position	Survivor Service Providers	Support front line Survivor Service Providers to find services and supports for families living with family violence. To support family violence community awareness initiatives across the NWT	Justice
Independent Legal Advice and Representation for Survivors Program	Survivors of Sexual Assault, Family Violence and those accessing EPOs	Provides up to four hours of free legal advice to survivors of family violence and sexual assault to support informed legal decisions related to court proceedings, safety planning and Emergency Protection Orders (EPOs) for themselves, and family members. Provides up to 30 hours of free, independent legal representation for someone involved in 276 and/or 278 applications.	Justice
Survivor Services	Survivors of crime and tragedy	Information, emotional support, community referrals, some system navigation. Survivor services are available to all survivors, many of them DV survivors.	Justice
Integrated Case Management (ICM)	Complex/Vulnerable Population	Assists with program navigation, some program participants of ICM are survivors and perpetrators of family and gender-based violence. Program parameters are wider than just family violence however, there is crossover.	Justice
Survivors of Crime Emergency Fund	Survivors of serious violent crimes	Limited emergency financial assistance - program funds are available to all survivors of crime, many of them family violence survivors.	Justice

Supports for Survivors			
Program	Target audience	Description	Notes
Survivor Assistance Fund	Survivors of crime	Supports community-based programs and activities that benefit survivors of crime - Funded entirely by fine surcharges administered through Justice - fund available to all programs that serve survivors, many of them family violence survivors.	Justice
Shelter renovations	Shelters, including Family Violence shelters	Renovation support – Funding is available for shelters in the NWT that operate out of a non-GNWT owned or leased building.	NWTHC
Community Counselling Program	All NWT residents	Counselling supports, information, referral to other services	DHSS
Ontario Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (ODARA)	Front line service providers and survivors of family violence	Risk assessment tool - Tool used by front-line service providers (RCMP, counsellors, survivor service providers, etc.)	Training licenses managed by HSS
Child and Youth Care Counselling Initiative	NWT schools (children and youth)	Provides supports to students as a part of a larger continuum of mental health and wellness services for children and youth within the HSSAs	ECE & DHSS
Income Security Programs – Income Assistance	Front Line Staff/Client Navigators	Training on trauma-informed practice to ensure front line staff and survivors have a safe space for disclosure and understanding of appropriate referral services.	ECE
Income Security Programs- Income Assistances	Survivors of Crime	Expedited and priority services available to survivors of crime. An emergency allowance may be able to assist with extraordinary expenses that the client requires.	ECE
Family Information Liaison Unit	Family members of MMIWG	Supports and navigation services for family members of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people	EIA

Interventions for those who use violence in their relationships			
Program	Target audience	Description	Notes
Domestic Violence Coordinator, G Division	RCMP members in the NWT	Dedicated member to review family violence files and provide support and training	Justice via Police Services Agreement - cost shared with federal government
Court orders and warrants of entry and seizure	Survivors and Perpetrators of violence	May be available under the Criminal Code or various territorial Acts including the Protection Against Family Violence Act.	Justice
Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court	Low- to medium-risk perpetrators of violence against a partner, who take responsibility and enter a guilty plea to a charge	Specialized court with associated eight-session program, available in-person in Yellowknife, Hay River and residents who can travel there. Remote program available for individuals in communities.	Justice
Men's Healing Fund	Any men who are traumatized or in need of healing however, the target audience is male perpetrators of family violence	Contribution agreements to community organizations to deliver healing programs across the NWT.	Justice
'Respectful Relationships' and 'Respectful Relationships' programs	Inmates of NWT correctional facilities, offenders supervised by Probation Services	Group program available in Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith, with optional sessions through Probation	Justice

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