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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

October 23, 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:
 - greater understanding of the circumstances influencing successful programs can be gained
 - improved knowledge about the programs themselves can be gleaned



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BACKGROUND

- The project is being co-led by:
 - Canada
 - Kingdom of Denmark
 - Norway
 - United States
 - Russia
 - Inuit Circumpolar Council
- 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 have been successful at introducing resilience approaches that emphasize coping skills, positive parenting and positive relationships
- Of the broad array of existing initiatives, there is a need to analyse successful interventions, in which communities they worked, and what were the success factors
- 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 the circumpolar North to learn from other Arctic communities about best practices related to mental wellness and to implement them as appropriate in these communities



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PROJECT DELIVERABLES

1. An inventory of successful 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 Symposium that will allow for knowledge sharing



PROGRESS TO DATE

- Activities accomplished since the March 2014 SDWG meeting:
 - At the May 2014 workshop in Tromsø, Norway emphasized the importance of close cooperation between the two research teams and the need to take a consultative approach that includes community and youth engagement
 - And the planning is underway for the final Symposium, to be held March 25 – 27 2015 in Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada
- Ongoing meetings of the 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 June 27, 2014; a written update on progress will be shared with the Project Steering Committee after this SAO meeting



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UPDATE: RESEARCH TEAMS

- Two research teams are being funded, each receiving \$250,000 (CAD) – funds were released in March 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)
- Research teams provided a progress update to the SDWG meeting on October 18, 2014



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NEXT STEPS

- March 25-27, 2015: Symposium in Iqaluit, Nunavut, will focus on reviewing findings and fostering knowledge translation; youth engagement will be key to the event
- March 2015: Tabling of Synthesis Report for SDWG endorsement
- April 2015: Tabling of Synthesis Report for SAO approval



Ande Somby, a local Saami artist, welcomed everyone with spiritual stories and yoiks.



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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:

- 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 (TJBYL) 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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