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THE EVIDENCE-BASE FOR PROMOTING MENTAL WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE TO ADDRESS SUICIDE IN CIRCUMPOLAR COMMUNITIES

Presentation to Senior Arctic Officials
Yellowknife, NWT


March 26, 2014



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RATIONALE

- This project aims to build on the recommendations from the *Nuuk Hope and Resilience* seminar (2009)
- By building the evidence base to promote mental wellness, researchers, policymakers and Indigenous communities:
 - can gain greater understanding of the circumstances influencing successful programs and
 - help to improve knowledge about them.

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BACKGROUND

- The project is being co-led by:
 - Canada
 - Kingdom of Denmark
 - Norway
 - United States
 - Russia
 - ICC
- Communities, policymakers and researchers come together to identify and share best practices in promoting resilience and well-being in circumpolar communities

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BACKGROUND (continued)

- Many communities are successful at introducing approaches that emphasize coping skills, positive parenting and positive relationships
- Of the broad array of existing initiatives, there is a need to analyse which have worked, with whom and for what reasons
- There is also a need to know if successful programs developed by one community could be adapted and scaled in other communities

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OBJECTIVES

- The objective of this initiative is to assess the outcomes of programs and/or activities that focus on:
 - Fostering child and youth resilience
 - Enhancing protective factors for children, youth and their families including social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors
 - Reducing risk factors known to impact mental well-being across the life course
- The ultimate goal is to enable communities across Arctic States to develop new/improved initiatives to increase the resilience of circumpolar peoples

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PROJECT DELIVERABLES

1. An inventory of promising initiatives being implemented in the Arctic
2. Recommendations on scaling up interventions in other communities
3. Indicators to evaluate resilience and mental well-being promotion programs
4. A conference that will allow for the sharing of knowledge obtained through the project

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PROGRESS TO DATE

- Activities accomplished to date include:
 - The launch of the request for applications on November 20, 2013 (closed January 31, 2014)
 - An online information session – or “webinar” – on November 28, 2013 to share information on the initiative and application requirements.

- Establishment of Project Steering Committee comprised of co-leads to provide oversight for the overall management of the project
 - The most recent meeting of this Committee was March 10, 2014


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UPDATE: RESEARCH TEAMS

- Co-Leads nominated potential reviewers to evaluate bids - Peer review meeting held on February 20th
- Two research teams are being funded, each receiving \$250,000 (CAD) – funds will be released by March 31, 2014
- Funded research teams include 22 researchers/collaborators from five Arctic Countries (Canada, the United States, Norway, the Kingdom of Denmark, and the Russian Federation)


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NEXT STEPS

- May 2014: Workshop in Tromso that bring together funded research teams, researchers engaged in similar work through other projects, and other stakeholders
- 2014/2015: Synthesis conference in Iqaluit, Nunavut, focused on reviewing preliminary findings
- March 2015: Tabling of synthesis report

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ANNEX

TEAM A: “Mental Well-Being and Suicide Prevention in Circumpolar Regions: Developing the Evidence Base and Identifying Promising Practices”

Abstract: Promoting mental well-being and preventing suicide is a high priority among circumpolar regions. A systematic synthesis of what has been done and what works and does not work across the Arctic will enable circumpolar regions to learn from one another. They have assembled an international team of researchers, administrators, and clinicians in partnership with regionally based community organizations and Indigenous-controlled health care agencies to summarize regional patterns, trends and determinants; create an inventory of existing programs and services; and conduct detailed case studies of innovative approaches in five regions, with the potential for replication, adaptation, and scaling-up by other regions.

Collaboration between: Canada, Greenland, Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States

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ANNEX

TEAM B: "RASP: Resilience and Suicide Prevention project"

Abstract: The RASP project aims to assess the process and outcomes of three suicide prevention and wellness promotion initiatives in the Arctic. This proposal is a collaboration between Alaska and two Canadian Arctic communities in order to identify and investigate promising interventions in those fields. Researchers and community members will study the ASIST training in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, the Community Liaison Wellness Worker program in Nunavik, and the Teck John Baker Youth Leaders (TJBLY) Program in Alaska. A mixed method approach will be used. Results will generate a full report with detailed recommendations on how to improve the interventions and scale them up to other Arctic regions in the globe.

Collaboration between: Canada and the United States

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THANK YOU

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT
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