

What About the Men?

Northern Men's Research Project



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Table of Acronyms

AANDC	Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
AHF	Aboriginal Healing Foundation
B&B	Bed and Breakfast
CR	Community-based Researcher
CYFN	Council of Yukon First Nations
EAS	Employment Assistance Services
EI	Employment Insurance
ESDC	Employment and Skills Development Canada
HACES	Heritage and Culture Essential Skills
ITK	Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
KSB	Kativik School Board
LES	Literacy and Essential Skills
LSCFN	Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation
MC	Master of Ceremony
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
NCC	National Capital Commission
NCCAH	National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health
NLC	Nunavut Literacy Council
NTI	Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
NWT	Northwest Territories
OLES	Office of Literacy and Essential Skills
PLAR	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
QIA	Qikiqtani Inuit Association
QTC	Qikiqtani Truth Commission
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SA	Social Assistance
TB	Tuberculosis
TH	Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in

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Author's Note

As I was writing this report, a piece of art on my mantle spoke to me: a polar bear, carved out of marble by Inuk artist Noah Kelly. It is an object of unique beauty. An artist explained to us that marble, because of its hardness, is the most difficult material to create beautiful carvings from. Yet Noah's skilled hands worked with the shape and lines of the rock, bringing out the shape he envisioned, and profiling the rock's unique grey streaks along the bear's legs.

I thought of the danger and physical labour Cape Dorset men went through to collect the rough marble from the quarry, and of the painstaking defeat when carving efforts led to pieces breaking off, and the artist needed to rethink the carving's shape, or even start again. I thought back to the injustice of partly finished carvings being stolen from under the artist's hands when he went inside for a break. I thought of the physical toll the artists suffered, breathing in the dust as they carved, and the harsh conditions under which they carved. And I thought of the uncertainty of finding a buyer who would acknowledge and (be able to) pay the art's value once all the work had gone into it.

I thought of the friends who likely came in to do the finishing sanding and polishing once the main shape was carved in, and of the younger boys who might have watched the skilled artists at work, picking up chips that had been carved off the stone, and shaping these into their own emerging art. I thought of the admiring audiences of Inuit art right around the world.

I thought of the men who shared stories so that this report could be written. I considered them as artists bringing out the unique beauty of their purposes in life, out of conditions that appear hard and unyielding. I remembered all the men we met and know, some appearing like the rough stone the artist starts with, others polished products still vulnerable to breakage or theft, others anywhere in between, and remembered those who are watching, learning, admiring, being inspired. I thought of the cost and uncertainty that characterize each one's journey.

I recognize the trust men showed us as they shared their stories, trusting us to see what was in them, to bring out their truth, and share them with broader audiences around the world. At times we worked and wrote through tears, remembering those who despite the treasures stolen out of their lives are persevering to bring out the treasure within. We worked as a team of people with loved ones in the North, in the hopes that sharing of stories will improve lives for northern Indigenous men, their families, and their communities.

Shelley Tulloch

Northern Men's Research Project Summary

Why did we do this research?

Self-government movements, land claims, Indigenous control of education, and economic development have led to increased opportunities for Indigenous Canadians to participate in society on their own terms, including learning and work. Despite these positive developments, we too often hear deficit discourses, that Indigenous Canadians have the highest rates of suicide, addiction, and incarceration, and the lowest rates of education and employment. Such characterizations miss the richness of many Indigenous people's lives, and can be troubling in carrying on negative stereotypes. Still, they raise red flags of injustice in our country. The slow movement to overcome the damage done by decades of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic oppression, and to positively engage in changing learning and work opportunities, appears unequally shared. Increasingly, statistics, research, media, and community perceptions suggest that Indigenous men are less likely than Indigenous women to complete high school or hold jobs, and significantly more at risk for suicide and jail. In this research, we asked, "Why are the men apparently worse off than Indigenous women in these seemingly improving times? What supports Indigenous men to carve out the lives they aspire to?"

How did we do this research?

Ilitaqsiq, the Nunavut Literacy Council (NLC), in partnership with the Yukon Literacy Coalition, the Northwest Territories Literacy Council, and Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador, initiated the Northern Men's Research Project. Employment and Skills Development Canada provided primary funding. Northern Indigenous men led this project within a team of community-based researchers, who were supported by literacy council staff and an academic research guide. Through open-ended interviews (33 participants), closed questionnaires (166), and a workshop with the community-based researchers and identified Indigenous male role models (11) from communities across the North, we documented men's stories about learning, work, and well being. We asked men about what is important to them, what they hope for themselves and their sons, and what helps them get there or blocks them. We also asked about examples of programming and policy that have supported them toward their goals. In our reporting, we bring to light some specific challenges that men face, while highlighting positive examples of men overcoming barriers to reach their desired goals.

This research is exploratory. The number of men in this study does not necessarily reflect the diversity of men in the North and greater dialogue is needed to bring breadth and depth to our understandings. Still, given the gap in research specifically addressing northern Indigenous men's experiences, we contribute to dialogue by raising questions and identifying paths of further inquiry and action for those who are concerned with supporting the engagement of northern Indigenous men in learning, work, and well-being.

What did we find out?

What do northern Indigenous men see as “success”?

Freedom to self-define. As part of our research, we needed to define “success” in the men's own terms in order to avoid framing men’s experiences in terms of non-Indigenous, or non-male driven visions of what is important. In the stories we collected, common themes emerge, but no single set of criteria for what constitutes success for northern Indigenous men. The success northern Indigenous men talked about in this study is multi-dimensional. In the big picture, men’s descriptions of success reflected the importance of what one does and is able to do; how one’s actions impact the community; and how these reflect who one is.

“Strong like two men.” A common theme in men’s definitions of success was what the T’licho call being “strong like two men”: able to function in and positively draw from the so-called “modern” life, including schooling and paid work, as well as more traditional sides of life, associated with culture and the land-based economy. Both schooling and work are framed around the need for money. Schooling (high school, college, job-training) is valued because it is seen as necessary to get a job, and paid work is necessary in order to have a home, keep food in the cupboards, support family members, and—if one is lucky—pay for things that one wants. If one can enjoy one's schooling and job, all the better, but school achievement and jobs were not described by the men in this study as status symbols, expressions of identity, or means to self-realization the way they have been described to be for certain sectors of men in Euro-Canadian cultures.

The practical and symbolic importance of participating in cultural and subsistence practices was consistently mentioned. In many northern communities, traditional practices are part of a second, land¹-based economy. Men’s ability and activity in fishing, hunting, collecting wood, etc., reflects and brings a wealth that does not show up in dollar amounts. Learning and practicing land skills are tied to survival. Being on the land, and all that entails, is also where men say they develop the characteristics that are important for being a complete person, where they find their identity and well-being.

Helping. Providing. An overlapping theme in men’s descriptions of what they aspire to or admire is being in a position to help others: providing for basic needs, having something to share, helping others to get ahead, knowing what to do, and passing on knowledge and wisdom. Men spoke of valuing their roles as father and husband, including for the legacy they leave through their children’s continued contribution to society. Men’s vision of success was not about individualized goals or achievement but rather about contributing to the well-being of the family and community.

“Being a good human being.” Many men expressed the key aspect of success as “being a good human being.” Men aspired to develop, enact, and pass on core values such as being respected and respectful, being grateful and generous, being a good listener, forgiving,

¹ “Land” is used here in its broadest sense here to include land, water, and ice.

overcoming mistreatment, working hard, and being one's best. Humility and equality were valued, where the goal is not to get ahead, but to be "normal." For centuries prior to contact with Europeans, each Indigenous group had its own economic, political, and social structures and these continue to be reflected in northern Indigenous men's aspirations and visions of the good life, even as they take on additional roles that are considered necessary for surviving or thriving within the systems introduced by Euro-Canadians.

Implications of the research, when considering the extent to which northern Indigenous men are thriving in the range of roles available to them are:

1. Avoid assuming a single vision of success for all northern Indigenous men.
2. Acknowledge and support each man's freedom in designing a desired future within a changing context.
3. Evaluate needed and desired support in terms of men's own identified goals.

How are northern Indigenous men engaging in learning and work?

Myth of the disengaged man. In light of the awareness that federally collected statistics did not necessarily reflect northern Indigenous men's values or realities relating to their level of engagement, we also asked men to describe their daily lives and life pathways. Participants agreed that northern Indigenous men appear under-represented in formal schooling (schools, colleges, graduation rates) and in many workplaces, notably the self-government offices and related jobs. However, findings also pointed to learning and work that is happening outside of school and jobs. Participants said that their most useful learning, in terms of doing their current job, came from self-teaching or learning on-the-job. While men tended to undervalue their unpaid work (child and Elder care, subsistence, helping family members, fixing things), findings show it to be an important part of their economic activity (Condon, Collings, & Wenzel, 1995). Also, men's stories show engagement in learning and work as cyclical, reflecting seasons in men's lives (literally and figuratively). Our findings call into question the "myth of the disengaged male," showing northern Indigenous men as more actively involved in learning and work than narrow definitions of such concepts and national statistics would suggest. Our findings nonetheless pointed to areas where men wished for but had difficulty accessing greater growth opportunities. We found that men's stories focused on gaps in well-being as the primary cause of disengagement.

Implications for policy and program developers include:

4. Broaden the sense of "learning" to reflect the range of pathways in northern Indigenous men's learning.
5. Broaden the sense of "work" to valorize the range of men's contributions and more accurately reflect engagement.
6. Acknowledge well-being as a fundamental predictor of engagement in learning and work.

7. Develop policy and programming to reflect the priority of supporting well-being, including as a means to support learning and work engagement.

What barriers do men face in engaging with learning and work?

In order to move toward better supporting northern Indigenous men, we asked what seemed to be holding them back. Men expressed a wide range of barriers specific to their goals and contexts. Many of the barriers men mentioned were related to the northern context of small, geographically isolated communities in which school and paid work opportunities are limited or unpredictable. Men also frequently referenced the rapidly changing intercultural context and related trauma in their lives. The common thread in diverse barriers mentioned was a sense of futility and frustration in contexts where one's own and others' expectations of oneself could not be met due to conflicting goals, which cannot be filled at the same time, and a lack of resources and support to reach any of the goals. The resulting disconnect between what men want and value, what they feel is expected of them and what they are actually doing, contributed to shame, followed by disengagement and negative life choices, which in turn perpetuates barriers to learning, work, and well-being.

Conflicting goals and values (Double bind). The men we spoke to have multiple visions of who they should be and want to be, some coming from themselves and some imposed on them by others: students who are graduating and getting certified, workers who are bringing home pay checks, hunters who are on the land, husbands and fathers who are spending time with their families, men who are healing. In some ways, these goals can be mutually reinforcing. For example, schooling helps one to get a job and then make the money that is needed to go on the land and to support one's family. However, they are also experienced as mutually exclusive, where pursuing one goal seems to mean abandoning another. Men may want to stay in school, but have to leave school to support their families (childcare or paid work). Pursuing higher education or taking available job opportunities often means separation from valued family and community involvement. School, jobs, and speaking English are good, but associated with past trauma and the abandonment of Indigenous identity. Working in natural resource extraction brings money but destroys the treasured land. Rigid work schedules bring in money, but conflict with the flexibility hunters need to adapt to weather and presence of animals. At times, men are left feeling like no matter what they do, they cannot concurrently live out all of their values and fill others' expectations. This feeling of a double bind, in which all choices feel like they mean giving up something that is too valued to give up, can block men from moving forward in any of their valued areas.

Trauma. The double bind of conflicting goals with limited resources for reaching them is experienced as hidden oppression and trauma. It compounds other forms of oppression and trauma that men have faced and continue to face. The legacy of residential schools—being separated from families, treated as less than human, abused, forced to assimilate into English language and culture—continues to plague men who attended the schools as well as those who

were left behind and those who were not yet born. The trauma, for past students, led to ongoing difficulty concentrating and thinking clearly, as well as to an unwillingness to be visible and speak up. The traumatic associations that many Indigenous men still have with schooling make it more challenging to return to school and/or to support and motivate their sons to attend and continue in a schooling system that is still foreign and that they mistrust.

Racial Bias. Racial bias is still entrenched in the colonizing institutions—schools, workplaces, policing—and acted out by some of the people who work in them, despite positive efforts to make these institutions more reflective and welcoming of Indigenous people and the good intentions of many who work there. Schools and workplaces can feel unwelcoming when men do not see themselves reflected in them and when they encounter a lack of understanding of the barriers they face to attend and thrive in those environments. Men feel a lack of support when teachers, colleagues, and bosses come from a different cultural and language background and have difficulty understanding where they are coming from. Culturally and linguistically irrelevant testing makes it difficult for men to show what they know. Indigenous men continue to hear negative messaging of who they are (“less than”, “incapable”, “not good enough”), or messages that do not line up with how they see themselves (including negativity toward values of their Indigenous culture or their generation). The shame of trauma (of victims and witnesses) and ongoing racism further block men from attaining and holding on to what they consider to be the good life.

Social Isolation. Many northern Indigenous men face a serious lack of support. Families may be the primary support system, and yet many parents are struggling themselves, and are not able to provide sons with the practical or emotional support, safety, and role modelling they need. Even where families are very supportive, men need to leave this safety net far behind to pursue school and work opportunities that are not available in the community. Overtly unsupportive practices men face include favouritism, unfair hiring/promotion practices and pay structures, bullying, negative peer pressure, and punitive rather than rehabilitative justice. Lack of support in its more insidious forms includes the absence or closing down of programs that could have helped or were helping. In all, many men indicated that they did not know where to find support, and that support systems were hard to access.

Lack of resources. Issues of poverty, lack of housing, food insecurity, and limited health care make daily life hard and present additional challenges to how men are able to engage with learning and work. Going away to school, or changing employers, can mean losing your house, for example, making it more difficult to take the associated risks. The unavailability or uncertainty of resources can make the future particularly unpredictable, and thus difficult to appropriately prepare for. The ways social assistance is structured can provide a disincentive to work. In some communities, jobs and learning opportunities simply are not there. In other communities, jobs and training might be available, but men have difficulty attaining or demonstrating the necessary competencies to move into them. On a further level, then, men describe the oppression of having insufficient resources to meet any of their conflicting goals.

Shame. This overarching feeling of operating in an oppressive context leads to shame, which can lead to disengagement and lack of connection. Men spoke of the pain and loneliness of feeling bad about who they are, feeling unloved, and useless. They said these feelings led to negative life choices, including addictive behaviours and acting out in anger, which made it more difficult to stay in school, keep jobs, and maintain positive relationships. For example, lateness and absenteeism (maybe because of crowded housing or lack of food) leads to a loss of income or learning opportunity, and makes it even more difficult for a man to feel like he is keeping up, let alone providing for or helping others.

Discussion of these barriers runs the risk of increasing negative feelings. Our intent is not to shame or lay blame, or to paint northern Indigenous men's situation as hopeless, but rather to acknowledge the forces that pull men away from the lives they would aspire to. Men are overcoming these challenges, as evidenced in the positive stories we collected. Our objective in discussing these issues is to increase understanding of men's paths in order to better support men toward the goals they choose for themselves.

These findings indicate a pressing need for policy makers and programmers to:

8. Open wider spaces for men's voices to self-define their visions of themselves, what they wish, and how they want to get there.
9. Develop and deliver more effective and consistent cross-cultural training for teachers and employees coming into the communities.
10. Build critical awareness, among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members of the oppressive factors at work and the need for deliberately decolonizing practices.
11. Recognize and affirm the strengths and resources that northern Indigenous men bring to families, communities, schools and workplaces.
12. Continue to address social injustices such as inadequate housing and food insecurity in the North.

Which factors support northern Indigenous men's learning, work and well-being?

While Indigenous men across the North are living in similarly challenging contexts, some have been more resilient than others at some point in their lives. While the negative factors seem to start from the outside and then be internalized, the supportive factors seem to come from the inside, beginning with personal healing and transformation, which is then externalized through greater connection to family, community, culture and land and greater freedom in living according to ones' values and goals. Personal well-being and a strong support network seem to help men escape the feeling of the double bind that can hold them down.

Vision of self. The men who were engaged with learning, work, and well-being were looking within themselves and choosing to accept and love themselves. They were admitting ways in

which they had been hurt and had hurt others. They were acknowledging that they will not be perfect but they can do better in acting out their values. They were courageously doing something about it. Personal growth is something men do for themselves, despite the context. However, healing also happens through being with other Indigenous men, sharing stories, and realizing one's normality. Men were greatly helped on the path to feeling good about themselves by seeing themselves positively reflected in others' eyes: being respected, trusted, affirmed, treated kindly, and feeling loved. It also helped to have Indigenous leaders, teachers, and counsellors who understood them and recognized the strengths in Indigenous men and communities, and to have Indigenous male role models who reflect similar values, language, culture, and life experiences and show a range of positive possibilities for Indigenous men's lives.

Connectedness to culture, land, and community. Men talked about connection as something that helped them toward their goals and that came as a result of greater well-being. Connection was expressed in a holistic sense, to what Inuit call "*sila*," the substance of life (Leduc, 2010), including the land, spirituality, and the knowledge and practices of the ancestors who came before. *Sila* helped the men to feel well, and to reaffirm and act according to their values. Spending time with family, Elders, and other community members, communicating, and making an effort to get along helped men to strengthen the relationships that they rely on. Sports and traditional activities were effective venues for belonging. Men found that being able to connect beyond their community and culture—through travelling and relationships with non-Indigenous people, for example—was helpful too. Northern Indigenous men learned foundational values and skills for their lives through connection with culture, land, and community, including communication, work ethic, humility, self-control, openness, forgiveness, patience, and perseverance. It is also within these connections that men see how they are valued, useful, and desired in the community.

Support. Without a doubt, interpersonal support is one of the strongest factors in Indigenous men's empowerment. It made a huge difference to men's lives if there was even a single person that they could rely on for support, whether a parent, grandparent, sibling, teacher, Elder, counsellor, co-worker, boss, coach, or support personnel in school, at work or in the community. It helped them to feel secure that basic needs were taken care of, to have someone who encouraged them, and someone who could help them overcome specific barriers (including navigating bureaucracy and filling in forms). Men found success through specific invitations or directions: being invited to apply for a job, run in an election, share their story; being told to get help, go to school, or to keep applying and trying again. Men's stories reflect that their involvement in school and work is mediated and sustained by connection. At the times in a man's life when he was most engaged in learning and work, there was a sense of not doing it on his own, but that he was doing it because others believed in him and were alongside him.

Connecting vision of self to learning and work. Men who had a positive vision of themselves seemed to feel more freedom in choosing roles and living in ways that align with their values, and were better able to reconcile their vision of themselves with what they were doing in school and at work. While they face the same challenge of conflicting expectations and goals and

limited resources to reach them, they seemed more content, feeling that what they are doing is good enough, or a good choice, within competing and limited accessible options. Outside factors help, including schooling, testing, and work environments that are culturally and linguistically relevant and treat men's range of skills and experiences (bilingualism, traditional knowledge, etc.) as assets. Specific schooling and work options, including college versus grade school, and land-based versus office work were experienced as more fulfilling. Opportunities for growth in school and work, and feeling one was being treated fairly, also helped. Despite the emphasis and value on togetherness, many men aspired to or found success in self-directed work and learning (teaching oneself, entrepreneurship, solitary work such as trucking), which may be another way in which some men escape feelings of oppression at school and work. Men who experienced less conflict between their visions of themselves and the practices and values of school and work were more motivated, enjoyed school and work more, experienced school and work as more meaningful, and were thus more resilient as evidenced by their ability to persevere.

Availability of resources. It probably goes without saying that greater access to resources and availability of a wider range of opportunities helps. Being able to access schooling, training, work, and healing programs within one's community removes the barrier of having to leave one's family and gives more visibility to role models who are pursuing these options. Having jobs predictably available protects against the disillusionment of training for work that is not there. Reliable housing options make it more possible to take the risk of leaving one's community. Travel opportunities increase openness to the world. Having transportation and cabins make it easier to spend time on the land and experience its healing. Availability of funding, alongside support in writing proposals, makes it more possible for men to develop and deliver programs for their own people, in their own community. However, our findings show that Indigenous men are drawing on internal strength, which supports them to live well even in contexts where resources and opportunities are limited.

The stories of what men have found most helpful opens pathways for directions in policy and programming that will more effectively support men as they pursue learning, work, and well-being. These pathways include:

13. Incorporate healing components in learning programs and workplaces.
14. Train community members to locally fill counselling and support-related jobs.
15. Increase visibility and accessibility of supportive people and programs.
16. Equip supportive individuals and organizations to more effectively fulfill their respective roles.
17. Profile northern Indigenous male role models.
18. Develop and deliver parenting workshops for men.
19. Facilitate opportunities for northern Indigenous men to mentor each other and gather to share stories and experiences.

20. Build infrastructure (e.g., cabins) to support delivery of land-based men's retreats and healing programs.
21. Share and adapt promising practices in local and culturally relevant schooling and training.
22. Develop innovative non-formal, community-based learning programs in which literacy and essential skills are embedded within traditional skills programs.
23. Affirm the importance of traditional values and knowledge in workplaces.
24. Provide greater access to funding for community-driven initiatives by northern Indigenous men for northern Indigenous men.

How are the identified factors specific to northern Indigenous men?

Certainly the factors we have identified in the northern Indigenous men's stories are experienced by other Indigenous people as well. Still, when we line up the prevalence of these particular themes within the men's stories with other accounts of the experiences of Indigenous men and women, boys and girls, in the literature, patterns emerge that suggest why these specific challenges may be particularly pressing for males. Women, too, experience multiple and conflicting roles. However, rites of passage and a key aspect of womanhood in pre-contact times—bearing children—continues to be accessible to most northern Indigenous women whereas the traditional role of hunter and provider is decreasingly accessible to men due to limited access to and depletion of natural resources (partly due to settlement in communities, larger groups depending on the same resources, and conflicts with governments over land and resource use) (Hensel, 1996). Also, during the period of most intensive contact and cultural and economic change in the North (post-Second World War), women across Canada were redefining gender roles and this may have created a wider space within which Indigenous women could self-define goals and roles. In contrast, the primordality of the hunter-male in northern Indigenous societies and of the working-male in Euro-Canadian society may have left men with less breadth in possible roles, and feeling more trapped between conflicting goals, neither of which they have satisfactory resources to attain.

Ethnographers and participants in our study suggest that the switch from the nomadic lifestyle to more sedentary lives in the communities may have been less traumatic for women, and they were quicker to attend school regularly and to take on regular jobs. Ethnographic accounts of child socialization in northern Indigenous communities over the period of rapid cultural change suggest that parents, over decades, encouraged their daughters to take on these new roles relating to schooling and work, but encouraged or allowed their sons to prioritize subsistence practices (McElroy, 1975). In this way, parental support and modeling of schooling and work engagement may also have been more targeted to girls than to boys, aggravating barriers to men embracing school and job opportunities.

While colonizing and racist attitudes and systems affect both women and men, research suggests that men may have been particularly impacted and for a longer time. Lomawaima and McCarty

(2006), for example, argued that across North America, tolerance and eventual embracing of Indigenous cultural practices was first extended to the aspects of Indigenous culture that least threatened the national status quo, and these were largely within women's domains: handiwork, sewing, beading, etc. They show that traditional practices relating to land and resource use, which are arguably more anchored in the men's domains, have continued to be sources of tension (for example federal government-First Nation disputes about subsistence rights) and, as a result, positive imaging of Indigenous males may be slower to reach public attitudes and school textbooks. Hensel (1996) further argued that marriage patterns across the North disadvantage and show greater racial bias against Indigenous males than females.

Finally, international movements focusing on women's issues have brought women's needs to the forefront, and the North is no exception. Men across the North commented on the number of organizations, policies and programs specifically aimed at supporting women. Poignantly, men commented, "Women have all these programs. Men have jail." The value on humility and putting others first may have made it harder for men in this context to bring their specific needs to the forefront, resulting in a sense, across Canada's North, that Indigenous men and their needs are invisible (Ball, 2009).

We affirm the commonality of many of Indigenous men and women's experiences, and we do not intend to belittle or ignore the specific challenges women continue to face. In light of a gap in research into men's specific barriers and success factors, our goal is to raise questions, awareness, and understanding of the difficult context men, specifically, are navigating in their efforts to secure a positive future for themselves, their sons, and their grandsons. Taking care of men is ultimately about taking care of families—wives, sisters, daughters, mothers—and communities. As Inuit female activists have stated, "If we are going to help women, we also need to help their boyfriends, husbands, and common-law partners" (Adams, 2011, p. 22) and "our culture can only be whole and rich when both the man and the woman are working together in all aspects of life" (Evic, 2011, pp. 56-57).

How do these factors relate to literacy and essential skills?

When the northern literacy councils and coalition launched this research, we were particularly interested in the link between northern Indigenous men's acquisition and practice of literacy and essential skills (LES) and their engagement in learning and school. Because we are committed to empowering, community-driven research, we adapted the project based on the community-based researchers' insights. They recommended that the project would be best framed as an investigation of men's broader experiences with learning and work, situated in a context of overall well-being.

Our research methodology thus asked for broad experiences with learning and work, without specifically asking about LES. Literacy and essential skills did not emerge as an organizing theme in our analysis of men's stories. However, we saw reflections of LES in the themes men mentioned

regarding what has helped and blocked them. Many of the recommendations coming out of the research have links to men's acquisition and practice of LES. Findings can be effectively applied to providing more meaningful LES programming, as well as to incorporating LES into other types of programming for maximum impact.

In the men's stories, disengagement from employment and education emerged as co-symptoms of destructive colonizing practices, along with dislocation from families, land, culture, traditional livelihoods, ancestral languages, and other treasures linked to well-being. The most promising programs are those that address this disinheritance holistically, combining healing, culture, tradition, ancestral language, and connectedness to the land, family, and community, along with literacy and job readiness.

One promising approach involves embedding literacy in traditional skills programs. Embedded literacy programs recognize and draw out the literacy practices that are inherent in a particular activity. They allow for task-based learning where situated literacy practices are taught alongside other content. Traditional skills programs with embedded literacy have had outstanding results for Inuit women (cf., Nunavut Literacy Council, 2014). Offering traditional skills programs with embedded literacy that are relevant and appealing to men specifically, and that anchor literacy within men's domains, would address men's felt needs and desires, such as learning from Elders, and learning traditional skills. They would also provide learning contexts where the men find congruence between what they are doing and their visions of themselves.

Relationally-based learning and approaches that support connections to family and community are also promising. These include family literacy, parenting programs, and programs that link parents to schools.

Another promising approach would be to offer programs in which literacy practices are taught or supported as tools toward men achieving other self-identified goals. An example could be holding workshops for grant-writing, thus supporting the goal of northern Indigenous men running programs for other men. Another example could be creative arts programming in which song-writing, story-telling, drama, and other expressive arts are practiced as vehicles for healing, as well as learning and connecting.

Such approaches address literacy development in ways that support the broader issues that men brought up. They lead to healing, connectedness, congruence, and other core supportive factors, while also addressing a need for lifelong learning and enhanced literacy and essential skills. Specific applications of the research to LES programming are developed in Appendix F.

How can these findings be used to improve lives in the North?

Throughout this research summary, we have included suggestions of how research findings can be used to improve lives in the North. The following full research report includes examples of specific programs—land camps, Uncles retreats, men's groups and gatherings, industry liaison, and work

training programs—that have been developed and effectively implemented in different regions of the North. These provide examples of the kinds of programs men have found helpful, and that could be adapted in other regions and communities. The full report also includes short life stories from eight northern Indigenous men whose lives reflect the diversity of challenges and personal resilience documented in our research. We hope these will be widely shared, and that other men will continue to come forward and share their stories of everyday life and successes. This report is not intended as the definitive word on men's barriers and success factors. Our hope is to contribute to dialogue, prioritizing men's voices about their own experiences, in order to support everyone in the North to make the most of, and create new, opportunities for shaping the life paths they desire to walk on.

Chapter 1 | Introduction

In 2012, *Ilitaqsiniq*² (the Nunavut Literacy Council) received funding from the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES), Employment and Skills Development Canada (ESDC) to conduct research into supportive factors that would improve educational outcomes and employability of First Nations, Inuit and Métis men in northern Canada. This research was conducted across Canada's North in partnership with the Yukon Literacy Coalition, Northwest Territories (NWT) Literacy Council, and Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador.

The project objectives were to:

1. Conduct research to identify the gaps and barriers and supportive factors to First Nations, Inuit and Métis men's participation in education and employment;
2. Build the research and knowledge capacity of the northern literacy coalitions to further our goals of becoming centres of expertise;
3. Develop a set of recommendations that would help to address the gaps and barriers in workforce development and address related employment issues;
4. Influence development of new models for delivery of adult literacy and essential skills programs, and models for the recruitment, retention, and skill development of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis men;
5. Share what we have learned with practitioners, policy and program developers, and others to integrate the research results with current practice to allow Inuit, First Nations, and Métis men to be better supported in addressing their learning and employment goals.

Quluaq Pilakapsi, an Inuk Elder, community-based researcher, and staff member at *Ilitaqsiniq* instigated the project. As she looked at the research and programming that *Ilitaqsiniq* was leading and supporting, she asked, "What about the men?"³ She noticed that northern Indigenous men seemed to be missing out on opportunities to acquire traditional skills and knowledge as well as to acquire the skills and knowledge required for new job opportunities in the North. She observed the dominance of female voices in literacy and language-related programming and, more broadly, in education in the North, where the majority of staff, board members, teachers, etc. were women. She suggested that while women's needs were being identified and programs were being developed to engage women in learning and work (e.g., Kivalliq Inuit Association, n.d.; Pirurvik, n.d.; Nunavut Literacy Council, 2014) very few resources were available to specifically support men. She observed men in her community who felt frustrated and lost in light of their current learning and work options, and were disengaging and turning to negative behaviours. It was her hope that through the Northern Men's Research Project, men would be "very well supported in whatever it is

² *Ilitaqsiniq* is the Inuktitut name for the Nunavut Literacy Council. It reflects a definition of literacy given by an Inuk Elder in Gjoa Haven Nunavut during early Nunavut Literacy Council workshops, "Seeing, and knowing what you see" (Nunavut Literacy Council, n.d.).

³ A complete interview with Quluaq Pilakapsi, explaining the genesis of this project, is included in Appendix A.

they decide to do in life [...] strong, confident, independent contributors to their communities [...] resourceful [...] and men who] realize that they are capable" (Pilakapsi, Appendix A).

Quluaq's observations that northern Indigenous men are under-represented in learning and work opportunities, and thus are suffering in a range of wellness indicators, are backed up by national and territorial research and statistics. Marlene Brant Castellano (2008) wrote, "In terms of income, the gap is widening and Aboriginal men are falling behind Aboriginal women in educational attainment" (p. 11). Indigenous Canadians as a group are less well-served by schooling and employment opportunities than are non-Indigenous Canadians. The 2011 National Household Survey showed, for example, that while the educational gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians is decreasing, it persists. The survey reported that 29% of working age Indigenous Canadians have not completed high school, compared to 12% of non-Indigenous Canadians. It also showed 48% of Indigenous Canadians have some post-secondary qualification, compared to 65% of non-Indigenous Canadians. These contrasts are even more stark among Inuit, where 49% of working age Inuit have not completed high school, and 36% have completed some post-secondary (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada [AANDC], 2013).

Across Canada, more women than men are now graduating from high school and completing post-secondary education. This gender gap is most noticeable among Indigenous Canadians and in the Territories, especially Nunavut (AANDC, 2013; Conference Board of Canada, 2015; Nunavut 2010b). As one example, Statistics Canada reported (2003) a high school graduation rate of 43% among women in Nunavut and only 27% among men. The Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students office has reported funding almost twice as many women (258) as men (130) to attend northern colleges (Minogue, 2005). Across Canada, 65% of Indigenous Canadians who hold university degrees are women (70% among Status Indians; 68% among Inuit), compared to the national average of 54% (AANDC, 2013). These statistics suggest that Indigenous women are accessing and succeeding more at formal schooling opportunities than men are.

Employment and occupational skill level are strongly influenced by educational attainment (Finnie & Meng, 2007). Indigenous Canadians on the whole acquire lower levels of literacy and essential skills than the Canadian average (HRSDC & Statistics Canada, 2005) and have correspondingly lower rates of participation in learning and employment programs. At a territorial level, the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics (2015) recorded Inuit employment rates at 44.5% in 2015, compared with 86.2% for non-Inuit in Nunavut, and 60% for Canadians as a whole. Here, too, northern Indigenous women seem to fare better than their male counterparts. For example, the National Household Survey reported unemployment rates for Inuit women across the country at 14%, compared with 21% for Inuit men. Laakkuluk Jessen Williamson (2006), in her analysis of proposed gender parity in the Nunavut Government, identified that 70% of Government of Nunavut employees were women, and that women in Nunavut were earning significantly more than men in the territory (in contrast with other jurisdictions in Canada). While educational and employment patterns vary from territory to territory, and from group to group, consultations with communities in the early stages of the project confirmed a perception that men were under-represented, at least in particular types of learning and work, particularly the self-government-related office work.

Inuit and First Nations men's low level of participation in education and the workforce may be linked to other low scores on wellness indicators. Low literacy and essential skill levels of Inuit and First Nations men and youth are barriers to entry into the workforce, enrolment in higher level education and healthy participation in family and community life. Jessica Ball (2008) identified how lower engagement in learning and work cluster with other symptoms of distress among Indigenous men:

Census data confirm that, as a group, self-identified Aboriginal males between 15 and 65 years of age have higher rates of unemployment, poverty, mobility, being unmarried, not completing high school, incarceration & homelessness than do non-Aboriginal males (Statistics Canada, 2001). One in five incarcerated men in Canada is Aboriginal (Statistics Canada, 2005). Young Aboriginal men die at a higher rate than the rest of the Canadian population as a result of suicide or unintentional injury (Health Canada, 2005). (p. 54-55)

Kirmayer, Simpson and Cargo (2003) further pointed out that Indigenous men have the highest rates of mental illness, addictions, and suicide among ethnic groups in Canada. Addressing the particular factors that help or hinder Inuit, First Nations and Métis males to engage in education and the workforce promises to positively impact healthy participation in family and community life and support men in carving out the futures they choose in a changing world:

The promise of education is that it will enable Aboriginal people to sustain well-being while meeting their responsibilities in the circle of life. [...] Fulfilling the promise will require preparing successive generations to participate fully in their own communities and to assume their place as Aboriginal citizens and people in global society. (Castellano, Davis, & Lahache, 2001, p. 254)

The Canada@150 research team also pointed out the economic potential of Indigenous men contributing to Canadian society, if educational and employment barriers were adequately addressed:

It is estimated that with an increase in educational attainment, this workforce could contribute up to \$71 billion to the Canadian economy over the period 2001–2017. The results could be even greater if the barriers holding back Aboriginals are simultaneously addressed. (Canada@150, 2010).

While these statistics bring to light the overall challenge and opportunity that this research addresses, they can mask the personal realities of the men in question. They are fathers, brothers, uncles, husbands, boyfriends, sons, and nephews, who are struggling to make the most of and find their space in a rapidly changing cultural, political, social, and economic context. While our research suggested that this negative, deficit-based portrayal partly misses the point of northern Indigenous men's lived realities and aspirations, the statistics nonetheless point to overwhelming pain and dislocation in Indigenous men's experiences.

Ethnographic observers in the North have documented gendered differences in responses to the shifts from traditional learning to schools and from the land-based economy to mixed or cash-based economy in the North, which may shed some light on the different levels of engagement now seen between men and women. As early as 1975, ethnologist Ann McElroy observed that even if the earliest paid jobs in Inuit communities were filled by men, men in the North were having more difficulty than women switching from the traditional subsistence economy to the modern wage economy (see also Stern, 2003; Natcher, 2008). She reported early differences in the ways parents socialized their boys and girls to participate in the new economy, or to continue to participate in traditional activities:

Finding a job increases the prestige and independence of a teen-age girl. [...] Teen-age boys also find casual employment [...] but parents are ambivalent about the importance of wage employment for their sons. Discussions of whether a Saturday job or an opportunity to go hunting took precedence were not uncommon between parents and sons. In one example of a highly acculturated Frobisher Bay family, both the teen-age son and daughter had steady weekend jobs. When the father decided to take the family hunting one weekend, he agreed that his son could arrange for a substitute and go along, but he insisted that the daughter stay in town and show up for work. (McElroy, 1975, p. 668)

McElroy (1975) further observed the fundamental link between subsistence practices and male identity, and the resulting perceived conflict between “being a real man” and taking an in-town job, which also impacted employment:

Male identification with the role of hunter is strengthened during early adulthood by community sentiment and peer group recognition. A man who provides land food to his family and relatives is considered to be *inumarrik*, “a real person.” One man who had recently taken a full-time job confided to me that he no longer felt *inummari*—because he could not provide his children with the land food he believed would make them stronger and healthier than would store food. [...] Peer group pressure [also] leads to hunting taking precedence over job obligations. (p. 669)

Subsequent studies of northern Indigenous men's economic adaptation have made similar observations. Condon, Collings and Wenzel (1995) wrote that despite an increasing practical need to work for money, the valued behaviours and abilities of men remained those most closely linked with the subsistence lifestyle. Essential rites of passage for becoming and being a mature and marriable man were land-based (Jenness, 1922). Whereas women's traditional subsistence practices were congruent with sedentary life in the communities (i.e., they continued to raise children, prepare skins, sew, etc.), men's traditional subsistence practices were not. Time and place commitments necessary to participate in an educational program or hold a job were (and maybe are) in direct conflict with desires or commitment to be out on the land developing and practicing the subsistence skills that are (or at least were) core to Indigenous male identity in the Arctic (Condon, 1990).

This relative difficulty of men has been observed in other rapidly transitioning Indigenous societies around the world: “the disruptions created in rapid culture change hit the men more directly, leaving the women less changed and less anxious” (Spindler & Spindler, 1971, p. 398). Research among Alaskan Inuit confirmed the cultural aspect of low labour force participation: “... for northern Native men, much more than for women, cultural as well as economic factors explain low labour force participation” (Kleinfeld, Kruse, & Travis, 1983, p. 1). They further point to the beneficial impact that culturally adapted jobs can have in attracting and retaining northern Indigenous men.

While ethnographic research into changing patterns of education and economic productivity has thus pointed out over the past forty years that men are facing additional challenges trying to make the most of new opportunities in a changing world, and the gender gap is confirmed in statistics, very little research has specifically addressed northern Indigenous men's lived experiences with learning and work. In a search for relevant literature, the few studies that we found focusing on northern Indigenous men's engagement in learning and work were conducted in Alaska (Kleinfeld & Andrews, 2006; Kleinfeld et al., 1981). Other studies did not specifically address gender (Dorais, 1997; Douglas, 1999; Flanders, 1983; Stern, 2001), looked at gender differences more broadly (Condon & Stern, 1993; Williamson, K., 2006), or focused on women's experiences (McElroy, 1975; Billson & Mancini, 2007; Cowan, 2003; Mackenzie-Stringer, 2012). Jessica Ball's (2008, 2009, 2010) research into Indigenous fathers' experiences; the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health's [NCCA] (2011) Showcase on Aboriginal Father involvement; Inuit Tuttarvingat's (2009) television broadcast, “How are we as men? *Angutiilli qanuilipat?*”; and Ilisaqsivik's (n.d.) discussion paper on Inuit men and empowerment are rare examples of research and dialogue specifically documenting and analyzing Indigenous men's experiences.

Particular needs in communities are being addressed in research, policy, and programming (e.g., Castellano et al., 2001). Still, most innovative research and programming in Indigenous literacy and essential skill acquisition and labour force engagement is either gender-neutral (addressing youth, or urban Aboriginal people, or particular communities) or female-targeted. While such programming is invaluable, the particular needs of the group that may most need innovative programming—men—are not being adequately addressed. The particular factors contributing to or hindering male participation in learning and the workforce have not been studied or identified. This project was designed to fill this knowledge gap. Through the Northern Men's Research Project, a community-based research team collected and analyzed men's stories of learning and work, attempting to answer the question “what are the supportive factors and barriers to northern Indigenous men's participation in learning, work, and well-being?”

The research documented in the following chapters, and the men's stories that inform it, shows that for northern Indigenous men, participation in learning and work is fundamentally a reflection of personal and community well-being. We show that men are perhaps more engaged in learning and work than statistics would suggest. Still, the men's stories point to tensions between participation in the traditional subsistence economy and participation in the cash economy that have particularly affected men, as alluded to in the ethnographic literature. The stories also show

incredible resilience among men in difficult contexts, who choose to make the best of what is available to them. Finally, we identify a number of initiatives that have been designed and implemented in the North by Indigenous men, for Indigenous men, in support of the needs their stories identify.

It is our hope that this research will provide northern policy makers, program developers, practitioners, and literacy advocates with current, relevant, and credible research needed to inform and inspire changes in policy to effectively address learning and employability challenges of Inuit and First Nations men across the North. We hope that the men's stories will further inspire development of models and best practice approaches to engaging and retaining Inuit and First Nations men in formal and informal programming and in workplace education, and that the research will be used by stakeholders to improve the engagement of Inuit and First Nations men and the quality and effectiveness of adult and workplace education programs and policy.

Chapter 2 | Research Method

Research Team

Iliqaqsiq, the Nunavut Literacy Council (NLC), in partnership with the Yukon Literacy Coalition, the Northwest Territories Literacy Council, and Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador, initiated the Northern Men's Research Project. ESDC provided primary funding. Other community-based organizations and regional and First Nations governments provided in-kind support. Northern Indigenous men led this project within a team of community-based researchers, who were supported by literacy council staff and an academic research guide.

The community-based researchers (Byron Hamel, Noel Kaludjak, Mike Nitsiza, Helen Kitekudlak, Bob Patles, Allie Winton, and Steven Kormendy⁴) were nominated within their communities and regions during initial community consultations about this project. They are individuals who were considered to have the credibility to investigate men's engagement in learning and work, with strong communication and people skills. As a team, they brought in diverse experiences, including journalism/communications, counselling, teaching, and school administration. Most of the community-based researchers were Indigenous men; all have extensive lived experience with the research topics and are anchored in northern communities. Regional coordinators Colleen Segriff, Katie Randall, Cayla Chenier, Guillaume Charron, and Caroline Vaughan provided logistical support and input from the literacy council offices in each territory/province. The councils' executive directors (Beth Mulloy, Helen Balanoff, Kim Crockatt, and Caroline Vaughan, the latter doing double duty as regional coordinator) also provided intellectual direction and support. The academic research guide, Shelley Tulloch, adjunct faculty member at the University of Prince Edward Island, provided training and support through research design and implementation.

As part of the research process, the community-based researchers met in-person at least once per year along with the academic research guide and literacy council staff. At these meetings, team members discussed the process and results to date, participated in research training, and planned for the next stage of the research. Extensive notes were taken at each meeting. Part of the teamwork included reconsidering the role and process of research in the North, being aware of the impact of the research, and committing to extend the reach of the project through ongoing informal sharing as well as community-based reporting. We learned from each other, sharing stories, building relationships, and motivating each other as a team. This report represents our work as a team, although in some places comments from specific team members are quoted and attributed to them, as they speak from specific lived experiences in their regions.

⁴ Steven Kormendy replaced Allie Winton as a community-based researcher in Yukon in the second year of the project.

Research Methodologies

This community-based research was primarily ethnographic (Spradley, 1980) and used an adapted grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 2009 [1969]). Within these phenomenological approaches, we were interested in documenting men's own visions of their lives, in their own words. This focus on creating a venue for men to share their stories and for their voices to be heard and interpreted on their own terms is consistent with our goal of research that empowers through its process as well as its outcomes. Through our collaboration as equal members in the research team, and through each researcher's close connections within each community, our work is grounded in relationships and mutual respect, as is fitting in Indigenous, decolonizing methodologies (Battiste, 2011; Smith, 1999). Our process of sharing stories as a means of generating knowledge and understanding is consistent with knowledge-sharing practices in many Indigenous cultures, including in the Canadian North (Healey & Tagak, 2014; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008).

Research Participants

In a research project focusing on Indigenous people, and on men specifically, we realize that "Indigenous" and "male" are political, social, and cultural terms defined by a range of attributes, shared experiences, practices, and recognition, not solely by genetics or physical traits at birth (Condon & Stern, 2003). "Northern" could be considered a fluid category, as people move in and out of the North for school, jobs, and family reasons. Our research aimed to be inclusive and reflect people's own ways of seeing themselves, so we relied on self-identification when applying our research criteria. Anyone who self-identified as male and as Indigenous (or Inuit, First Nation, or Metis), and identified a community in Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, or Labrador as home was eligible to participate. Although we recognize that umbrella terms such as Indigenous and even Inuit, First Nations, and Métis inadequately reflect the identity and diversity of men in the North, we use these general terms to point to overall trends across Canada's North without identifying specific communities.

The researchers in their respective regions used strategic purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2003), attempting to recruit participants from a range of ages and with a variety of learning, work, and family experiences. In the first round of interviews, researchers also invited people working with men in the communities (including local government representatives, teachers and administrators, literacy workers, employers, and RCMP) to contribute to the data through group interviews. Their perspectives helped us to understand and contextualize what we were hearing from the men. Still, it is the men themselves who are held as the experts of their own experience, and their stories form the foundation of our analysis.

Research Location

The research took place in nine communities across Canada's North: two communities in each of Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Labrador, and three communities in Nunavut.⁵ Communities were selected based on the criteria of having opportunities for local schooling up to Grade 12, plus some post-secondary in the community, as well as having local work opportunities. We included smaller and medium-sized communities (not the territorial capitals). In each community, a single First Nation, Inuit or Métis group made up the large majority of the population. All had a form of self-government.

Our goal in researching across the North was to identify overarching themes that affect large numbers of males across the country, even though we recognize the diversity across and within communities. Results are analyzed and presented as a whole, suggesting what might be commonly true for many men across the North. It is beyond the scope of this exploratory research to characterize specific communities or even territories.⁶

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was cyclical, with each stage of research building on the understandings gained in the previous stage(s) (Spradley, 1980). In the pre-research stage, literacy council staff contacted local organizations and government representatives to seek input into the relevance of the research topic for their community. This stage resulted in the selection of participating communities, the nomination of community-based researchers, and preliminary identification of themes for investigation.

In stage one of the research, community-based researchers met with the research guide and literacy council staff to refine the research questions and design a framework for the open-ended interviews. The resulting interview protocol included questions and prompts that invited men to speak about their experiences with education, family, and work; their desires with regard to education, family, and work; as well as stories that could be indicators of success factors and barriers (Appendix B). Community-based researchers used the list of questions loosely, with the freedom to follow a participant's own leading to talk about what was on the participant's mind. In most cases, community-based researchers were able to conduct interviews in participants' language of choice: either the Indigenous language or English. In total, 24 interviews were conducted at this stage, in eight communities, of approximately one hour each, with a total of 33 participants.

These interviews were translated (if necessary), transcribed, and then analyzed with NVivo software for qualitative analysis. Using an adapted grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss,

⁵ One community in each main region: Kitikmeot, Kivalliq, and Baffin

⁶ Although our data collection was balanced in Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Labrador, we acknowledge that the review of additional literature is somewhat slanted to experiences in Nunavut, given the expertise and documents accessible to the lead organization and the academic research guide.

2009 [1969]), we read through each interview several times, identifying recurring themes. We then went through and coded all interviews for each instance of each theme. After coding for themes, we analyzed the data coded within particular themes to further identify sub-themes. We coded both explicit statements of factors and statements that suggested a certain factor was at play, even if the individual interviewed did not say it outrightly. For example, "I couldn't go back to school because I had to work to support my family" and "I've been working full-time since I was fifteen" would both be considered as statements showing work as conflicting with high school attendance, although we were cautious not to assume cause and effect unless it was explicitly stated. Rather, throughout the analysis we speak more generally of the men's range of experiences and which experiences seem linked to others, without claiming directionality of cause and effect.

In the second stage of the research, the team developed a closed questionnaire based on themes identified in the open-ended interviews (Appendix C). These questionnaires asked northern men about their participation in learning, work, and well-being-related activities, and the factors that helped or hindered them to make progress toward their life goals. Most questions were multiple choice, with answer options reflecting what we had heard in the interviews. In most questions, participants were able to select more than one response to reflect different layers of their experiences. The questionnaire was developed using FluidSurvey software.⁷ The questionnaire was available for participants to fill out online on their own, online with the help of a community-based support person, or in a paper version (generally with the researcher present). Community-based researchers applied whichever strategy best suited their community and participants. Participants were recruited through posters, radio announcements, and in-person invitations. In total, 166 closed questionnaires were completed, in seven northern communities, representing each northern territory/province.⁸ Teenagers, Elders, and every age group in between responded, and gave answers reflecting a range of experiences with learning and work.

Results were tabulated as percentages of people giving a particular response, based on total number of respondents. Qualitative responses, when given, were used to augment understanding of responses, and were included in the qualitative thematic analysis. Cross-tabulations of results by region/territory were considered in the analysis, specifically with the aim of identifying areas where responses from one region might be skewing overall results. However, because of the low sample size, and our project's goals, we have not analyzed regional differences for statistical significance, nor are region-specific results reported.

As a final stage in the research, we held a three-day workshop that brought together the community-based researchers and northern Indigenous male role models from each region (eleven participants in total). Criteria for role model selection were developed by the research team, based

⁷ Fluid Survey is now a branch of SurveyMonkey, and was chosen for its ability to support questionnaires administered online or offline, as well as for the security of its data storage within Canada.

⁸ Although 188 surveys were completed, 22 were not included in the analysis because they were completed by individuals who did not self-identify within the inclusion criteria, or because they appeared to be duplicates (i.e., where an individual might have started the questionnaire online, not realized it had saved, and filled it out again, giving identical responses from the same IP address).

on results from the earlier phases of the research. Role models were selected by the community-based researchers in consultation with their regional literacy coalition, taking into account nominations of role models given during the questionnaire stage of the research.

The goals of the workshop were to deepen and verify the analysis of research to date and to respond to needs identified in earlier interviews, namely to create a venue for men to share their stories and inspire each other, and to document role models' stories for sharing with a broader audience. One of the community-based researchers facilitated open discussion around three themes: what is important to the life of a northern Indigenous man (defining success); men's own journeys in learning, work, and well-being (identifying barriers and supportive factors); and examples of programming and policy that supported men toward their goals. The workshop took place in English, with some informal translation as required. Discussions were audio- and video-recorded, and later transcribed verbatim. Workshop transcripts were analyzed thematically alongside earlier interviews. They were also used as the basis for the role models' stories included in Chapter 6.

The research thus used qualitative and quantitative research methods to document men's perceptions and experiences of what is helping or blocking them from participating in learning and work and achieving their life goals. Men were able to participate in an interview, a short closed questionnaire, a role models workshop, or a combination of the data collection events. In keeping with a grounded theory approach, we analyzed data as we went along. Subsequent data collection was shaped by, and used to confirm, emerging understandings. Multiple data collection techniques allowed for triangulation of research results, meaning that perspectives that were repeated across interviews, questionnaires, and workshops, and across data sources (men, those who work with men, and published literature) were considered particularly robust results.

At the end of the project, once all data were entered and had undergone preliminary thematic analysis, we went back through the interview and workshop transcriptions, as well as the questionnaire summary graphs, looking specifically for answers to our research questions:

- What do the stories say about how the men define success or the good life?
- Which barriers to men's success are revealed in the stories?
- What do the men say helped them to be successful in learning, work, and well-being?
- What do they suggest in terms of policy, programming, and other initiatives to support men?

The overarching themes of analysis, presented as chapters in this report, are a) success or the good life; b) participation in learning, work, and community; c) barriers; d) success factors; and e) promising models.

Dialogue was an important analytical tool throughout the research. Community researchers, as active community members trained in ethnographic methods, shared observations from their home communities and regions. As we went through the analysis, the research guide presented the NVivo analysis to the bigger group for input. Members of the research team discussed what

they were hearing from participants in their respective communities, what they were seeing so far in the data, and how they understood their own observations as contributing to overall results. Throughout our reporting, we use extensive verbatim quoting. Through our inclusion of original data, we invite readers to be co-interpreters of data alongside our research team, to elaborate on or question our interpretation, in order to move closer to the goal of understanding northern men's experiences as they tell their own stories.

Finally, we consulted published literature as part of the ongoing dialogue of ideas throughout the project. Published sources were consulted at the beginning of the project to identify the need for the research, ensure that we were not duplicating previous research, and broaden our thinking of what we might ask the men. At that time, we found some relevant references to men's experiences buried in research about women in the North (Billson & Mancini, 2007; Fogel-Chance, 1993; McComber & Partridge, 2011; McElroy, 1975), gender roles in the North (Condon & Stern, 1993; Williamson, K., 2006; Williamson, L., 2006), northern ethnographies (Condon et al., 1995; Dorais, 2010; Fleming, 2004; Hensel, 1996), and autobiographies of northern Indigenous leaders (Amagoalik, 2007; Arvaluk, 2008; Crozier-Hogle, Wilson, & Jensen, 2010; Ittinuar, 2008; Lyall, 2014; Okpik, 2005; Quassa, 2008; Tapardjuk, 2014). We found some relevant research related to Indigenous males' experiences in Alaska (Kleinfeld & Andrews, 2006; Kleinfeld, Kruse, & Travis, 1981). However, we found a gap in research specifically analyzing northern Indigenous men's engagement with learning and work in Canada. Little to no research had examined the factors that support or block men's engagement with learning and work, especially from the men's lived perspectives, even if the topic has been broached now and then in popular media (Inuit Tuttarvingat, 2009).

In keeping with our commitment to a data-driven and grounded theory approach that prioritizes men's stories and makes sense of them on their own terms (without imposing pre-determined theories), any reading conducted prior to the data collection was kept in the background while we listened to men's stories with an open mind. After collecting and identifying common threads in men's stories across the North, we went back to the published literature to explore in more detail themes from data, and to see how what we were seeing in the data may or may not be reflected in the literature. We gave special consideration to texts authored by Indigenous people, and those that privileged lived experiences through thick description (Geertz, 1973) and extensive verbatim quoting.

Research Ethics

The research was conducted following promising practices of community-engaged research in the North (Nickels, Shirley, & Laidler, 2006). Part of our work as a team was to design a research framework that was specific enough to be easily followed in each community, and flexible enough for each community researcher to implement in ways that best fit norms and expectations for knowledge generation in his context. Each literacy council assumed responsibility for the conduct of research in its region. Following local regulations and standards, research licenses were obtained from Aurora Research Institute in the Northwest Territories and from Nunavut Research Institute.

Permission to conduct research was obtained from NunatuKavut Governing Council and from the relevant First Nations governments in Yukon.

Participation in this research was by invitation, with no obligation on the part of communities or individuals to take part. Feedback from men who chose to participate suggests that they welcomed the opportunity to speak and be heard on the subject of men's specific needs in the North. Other men were reluctant to be interviewed, and this choice was respected. Participants in the first round of interviews were given the option to speak using their own name or under a pseudonym. Most chose to be identified by a pseudonym, and this is indicated by the use of single quotation marks ('X') when attributing names to their quotations. The closed questionnaires were all completed anonymously. In the final stage of the research, when we conducted the role models workshop, we asked participants if they would agree to have their names included with their stories. The inclusion of names gives stories more credibility in local communities, as hearers can co-interpret the stories based on their knowledge of the individual. It also respects standards for knowledge sharing in northern communities, which consider the most valuable knowledge to be that which comes from someone who has experienced it first-hand.

Throughout the data collection we emphasized that there were no right or wrong answers, and that we were open to hearing men's own perspectives of their experiences. Participants were invited to follow any tangents they considered to be pertinent and interesting, or to refrain from answering any question that they would prefer not to answer.

While we were not specifically researching residential school experiences, we were aware that participants might recall traumatic learning experiences, and thus included information on how to access counselling and support on each consent form (participants kept a copy). It was an added benefit that most of the community-based researchers had counselling-related experience, and all were experienced in providing a validating, non-threatening environment in which men could share their stories. Sample consent forms (which were adapted to each region) are included in Appendix D. In the final research workshop, the community-based researchers participated both as facilitators and as knowledgeable individuals and, where appropriate, as recognized by their fellow researchers, as role models from their respective regions.⁹ For this purpose, they also signed consent forms for the final workshop, and their comments and testimonies are included as data.

In our research and reporting, we were committed to a strengths-based approach, documenting what *is* working and helping, and areas in which men *are* living out the lives they wish, even as we documented barriers. We made every effort to mitigate the potentially stigmatizing effects of discussing issues. We are aware that well-meaning efforts throughout the evolving relationship between the first inhabitants of these lands and the institutions of newcomers have been hampered by the "inability to see the true strengths of ... communities" (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006, p. 90). We cautiously and humbly offer this analysis, realizing that despite our efforts to see

⁹ Applying the criteria of male, self-identified as First Nation, Inuit or Métis, and calling a northern community home.

things from the inside, many of the true strengths of northern Indigenous men remain implicit, invisible, or unnamed.

In our reporting, we bring to light some specific challenges that men face, while highlighting positive examples of men overcoming barriers to reach their desired goals. The research is exploratory. The number of men in this study does not necessarily reflect the diversity of men in the North and greater dialogue is needed to bring breadth and depth to our understandings. Still, given the gap in research specifically addressing northern Indigenous men's experiences, we contribute to dialogue by raising questions and identifying paths of further inquiry and action for those who are concerned with supporting the engagement of northern Indigenous men in learning, work, and well-being.

At the end of the research, some of the results pointed back to thematic areas that have been researched in the North, although without a gender focus or with women specifically, such as identity and empowerment (Castellano, 2008; Dorais, 2010); culturally responsive curriculum, assessment and pedagogy (Barnhardt, 2008; Cappon, 2008; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Hodgson-Smith, 2000; Lewthwaite, Owen, Doiron, McMillan, & Renaud, 2013; McCardle & Berninger, 2015; Stenton & Rigby, 1995; Stern, 1999; Wyman et al., 2010); and Indigenous healing and well-being (Archibald & Dewar, 2010; De la Sablonnière, Pinard St-Pierre, Taylor, & Annahatak, 2011; Kirmayer, Simpson, & Cargo, 2003; Kral, 2012; Kral, Idlout, Minore, Dyck, & Kirmayer, 2007; Tester & McNicoll, 2004). We have touched on the literature most closely related to dominant themes. However, as the men's testimonies pointed in different directions, we have limited our work to pointing to these themes as paths for further research on gender-specific issues relating to learning and work among Indigenous men in the North. Selected resources are summarized in Appendix E. Specific commentary and recommendations relating to Indigenous men and literacy are included in Appendix F.

Chapter 3 | Northern Indigenous Men Define Success

As part of our research, we tried to understand and define success in the men's own terms in order to avoid framing men's experiences in terms of non-Indigenous, or non-male visions of what is important. By success we mean what northern Indigenous men say is important to them, what they aspire to, and what they associate with or consider indicators of living the good life. In the stories we collected, common themes emerge but no single set of criteria for what constitutes success for northern Indigenous men. The success northern Indigenous men talked about in this study is multi-dimensional. In the big picture, men's descriptions of success reflected the importance of what one does and is able to do; how one's actions impact the community; and how these reflect who one is. Three thematic areas are discussed below: 1) being strong like two men (combining education, employment, and subsistence); 2) being a provider and helper; and 3) being a good person. However, each of these should be considered in light of a broader need to avoid boxing men into limited definitions, and making space for northern Indigenous men on an individual as well as collective basis to define what is important for them.

Strong like Two Men (Education, Employment, Subsistence)

A common theme in men's definitions of success is reflected in T'licho Chief Jimmy Bruneau's vision of being "strong like two people" (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2011), which includes learning, work, and subsistence as overlapping values and practices. The men valued being able to function in and positively draw from the so-called modern life, including schooling and paid work, as well as more traditional sides of life associated with culture and the land-based economy. Mike Nitsiza, from the NWT put it this way, "We try to make balance, like strong like two people. Given the choices that we have." 'Mr. Diamond', from NWT, explained his personal strengths and achievement in this way:

The resources I have would be, I mean, I have processing skills technician for the mining and I took the leadership program in Aurora College and I finished that and I have other courses, mine rescue courses I took in the mine. I completed that too, so I have it. I have skills on the land, trapping, survival on the land too, so I have both. Like two people.

'Captain Planet' from NWT acknowledged his son's success in terms of being able to navigate work and land:

My son, right now he has a full-time job at the mine and he's doing okay. He's got his own little apartment and he's [got] a good living. When he was growing up I took him on the land. I showed him to trap, how to go fishing and how to hunt you know. He also...can survive on the land, there's no problem. He can haul woods and whatever the mens need to know, he knows it all.

Maintaining links to both culture and tradition on one hand, and the wage economy on the other, is a matter of living out values as well as practices. Byron Hamel (Labrador), explained why Roy Byrne was selected as a role model from Labrador, "Roy's a very good example of people who balance traditional values with making a successful life in a world that's forcing you into working *jobs* for money." Roy affirmed:

You see how it's so important, like the way things are now, being at the mine and all that stuff, and you kind of see the other stuff, why it's so important being more cultural. Why culture is more important than just work. You kind of see both sides of it and you try to balance that somehow. There's a way to balance it, but sometimes it's hard.

This multi-faceted vision of what it means to be successful was confirmed in the closed questionnaire, across regions. In response to question 13, "Which characteristics are most important to being a successful man in your community?" (in which participants could choose as many responses as they wished, Figure 1 below), "traditional knowledge and land skills" and "having a job" were equally selected responses, chosen by 67% of respondents (112/166 and 111/166, respectively).

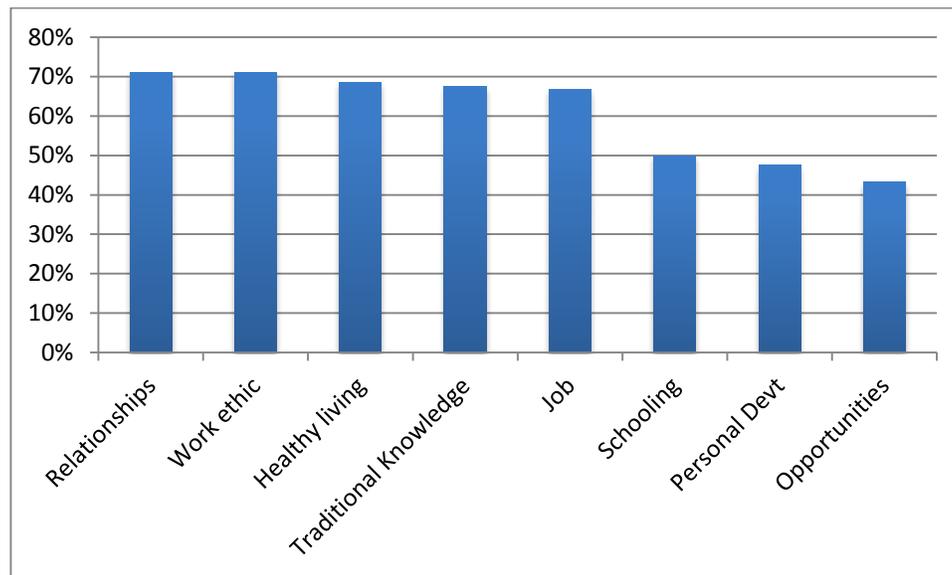


Figure 1 Self-Defined Characteristics of Successful Northern Indigenous Men

'Captain Planet's' praise of his son "knowing what men need to know" and Roy's difficulty balancing two sets of values resonated across interviews. What men need to know, and be able to do, expanded as cash economies joined the traditional land-based economy, and as thriving in western institutions required additional skills to surviving on the land (which is also still required). While in best case scenarios men talked about finding a balance, or drawing on the best of both worlds, others exposed this expectation as a heavy burden. Laakkuluk Jessen Williamson (2006) described it as an abyss, rather than a balancing act: "Inuit boys, on the other hand, feel that they

have fallen into an abyss between their traditional role as men and some kind of future self-definition" (p. 60).

Education

Education, part of the "strong like two men" picture, was most frequently mentioned in interviews as what is required to be a successful northern Indigenous men (i.e., education was explicitly linked to success by about half of the men interviewed). 'Mr. Hockey', in Yukon, said, "For someone young today ...just keeping themselves educated. That is a big part of being successful." 'Man 1' in Yukon said: "You have to take those courses. If you don't, you are going to miss out no matter how hard you try." 'Family Guy' from NWT said: "Well, growing up...you see your cousins or your friend graduate from the high school and they continue on with their education and complete. That's the people I admire." When asked about the best possible future he could imagine for his son, 'Co-op Worker' in NWT said:

Going to university and getting a diploma. Any diploma he desires. [...] There's, men are finally getting a lot of education today in the North. It's just that a lot more have to get more education and everyone can benefit from education or courses or getting a diploma or certificate or anything they can get from going to school.

'Mr. Diamond', from NWT, also said: "For [my son], it would be education right? To have a better education. [...] Like for me I really have to push myself, educate myself if I want to be successful in today's world." For these men, obtaining an education through schooling is admirable, and something to aspire to.

The men we spoke with framed schooling as a means to an end. Schooling, whether high school, college, job-training, certification, or other adult education, is valued because it is seen as opening doors to greater options. Men spoke about schooling or training as necessary to get a job and to do one's job well. 'Family Guy' from NWT said: "Education's very important to me, regardless how I didn't finish school. 'Cause now you look around and you see advertisements, grade 12 requirement or equivalent. So it's always grade 12 or better. So now I know that education's important." 'Captain Planet', from NWT, also emphasized the practical need for education as a means to a good life:

Well, without education you can't do too much these days. You got to have education to have a job. It's not like before where you don't need education as long as you know how to hunt you can survive but today it's not like that. You got to have education to have a good job and to have a good family and a good life.

Although in other areas of the interviews, some men spoke of the love of learning and the desire to keep growing, the comments about education as part of the good life or success do not seem to refer to learning for the sake of learning or education as a status symbol, but rather education as a means to achieving security:

Best future [for my grandson] would be finishing school, have a decent life, accomplish pretty much everything and then sitting somewhere retired. [...] For T'lico mens today...success would be when you're done, when you finish schools or you took a job and then you retired. That could be success, yeah? ('Family Guy', NWT)

The value of education was nonetheless nuanced in contrast with other aspects of success or the good life in northern men's experiences. Bob Patles, a community-based researcher explained:

The education that's out there, that's available to us, for a lot of us, as native men, to this day, it's not important. And even to me, when I have a really good job, I make good money, but I'd rather be fishing today. Any day of the week, I'll go. But, how do we change that way of thinking for our men? When I was asking a lot of men, and we came up with the answers that we got not that long ago, the want and the desire to keep a traditional form of living was very important to everyone. It was more important than education.

Other men explained how they considered themselves, and others, successful even with limited schooling or training. Certainly the knowledge and expertise of Elders on the land was valued as highly admirable. Participants acknowledged that many men they know have found jobs and been able to work even without schooling. These abilities came from a different kind of education, modelling on the land, or teaching oneself, or one-on-one mentoring that came without schooling. Even while acknowledging that they, themselves, had worked most of their lives without high levels of schooling, many of the middle-aged and older participants questioned whether or not this option is still available to the younger generation. However, even in research specifically with youth, Becky Tootoo (2015) noted that the young men considered to be successful in her hometown of Baker Lake, Nunavut, did not necessarily have high school diplomas.

The ambivalence about the relative value of schooling came across in the closed questionnaire. Only half of respondents (50%; 83/166) chose "holding a school diploma, degree or certificate" as an important characteristic of being a successful man in their community (Q. 13, Figure 1, where they could choose any number of responses). Again, these responses may reflect the reality that men are observing in their communities: the people who are the most highly respected, admired, and looked up to are not necessarily those with formal education, and northern Indigenous men are observing other northern Indigenous men succeeding, whether working or otherwise living the good life, without following a path of K-12, high school diploma, then college. These results may also point to a lack of role models in the communities who have chosen this path.

This is not to say that education is not highly valued by men or seen as important; it was commonly mentioned in open interview questions about what it means to be successful and what men aspire to for their sons and grandsons. However, men's practical self-assessments reflected education as less characteristic of successful men in their communities, when contrasted with land skills, job, relationships, healthy lifestyle, or work ethic responses, which were chosen by over two-thirds of respondents (67%–71%; Figure 1).

Employment

Paid work, part of being “strong like two men,” was prioritized by men in the interviews and the closed questionnaire. About half of the men interviewed linked paid work to success. For example, ‘Man 1’ in Yukon said: “There are a lot of really successful [Indigenous] people these days. Some are entrepreneurs, some are business owners, some are owners of properties and stores. You name it, there are probably in the thousands now.” ‘Strong Spruce’ in Yukon said: “[My son] is a heavy equipment operator, he’s very successful. And the people he works for, they like him because he works very hard and he knows what he is doing.” For ‘Inuk’, in Nunavut, his vision for his son’s future success is linked to running a business: “We are trying to help him for his future to succeed. His mother and I used to run a...business. So, now I am trying to get out of debt and re-start the business so that my son can run the business one day.” Each of these shows work as part of the good life.

The value of paid work was most consistently tied to money. For ‘Core Splitter’ in Yukon, the best future he could imagine for his nephew is “To have a good job and make a good living.” The men explained how paid work is necessary in order to have a home, keep food in the cupboards, support family members, and if one is lucky, pay for things that one wants. ‘Mr. Diamond’ in NWT said:

[W]ork brings everything for me. If I bring money home, [I] help them. [...] Money, working for money is everything now. Everything costs money today. From one point to another point it costs money right. Even to check nets. [Work is important] to support my family, bring food to the table, have a better life.

Similarly, a closed questionnaire respondent from Labrador wrote: “Without myself working a full-time job, my family would not be able to pay our bills, as my partner is a stay at home mom for the most part.” ‘Co-op Worker’ in NWT said: “Work is important to me because it gives me an income. It’s something I like to do. It’s a career.” ‘Bob Blais’ in Yukon explained:

Before, I didn’t see, I was career oriented. Just get a job and make me happy. I liked just hiking around being a tour guide. Didn’t pay the bills very well, but I was happy. I find now, happiness only goes so far nowadays and kind of got to get the job done to make the money, to have a life. It’s changed quite a bit, so. Started taking a lot more courses towards what I want to do.

If one can enjoy one’s job (and the schooling that leads to it), all the better, but men said being able to pay bills is more important.

The practical value of work extended (sometimes) beyond being able to take care of oneself to being in a position to share and take care of others. As ‘Fisherman’ in Labrador explained:

[Work is] very important, [...to] make a life for yourself, get ahead, help people who are down and out, you know. You can work, and get ahead, and you have something to help someone else get ahead. Like if you want to help put a roof over somebody’s house, you can

afford to do it, you're going to do it. But if you couldn't afford to do it you might be in the same boat as the other guy is in. That's one of the things that's actually important. You can move ahead, you know, and get things you wanted, you can earn some money. A lot of people here couldn't get what they wanted. They just didn't have the money to get it. The fish wasn't there, and the prices wasn't there for you to make any money. You could just make enough money to eat, right? Not like now, now we can go and get a \$50,000 truck and write it right off. It wasn't like that before. No, it was completely different. Completely different. Amazing how things can completely change in forty or fifty years.

'Igaji' in Nunavut saw work as a way to serve and help the community:

I would like to help my fellow community members, or work at the power plant, or airport, emergency medevac worker. Whatever that would help the community. [...] If my community was in any danger or there was an emergency I would like to keep the airport accessible and safe. And also assist on any emergencies as I am young and able. Say there was assistance needed with an Elder I would be able. I enjoy helping Elders. I just want to be available to help people and be safe. [...] [Researcher: What do you think is the best thing for your son?] To get a job that helps others. Like a police officer or hamlet worker. Something that contributes to the community.

This vision of the value of work lying in being helpful and able to provide is consistent with men's broader visions of what it means to be successful, as will be discussed further in this report. Most often, though, paid work was associated with being able to meet one's own and one's family's basic needs (see also Dorais, 2010). For the most part, jobs were *not* described by the men in this study as status symbols, expressions of identity, or means to self-realization the way they have been described to be for certain sectors of men in Euro-Canadian/American cultures (Gradman, 1990). These findings are consistent with Martin's (2005) research into Iñupiat and Yup'ik (Alaskan Indigenous) well-being, which noted the tension between the practical need for paid work and men's life satisfaction, which actually decreased with employment.

Subsistence Knowledge, Practice, and Skills

Men consistently mentioned the practical and symbolic importance of participating in cultural and subsistence practices. In many northern communities, traditional practices are part of an ongoing land-based economy. Helen Kitekudlak, a community-based researcher from NWT, for example, praised her husband saying:

He's really knowledgeable traditionally *and* in today's society. He had his own carpenter business for years until he retired. [...] He's a really good hunter. In his earlier years, before they put quotas on animals, he got nine bears in one year. Just really knowledgeable about the land, and practically everything! He's my idol!

Men's ability and activity in fishing, hunting, collecting wood, etc. reflects and brings a wealth that does not show up in dollar amounts (Condon et al., 1995; Natcher, 2009; Usher, Duhaime, &

Searles, 2003). 'Bob Blais' from Yukon explained how success, for him, is experiencing the land alongside family, work, and learning: "Experiencing the land, hunting, and fishing, because you enjoy that stuff year-round, a nice moose steak, salmon. That's satisfying. You're feeding your family, you're surviving."

Learning and practicing land skills are tied to survival. 'Strong Spruce' from Yukon praised his son's learning and skills saying:

It really worked out well because he can hunt moose and skin moose without my help anymore because I showed him how it is done. To call moose, he can call a moose and bring him in. I showed him how to set snares also, and how to set up tents. How to use spruce bows to make a mattress, so he can sleep on it with canvass or a mattress. These essentials are easy to teach to our children. He does really well at watching. He knows what to do.

Being on the land, and all that entails, is also where men say they develop the characteristics that are important for being a complete person, where they find their identity, and well-being. The importance of learning and work relating to subsistence and traditional practices is thus both linked to survival and to developing the characteristics that are important for being a complete person.

Knowing and continuing on the traditional ways is seen as admirable and a source of strength. When community-based researcher Mike Nitsiza, NWT, spoke of people he admired in his community, he reflected:

The most important part is that...they really maintain our culture, the traditional. [...] They maintain the culture with traditional hand games. [...] And they're really good with drumming. They're famous in drum songs, prayer songs, they're active in the field. And one of the things I really admire [...] That's what makes them a good role model. I kind of miss them. And yet I see their sibling, their son, are doing the same thing, the drumming and they continue doing that role modeling. And we need that.

Lawrence Nitsiza confirmed: "Most of their children are following their footsteps. ...Like living in bush, most, like working in the bush, like that's what they taught us, following him, really good role model." For 'Strong Spruce' from Yukon, continuing to look to the past is a way to protect against getting lost, know where you are, where you've been, and where you're going:

So that's why today it is a success that we try to be the best in both worlds, in education and then living in the bush. ...[G]rowing up over there I am comfortable in the bush because I know where I am all the time, where you are going. You look forward on the path you look back, know your landmarks really well. You go into the bush a little ways, you turn around, it's what you see. You go a little bit further and it's the same thing. You look back again and when it is time to go back, you know, you go on and see the same marker that you memorize. Could be a tree, a deformed branch whatever it is. I think that's why people get lost when they go into the bush even a little ways, because they don't look back.

The metaphor of being strong like two men reflects men who know what to do, and are capable, in a wide range of settings.

Providing - Helping - Being Useful

An overlapping theme in men's descriptions of what they aspire to or admire as successful is being in a position to help others: providing for basic needs, having something to share, helping others to get ahead, and passing on knowledge and wisdom. Roy Byrne from Labrador said: "What's important to the life of a northern Indigenous man? I guess it's very important for them to provide for their families. That's what I think, the main thing, right? Putting food on the table, and being accepted..." Bob Patles (Yukon) agreed: "Traditionally men in a native community have always been the provider. And to this day either with or without a job I think they are still the providers." 'Igaji' from Nunavut extended the notion of providing: "[Success is] being a good person in life. Helping their fellow people by giving food as food is expensive now. [...] Helping the community in any way they can." Thus, the indicators of success in these terms is being in a position to help, whether through knowledge, service, or possessions.

Men spoke of valuing their role as father and husband, including the legacy they leave through their children's continued contribution to society. Noel Kaludjak (Nunavut), for example, explained that part of his reason for selecting Sam Tutanuak as a role model for this project was the legacy he saw in Sam's children:

Seeing his children succeed in school. And...Karen, his daughter... was *very* committed to her work. And that says a lot, you know. Her parents, especially her father, I guess, had a lot of influence on her, the way she is now. And I know their children are really good, respectful children. Just the way he raised his family. [...] I really admire that. I really look up to that.

The importance of community and relationships was also reflected in the responses to the closed questionnaire, where 'Having good relationships' tied for the top response (71%; 118/166) in regard to characteristics of a successful northern Indigenous man (Figure 1).

Men's vision of success was not about individualized goals or achievement but rather about contributing to the well-being of the family and community. While the role of provider is one that resonates across Euro-Canadian and Indigenous cultures, the broader focus on being a helper reflects a value and practice that might be at odds with a prevalent Euro-Canadian value on independence and getting ahead of others. The prevailing theme seems to be one of equality, where, for example, participants from small communities mentioned stepping back from jobs as a way of making room for others to have their turn working. While the cash economy is linked to capitalism, an emphasis on sharing and equality in the interviews reminds us that these communities had economic and political structures prior to contact that have not been erased. The results raise the question of how much of the economic development initiatives in the North are assuming a desire and/or willingness to participate in a capitalist society, and suggest the need to reexamine what self-government systems, and the people within them, really want and are motivated to work toward.

Being a Good Human Being

Many men expressed the key aspect of success as “being a good human being.” Steven Kormendy from Yukon explained that success for him was:

[To be] the person that I want to be, I guess. You know, not necessarily even education-wise. Just to be a human being like that, you know? To be humble, to be respectful, to be down to earth, to teach you how to live a good life, to have a good mind and a good soul, and show a true level of respect to everyone and hopefully that respect is shown back to you. ...Just to be a good human being is a good place to start.

Similarly, Roy Byrne (Labrador) emphasized virtue as most important:

Honesty, trustworthiness, courage, all those things, that's what we need in this world. ...[T]hat's what's going to help people in this world. To show kindness to people. To show patience in listening to people's stories. We need to develop spiritual arms and legs, and that's what's important.

Men aspired to develop, enact and pass on core values such as being respected and respectful, being grateful and generous, being a good listener, forgiving, overcoming mistreatment, working hard, and being one's best. 'Captain Planet' from NWT, for example, said: “[Success is to] be a good listener, take advice from people, and do well in everyday life.” 'Mr. Diamond' (NWT) affirmed that these values are taught as important: “They tell us to attend school and always be helpful, thankful, and help others. Always respect others too. And discipline too, is the big one.” 'Igaji' from Nunavut said: “[Success is] being able to work well. ...Also, being a good committed employee.” Humility and equality were valued, where the goal is not to get ahead, but to be “normal.” 'Man 1' from Yukon said: “But the rest of us are just trying to be normal, to be normal people. Trying to at least get along in the community and be as active in the community, but it is all how hard you work.”

In the closed questionnaire, 'having a good work ethic' and 'good relationships' were the top responses chosen as characteristic of a successful northern Indigenous man (71%; 118/166). 'Living a healthy lifestyle' was also chosen by more than two-thirds of respondents (69%; 114/166). The results summarized in Figure 1 (above) show how these personal characteristics and community connections were the top valued responses, followed closely by traditional knowledge/land skills and having a job.

Freedom to Self-Define

Our aim in discussing northern Indigenous men's conceptualization of success is not to come up with a definition of success that fits everyone, but to open doors for discussion. The themes above show trends in men's comments, but we acknowledge that individual men situate themselves very differently, and we heard varying definitions of success depending on who we talked to. Some emphasized education, graduating from high school, going to college, getting a diploma or

certification. Others emphasized having a job, and thus money and the ability to provide. Others focused on family. Still others focused on provision and survival by knowing the land. In their words, "the things men are supposed to know." One clear result is that success is not one-dimensional. Men's stories never pointed to money or education for the sake of money or education. Rather their comments and stories often overlapped multiple goals, feeding into each other, with a focus on living according to one's values, and serving family and community. Success was defined in terms of identity, relationship, and provision/survival.

Our results remind us that communities are not homogenous and nor are men's aspirations (Natcher, 2008). Northern Indigenous men are living in contexts that continue to change as new opportunities emerge and other options become less accessible. Differences are seen across communities and across generations, and also within groups of peers. We realized listening to the stories that one cannot and should not expect Indigenous men to have a common vision for what a good life will look like. Rather, one of the first findings of the research was the importance of creating wider spaces within which northern Indigenous men can self-define.¹⁰

As just one example of the range of aspirations men expressed, in this case, in regard to occupation, we asked in question 12 of the closed questionnaire "If all things were possible, what work (paid or unpaid) would you most like to do?" We received a wide range of responses, ranging from 'anything paid' to particular jobs or kinds of work. To some extent responses clustered in ways that are congruent with the analysis above. For example, 30% (50/166) of responses reflected land-based work, from wanting to hunt and get paid for it, to land/sea-based industries (e.g., fishing), to conservation agent, to land-based tourism. Another 30% of responses (49/166) indicated trades-related work, possibly reflecting current jobs and immediately obvious work opportunities. The next largest grouping, 13% of responses (22/166), reflected helping professions (or volunteer help), including counsellors, pastors, and emergency responders. Varied professional roles, including consultant, management/supervisor positions, engineer, architect, and real estate agent were mentioned by another 11% (19/166), followed by a desire for self-employed work (7%; 12/166). The remaining uncategorized responses included artist, inventor, professional athlete, among others.

Reviewing the data reminded us that of course individual men would look at the different options available to them and set a vision of the good life that would not necessarily be the same as that of their neighbour or their high school buddy. It is necessary to avoid colonizing definitions of success based on work and education. At the same time, men's comments opened the door to considering ways that defining success based solely on Indigenous traditions could also be experienced as oppressive in changing times. Indeed, this tension of feeling boxed in by multiple and competing

¹⁰ This discussion of broadening the scope of society's expectations of men is particularly relevant in northern contexts, where shifts in roles have been so rapid. However, it is a discussion that extends (recently) beyond northern Indigenous men. Paul Kivel (2013) wrote "the Act Like a Man box [is] a list of expectations of who we should be [...] Few of us...want to live in the Act Like a Man box. It is a limiting, lonely, and dangerous place to be" (pp. 21, 25). The "Good Men Project" (est. 2009), <http://goodmenproject.com>, is another example of extending societal and men's own expectations of what makes a man successful and a "good man."

visions of who one should be was a barrier that came up frequently in men's stories. In contrast, men's stories of when they were doing well, and areas they were proud of, seemed to reflect times and areas of freedom to self-define.

Implications of the research, when considering the extent to which northern Indigenous men are thriving in the range of roles available to them include avoiding assuming a single vision of success for all northern Indigenous men; acknowledging and supporting each man's freedom in designing a desired future within a changing context; and evaluating needed and desired support in terms of men's own identified goals (see also Jane Glassco Arctic Fellows, 2012).

Chapter 4 | Myth of the Disengaged Male

Part of the premise of our research was the perception that many northern Indigenous men are disengaged from learning and work opportunities. As we spoke to men across the North, this idea resonated within their stories. Men *did* feel under-represented in some sectors. However, their stories, taken in connection with their discussion of what they value and consideration of what is available to them, suggested that men are much more engaged than statistics, or limited visions of learning and work, would suggest. More often than not, men we encountered did not fit into “engaged” or “disengaged” categories. Rather, men described engagement in learning and work as graded, layered, and shifting practices, where engagement in one activity led to disengagement from another (e.g., leaving school to care for a child), and marked seasons in men’s lives (literally as well as metaphorically: e.g., seasonal work or two-weeks on, two-weeks off work) rather than permanent states.

Range of Participation

In the closed questionnaire, the first two questions asked men to indicate which activities they had participated in over the past year, and which activities had taken most of their time. Responses, summarized in Figure 2, show that a large majority of men (81%; 135/166) had done some paid work, and two thirds had also participated in subsistence¹¹ (68%; 113/166). More than a third also indicated that they had participated in learning (44%; 73/166) or unpaid work (36%; 60/166).

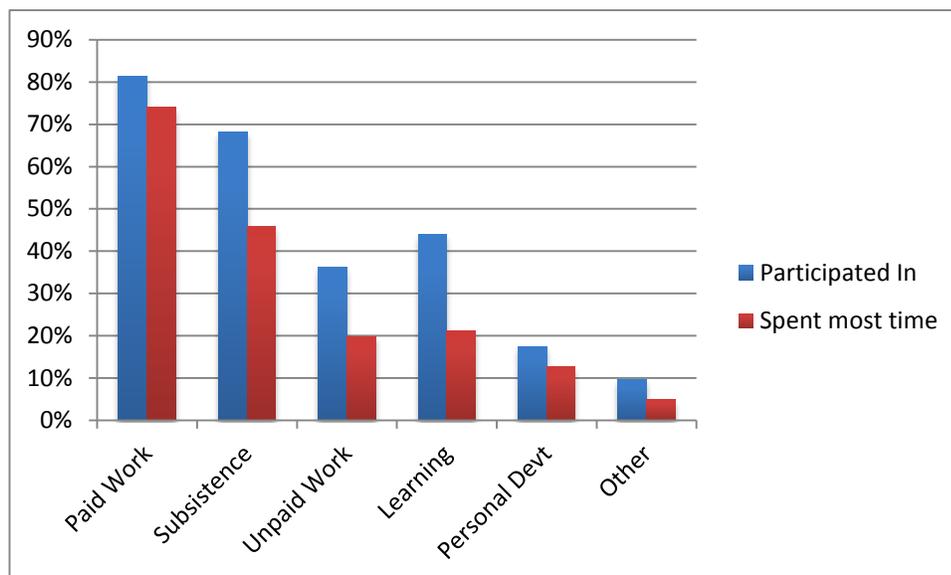


Figure 2 Men's Participation in Work, Learning, Subsistence and Well-being

¹¹ Subsistence and unpaid work were presented as separate categories because of the particular cultural and economic importance of land- and sea-based activities.

Most respondents gave multiple answers (e.g., participating in learning, work, and subsistence), with an average of two to three responses per participant. Only two participants chose no response, and these added comments such as “n/a, I’m retired”.

In these results, men represent themselves as productive in diverse ways, including ways that may not show up in national statistics. As some examples, a First Nations man from Yukon (age not given) wrote: “I am currently building a house and doing some of the work myself, it seems to occupy most of my free time.” A 36–45 year old Inuk from Nunavut wrote: “I also spend a lot of time with family helping and working on trucks, cabins, etc. Doing such activities helps in what I would find interesting as a career goal.” A 46–55 year-old southern Inuk from Labrador wrote: “I help care for my grandchild a lot as my daughter is a single parent.” Further, men occasionally clarified how a single activity such as subsistence could fulfill multiple roles of leisure, continuing cultural practices, providing for family, and supporting the community more broadly. For example, an 18–25 year old Inuk from NWT wrote: “I go hunting and fishing out on [the] land and have fun and do hunting and support for family and Elders.” ‘Igaji’, an interview participant from Nunavut, explained that he has never had a permanent job and left school at Grade 11 in order to take care of his baby. He is possibly someone who would turn up on the government's statistics as disengaged and yet his story shows him as constantly engaged, taking learning programs, learning by watching and reading, helping others, working on the boat or on skidoos, carving, hunting, and taking part-time jobs.

Commenting on their responses regarding what they spent most of their time doing, some men added that they would want to be doing more, if they could. One 26–35 year old Inuk from Nunavut noted: “[I go] hunting as often as my job allows, as I am on call periodically.” Another nuanced: “I am interested in carrying out additional volunteer work or training initiatives, difficult with workload.” Another 26–35 year-old Inuk from Labrador wrote: “Today's work schedules don't allow much time for traditional activities and are eliminating the opportunity to take part in those activities for the most part, except in cases where people are employed seasonally.” These comments point to the tension that came out across data collection: men desire to be doing even more than they are, but feel that that the activities they want to participate in are mutually exclusive. One choice or activity blocks others.

Work (Paid, Unpaid, and Subsistence)

The men, across communities, and in each of the data collection stages, represented themselves as participating in a system where work for money was valued, and in most cases possible. Only two respondents to the closed questionnaire said that they had never worked for pay (and these appear to have been students). Many men's stories, in the interviews, showed how they had desired to work, and pursued paid work, from their early teenage years. ‘Man 1’ from Yukon told this story of his first job:

When I was thirteen years old I went to the...Trading Post...they had a store there. ...I said, “...looks like you're putting money on the top of the can....I could help you out with that. I can

help you. I need a job. Can you help me out?" She said, "OK." Gave me my first job when I was thirteen years old. [...] Some of us did pretty good, but most times there were not too many jobs, unless you really wanted to work. Grab a shovel and go work. Set the pins at the bowling alley, or do some volunteer work just to keep you sane, \$2.50 a night.

For some, once paid work was available, they felt it was time to leave school. 'Guest' from Labrador explained: "When the fishery was open, when men became of age to go in the boat, like it could have been twelve, thirteen years old...once they were old enough to quit school, they went fishing." 'PP&MA' from Labrador put it this way: "Grade 9 used to be the threshold. You used to see a lot, especially men, and women <Researcher. dropping out?> I wouldn't say dropping out, it was the time to go to work."

These days, the men identified a wide range of paid work opportunities: mining, quarries, trades, tourism, arts, health care, exploration, education, retail, government, construction, fisheries, trucking, transportation, recreation, and hospitality, to name some options cited. Perceptions about the availability of jobs varied from region to region. The communities we visited in Labrador expressed most concern with a real lack of opportunity to work for pay, particularly due to the uncertainty of natural resources, which made employment very unpredictable. Participants from the other communities tended (though not unanimously) to suggest that options were available for men to work, at least to some extent. Furthermore, some men saw room to create opportunities through entrepreneurship. Two of the role models, for instance, had seen a need for lodging in their communities, and turned their homes into bed and breakfasts (in addition to their other work). As another example, Joe Kitekudlak, an Elder and role model with less than a year of formal schooling, ran his own local construction business, which created employment, served the community, and helped him provide for his family.

'Mr. Diamond' from NWT and others emphasized that while men may be working, and there are opportunities in the communities, Indigenous men are under-represented in particular jobs, particularly office and supervisory jobs related to the hamlet, town, First Nation, or territorial government:

Yeah, I find that too, right? Even all the office here, all the women's working. All the hard labour are the men's: working, trapping, woods cutting, mining. I think the community and the leadership has to support people, like educated people, to have them return to school or college, encourage them to take apprenticeship trades. There is a lot of opportunities I see, right? Like we need our own local electrician, plumbers we have skilled labourers, carpentry. There's a lot of opportunities for the mens to take trades. And that's a good paying job after they get it. [...] I seen some around the community, right? Women working full time and then the husband come home and maybe do some housework. Getting some woods, fish nets, trapping. I seen some of that. Two ways, it goes two ways, both ways. But we need more men in paying jobs.

These ideas were repeated in other men's comments. 'Man1' from Yukon said: "It seems like there are less men in the office, and more women in the office..." 'Truck Man' from NWT said: "Only ...those who work outside...like those that work on the garbage pickup and delivery water, cleanup, and heavy Equipment and Construction work only. ...[I]n the office there is only women.... There is nothing for men and they had work hard." 'Family Guy' from NWT added:

A lot of [the jobs] would be, for the mens, mostly with the carpentry, general labour, heavy equipment operating. [...] There's work available in the office too. But as you see...all the womens are taking pretty much all the senior [positions] like...supervisor. [...] The gap between women versus mens, it's true. What I would like to see, honestly, to close the gap. Here's the mens, at the beginning there was men way up there and now it's the opposite, women's up here now. They finish school. ...Ladies are the ones finishing school and even with grade 12 too. ...Women are more success than them. It'd be good to keep it balanced.

To some extent, the under-representation of northern Indigenous men in office jobs was presented as a problem. 'Captain Planet' from NWT said:

If you go the community office you see most of it's just young ladies working, young ladies running programs. ...But we don't see no mens in there. We need mens to run a program for us and mens to do some of the administration work for us in the community, like finance and all that department, well-paid jobs. There's a lot of well-paid jobs here in the community but the problem is mens don't step up to the plate. I don't know what's the problem there but we need more mens in the office work too.[...] At the end of the day the woman is doing two work, right? They work in the office, pay for the bills and then when the mens come home from hunting, they got to make dry fish, dry meat, right? Yeah, it'd be good to see more mens in the office. Yeah, in the future.

Even if men pointed out other activities that men were involved in (and even mentioned reluctance among men to do office work), the men we spoke with were interested in the idea that our research could help identify barriers to men in office jobs, and what could help support their engagement there, as well as in other work, and elsewhere in their communities.

While work for pay was an important theme in our research, we also recognized the importance to expand the idea of work. "Employment" and "unemployment" were in some ways not the most useful categories for describing men's experiences. Some men who described themselves as "not working" were in fact working multiple part-time jobs, or finding other ways of making money, such as carving, guiding, fixing machines, etc. 'Samual' and 'Simon' (co-interviewed in Yukon) said:

Around here, it could be a small engine mechanic or something like that. ...If you go to the bush maybe, go on as a bushwhacker and cut lines, things like that. There's lots of possibilities for youths out there. There's lots of skidoos around here that you can fix here. A person can look to do around here to make money fixing skidoos. All kinds of little motors. ...Just for a few bucks, not a business...Not enough volume to do it as a business.

'Inuk' in Nunavut described a time in his life when he was, by his definition, "unable to work" but nonetheless was active and productive, especially in relation to the vision of being a successful man (on the land, helping, sharing):

Yes, I have [had a time in my life when I wasn't working]. I used to be a driver. There was a time I couldn't work and just hunted. [...] Yes, I was a hunter for a while. I was also a guide, guided polar bear hunts, did dog team rides, and took students for dog team trips with my father. Also did dog team trips for visitors [tourists] and did land trips where we made iglus. This is what my father and I did before.

'Qimiata' in Nunavut explained that the lower numbers of men in office jobs reflects, at times, men's positive choices to pursue other forms of productivity that they enjoy more:

There are some males who have an education, but they are also more interested in hunting. This may be why they don't get training in other skills. There is also the artist who works by creating art. Some males create art for an income. I believe these also contribute to males not working in an office, hunting and being an artist.

Although these kinds of ad hoc paid work do not necessarily show up in employment statistics, and do not necessarily meet a high enough demand to develop a self-run business (although in some cases they do), they contribute to the cash economy, provide for men's needs, and reflect a certain level of productivity that is perhaps a more appropriate indicator of men's engagement and well-being than employment per se (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2007).

Men's stories also reflected a certain level of productivity in unpaid work: fixing things, building things, taking care of Elders or children, and helping out around the community. One of the role models, Joe Kitekudlak from NWT (who had run his own business and built a workshop at home), described his sons as "always fixing things," in particular skidoos that are used as transportation in the community and as vehicles for hunting. 'Mr. Diamond' from NWT explained: "When I'm not working, when I'm home, my wife's working so I have to do dishes, prepare lunch for my kids, my wife. I'm feeding the dogs, cleaning up around the house....take kids [to school], pick them up." 'Co-op Worker' in NWT also described family responsibilities: "I'm living with my mother right now. She needs some help to help her around the house everyday so right now I'm just staying with her." Others described volunteering in the community, or doing tasks that would be called volunteering in larger communities but are considered just part of being there for others in the smaller communities, including helping out at community events or one-on-one support, such as translating for Elders. 'Igaji' in Nunavut reported:

I look for people that may need help in our community. People like Elders and our grandparents. I look to help them and ask if they need assistance. It is not a chore to me. I look to be active in the community and not be idle. [...] I am young and able. Say there was assistance needed with an Elder I would be able. I enjoy helping Elders. I just want to be available to help people and be safe.

Subsistence practices (which crossed over into paid work in some cases) were an important part of unpaid economic contributions, and were examined separately in this research because of their cultural and economic importance (Poppel & Kruse, 2009; Stern, 2000). Men across the North talked about being on the land, harvesting, hunting, collecting wood, and doing the preparation and follow-up work such activities entail as a core part of their activities. 'Man1' in Yukon said:

I do a lot. I...go out on the land a lot. Go hunting...cut my own wood... I try and get out fishing. Get out as much as possible and learn about what's around...I know where the berries are, where the caribou are. It's moose harvest, the birds, just about everything about our land over the last 30 years.

The men explained that hunting was an expected part of helping and taking care of one's family and community. As 'Igaji' from Nunavut explained: "I also ask my family if they need help. If they ask me to go caribou hunting I will go hunt because they have asked this of me. I try to say yes when it is possible." 'Chubbs' in Labrador explained: "Oh, we eats all we want. And we give away a lot of it. I'd say last year...we gave away about fifty meals." Subsistence practices are rigorous, demanding, and skilled work, with uncertain returns. Traditional subsistence practices continue, although men present a challenging dilemma as they struggle to participate in employment, on the one hand, and maintain subsistence practices on the other, in a context where hunting requires money, but making money requires staying in town.

Despite the importance of men's unpaid contributions, we noticed that such work was often unrecognized, even by the men themselves. Byron Hamel (Labrador) reported:

Through my research in Labrador I met a lot of shy men. [...] I would ask, "What do you do for work?" and they would say, "I don't work." And then they would go through a whole list of what they would do. It's about ten or twelve hours in a day, but they don't see it as work. ...[W]e look at these tasks and they're not really respected because it's just expected. Why does someone who does ten, twelve hours a day of work for their community not see it as valuable?

Although subsistence is, for many of the families, essential for staying warm (collecting wood, providing fur for the women to prepare into clothing), and eating well (hunting, fishing), and men value and enjoy it, men also seemed to underplay their contributions through subsistence, referring to themselves as "not working" if not in a paid, regular job (Williamson, 2006).

The tension between what men enjoy and what they see as most necessary was reflected in questions 3 and 4 on the closed questionnaire (Figure 3). We asked participants to indicate which of their activities they found most enjoyable, and which they found most necessary (multiple answers were allowed). Two thirds of participants (67%; 111/166) said they find subsistence most enjoyable, but not as necessary as paid work. Conversely, a similar percentage (71%; 118/166) found paid work most necessary, but not as enjoyable as subsistence. Men are thus caught finding the balance between what they enjoy doing and what they find necessary. This tension is aggravated by the

lack of value placed on subsistence activities and (sometimes) the difficulty finding paid work that one finds somewhat enjoyable.

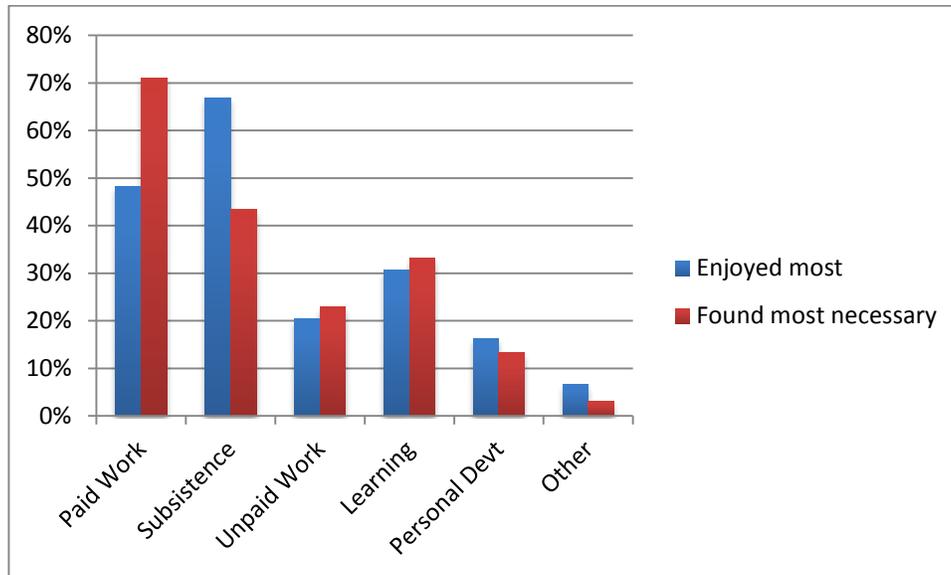


Figure 3 Activities Found Most Enjoyable and Most Necessary

Learning (From Family, Community, and School)

As Figure 2 in an earlier section showed, 44% (73/166) of respondents to the closed questionnaire indicated that they had participated in some kind of a learning program in the prior year. Only 21% (35/166) indicated this was one of the things they had spent most of their time doing. About one-third of participants (Figure 3) said that “school, training, or other learning” was the activity that they had found most enjoyable and most necessary. Comments in the interviews showed that men conceptualized learning quite broadly, as not limited to school, and including learning from family members, on one’s own, and from a range of mentors or teachers.

Many had stories of learning as children that was characterized by being with fathers, uncles, or other men from the community. ‘Fisherman’ from Labrador explained how raising children was a community affair: “Mostly your parents, brothers and uncles and all that...You look up to them all and they teach you the right things and from the wrong things.” Boys were taught the knowledge and skills of subsistence, alongside work ethic and values. As Eddie Skookum from Yukon shared:

I don’t say helping out is natural. You learn it from the wisdom of the people. When I was growing up, they’d pick you up and go hunting and they kind of learned from the men. The men would take you out and teach you how. They’d...teach you how to navigate the river...how to cut, how to set their nets, and everything else.

He went on to tell how he continues to prioritize the knowledge he can gain from Indigenous Elders for professional, personal, and cultural growth.

That kind of relational learning that once characterized passing on of traditional knowledge is diminishing (Laugrand & Oosten, 2009). Many of the men expressed concern that younger generations no longer have the opportunity to learn from fathers and older males. As Mike Nitsiza from NWT explained:

[A] lot of them [young boys] don't have the opportunity to go on a fishing trips with anybody. Maybe their families don't have a boat with a motor. ...So, when I'm going out, I want to make sure that the little ones has that opportunity. And that's where you build the bond with them. And then when you want to do something, they'll always be there to help you. And then, they'll help others too.

Other men, too, explained how they prioritize, in their work or their personal practice, supporting young boys and men to learn traditional knowledge and practices by being out on the land together. 'Mr. Hockey' from Yukon explained:

We go out for the first hunt, that teaches them how to live off the land, respect for the land. We do a lot of travelling in the summer to get the kids out on the land. That's basically called "ground-based habitat monitoring." Yeah, that's quite extensive. ...I really enjoy it, and so do the kids, going out and catching the salmon. It's a lot of work cleaning them, but when you bring it to the Elders and they are, "Oh, thank you." Or you get a moose and you get to deliver it to people that really need it, that's a rewarding experience...for myself anyways. <R. Right, so it probably contributes to some sense of pride about yourself?> Yeah, when you go up to first hunt and first fish, and are teaching kids, that's huge for me.

While the men sought out and valued the opportunity to pass on their knowledge, some encountered ambivalence from the younger learners. Sometimes, Mike Nitsiza explained, he can hardly get in his boat without the younger boys running out wanting to come fishing. Other times, he said, he cannot get anyone to come and help:

So it's a small community you know but it's a lot of drinking here. Try to get [my nephew] out hunting, he says, "No, no, maybe next time." My nephew won't go so I have to get someone else or go by myself, but [you] need help if you shoot an animal. I told my nephew I was going over, setting up my net... I said, "Come over and inspect the net. I'll show you how to do it." He didn't respond so I just went across and did it myself. ...I told him, "I just want you to watch and learn. One day I might not be able to do this, I want to show you." They don't want to learn anything.

Some of the older Inuit men expressed frustration at not being able to pass on the knowledge and skills they found so essential and valuable. Young men similarly expressed dissatisfaction at

inadequate opportunities to learn such skills. The data suggests a breakdown in traditional learning for both those that would teach and those that would learn.¹²

Traditional knowledge and land skills were the most frequently mentioned content of relational learning, possibly because men feel that this knowledge is diminishing and cannot be learned in other contexts. Also, the men strongly associated their own land-based, relational learning as the foundation for relationships, healthy living, and work ethic that serve them well in all aspects of life. Of course, traditional knowledge is only one aspect of relational, father-to-son (or uncle-to-nephew or grandfather-to-grandson) learning in northern communities. Some men are engaging with their children in new ways, including preparing them for school, helping them with homework, and passing on trades. 'Bob Blais' from Yukon took his son on the land, but he also "[sat] down with him and [taught] him how to read other books, [did] a lot of educational things, drawing, painting, colouring, hiking, exercise...."

Participants described varying, non-linear paths through formal schooling. As they went to grade school, graduated from high school, took college or university courses or job-specific training, or took upgrading to access such programs, many of the men's journeys were characterized by leaving school at some point, and either going back, or re-engaging with relevant, meaningful learning in a different way. For example, 'Mason Worker' in Yukon explained that he stopped his schooling at Grade 9 because having to leave town to go further was a barrier for him at that time. However, he eventually went away to an upgrading program and completed high school equivalency. 'Mr. Diamond' from NWT explained: "I dropped out at age 17 [from] high school in Yellowknife and I started working right after. From stock boy to cashier to assistant manager and then quit, went back to school for a year..." 'Captain Planet's (NWT) experience was similar:

Well to tell you the truth I didn't finish high school. I only went up to 11.5. But then I...started working at the store and later on they hired me as store manager. So as I became store manager...I took a course. I was learning as I go along, so, that's what keeps me going.

Many participants, particularly in Yukon and NWT, spoke favourably about college and job-specific training as more enjoyable and more relevant learning than what they experienced from Kindergarten to Grade 12. As 'Bob Blais' from Yukon reported: "I don't know, my education changed quite a bit when I went to the college here because it was more stable and easy to understand. I had a really great teacher who saw where I was and helped me get to where I wanted to be."

The men we spoke to seemed to characterize their experiences leaving school more as being done, or moving on to something else, rather than as dropping out or quitting. For example, when we asked men in the closed questionnaire (Q. 7) "Thinking of the last year you attended school, what were the most important reasons why you left?" and gave them a range of options reflecting what we had heard in the interviews, the two most commonly selected answers were "I had completed

¹² As evidenced in the First Nation's "Uncles Retreats" described by Bob Patles, younger and older men continue to be both learners and teachers of different types of knowledge.

my program" (51%; 84/166) and "I was going on to other things (e.g., job, family responsibilities)" (39%; 64/166). Responses are summarized in Figure 4 (multiple answers were possible, but uncommon).

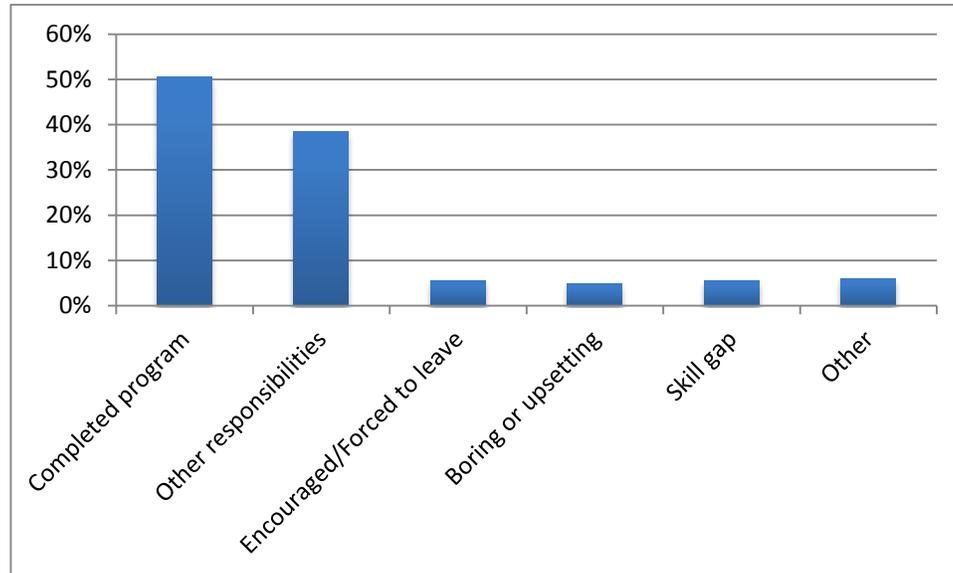


Figure 4 Reasons for Leaving School

When they were ready, many men said they went back to school to fulfill a specific need, whether to get high school equivalency or take specific training related to their current or desired work. These results provide an important nuance to discourse about young men disengaging from learning (Minogue, 2005). In contrast to deficit discourse, the men represent themselves as engaged and moving between opportunities and responsibilities, even if they are not following what might be an expected progression through grade school to high school graduation to college and/or permanent work.

Furthermore, men describe their learning outside of school as more significant in terms of getting jobs and doing jobs well than their in-school learning. When we asked, in the closed questionnaire (Q. 9, Figure 5) "Thinking of your current or most recent work, where did you learn most of the skills that you need(ed) for that work? (check all that apply)," the two most common responses were "on-the-job training" (73%; 122/166) and "observed skilled people" (63%; 104/166). A 26–35 year-old Inuk from Nunavut described this as "Working with the guys on the job, learning and being taught as I go." Fewer than half of the participants (46%; 77/166) acknowledged "school, college, or a formal class or program" as the most significant source of the knowledge and skills they needed for their jobs, and at least 12 of these respondents specifically noted in the comments section that they were referring to college learning. Although non-formal and community-based learning programs are growing in the North as bridges to employment and post-secondary learning (e.g., Nunavut Literacy Council, 2014), only 18% of respondents (30/166) indicated such

programs as useful to their skill development, possibly confirming a perception of gender bias in the types and target audiences of the community-based programs available.

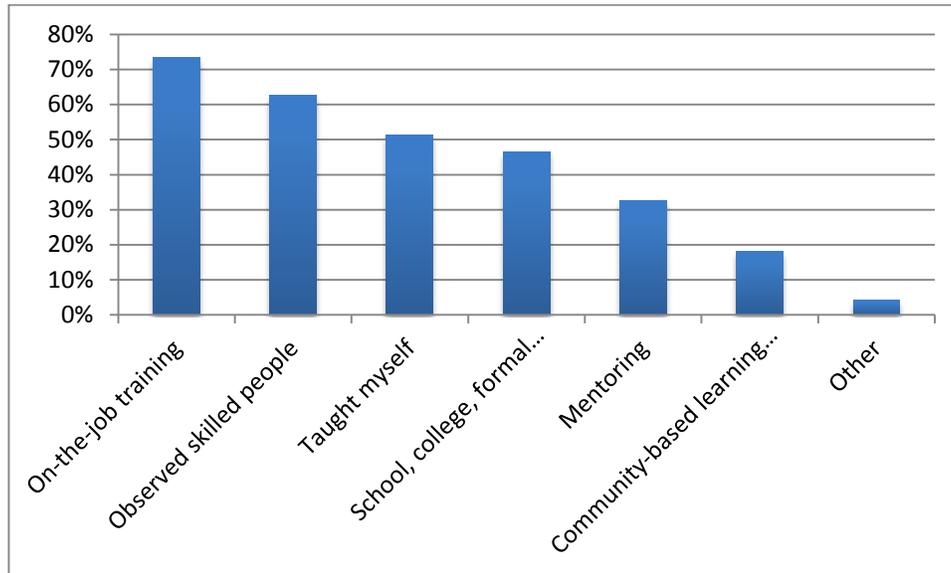


Figure 5 Where Men Learned the Skills Needed for Their Work

Approximately half of respondents indicated that their most important learning came from observing or teaching oneself (reading, practicing) (51%; 85/166). This tendency is seen in 'Mason worker's (Yukon) response to the question, "How important is education to you?," when he answered "It is very important. That's why I do a lot of reading." Helen Kitekudlak praised her husband, who attended school for less than a year as a young boy, saying: "[H]e taught himself to read and write. He can do both syllabics and roman orthography. He's a self-taught carpenter, electrician, plumber, mechanic." The importance men attribute to self-directed learning suggests a hunger that is not being satisfied in school or existing programs and that they are fulfilling elsewhere.

While men are teaching themselves, it is possible that low literacy skills, which were mentioned in several interviews, could still limit the venues through which men learn independently. Still, these results remind readers to look beyond program participation and completion statistics when ascertaining northern Indigenous men's engagement in learning and remember that a great deal of learning is evidently happening behind the scenes. Programs such as Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) (Archer, 2009) are a positive step to acknowledge learning that took place through in informal, or non-accredited channels, even if these need to be locally adapted and appropriate. As another example, one of the role models, Roy Byrne (Labrador), explained how in his work as liaison between industry and the First Nation, he has moved away from written assessments of prior learning and toward oral interviews conducted by someone fluent in both English and the Innu-Aimun.

To some extent, the men acknowledged feeling that they were benefiting less than women from new learning and work opportunities that came with moves into communities and transition to the cash economy. In learning programs, men said they sometimes felt under-represented in groups of women. 'Ferry Worker' in Yukon said, in response to a question about available learning programs: "Yes, I did take this course a couple of years ago with a bunch of women. There was one other guy but he kept not showing up, off and on. Mostly it was the four women and me taking the course about computers and stuff." Even studying in a university outside the territory, Steven Kormendy (Yukon) commented on how under-represented Indigenous men are, especially in certain programs: "Yes, even in my class, there are 35 or 40 people, maybe five males, and I'm the only Aboriginal male. It's pretty low representation, for sure."

Cycles of Engagement

Although our original research proposal suggested we would compare and contrast the experiences of men who were "engaged with" or "disengaged from" learning and work in order to identify defining factors in each group's experiences, the community-based team abandoned this approach early in our planning. Not only was characterizing men as disengaged potentially stigmatizing and unhelpful toward our goals of empowering research, it was also problematic in that men's experiences could not be neatly categorized into one group or the other. We have already discussed how men's experiences reflect a higher level of engagement than statistics might suggest once one broadens the concept of work to include all forms of productivity and the concept of learning to include more than just what happens in schools and classrooms. Even within these more fitting conceptualizations of participation in work and learning, which better reflect the men's realities, we noticed that most men in the communities we studied could be described as both engaged and disengaged depending on the moment the snapshot was taken.

A number of Inuit leaders' biographies published in recent years (Amagoalik, 2007; Arvaluk, 2008; Quassa, 2008) show this common movement between different forms of engagement and disengagement. The Honourable Paul Okalik, Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), past Premier of Nunavut, and the first Inuk to be called to the Bar, describes his early years as struggling terribly in school. He eventually dropped out and turned away from his community and toward alcohol as an escape: "It wasn't the path I had imagined for myself," says Mr. Okalik. "I was completely overwhelmed by the changes taking place in my community" (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007). He later landed a job that helped him recognize his skills and gain confidence. Following his daughter's birth, and feeling a new commitment to make life better for the next generations, he turned back to the advice and support of his grandmother and culture, went back to high school, and ultimately graduated from University of Ottawa's law school.

The Honourable Paul Quassa, Nunavut MLA and Minister of Education, tells another story of following different schooling and then work opportunities as they came, starting law school, then leaving prior to completion to be a single father to his son. He became president of the organization representing Inuit in Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), but stepped down in 1994 amid criminal charges and issues with substance abuse. Quassa wrote, "I can clearly

say it was due to alcohol abuse that I had to give up my seat" (2008, p. 113). Shame from the past made it difficult to go back into politics, but he eventually did: "I kept telling them that in 1993 they had asked me to resign and that people would remember that. No, people have forgiven you a long time ago. They won't even think about that. So, I ran again and I was very proud when I was re-elected" (Quassa, 2008, pp. 113-114). His biography shows ongoing struggles, moving in and out of more or less productive behaviours, but he is ultimately honoured by the contribution he has made and is making for Inuit society, as evidenced in ongoing re-elections and new opportunities to serve the public.

These men's highly public lives point to a push and pull in northern Indigenous men's participation in different aspects of society. Some cycle in and out of different levels of productivity, sometimes with personal problems and shame pushing one away from learning, work, and community connections. For others, or at different moments in men's lives, the cycle moves between different types of participation. An Elder from Labrador described his transitions through schooling and work this way:

I enjoyed going to college as an adult, but first when I started school when I was little there was physical abuse and it was very stressful. [...] I finished my program in College, but I left grade school in grade 9 when I was 15 (old enough to get out) because I fished during the summer and was eligible for EI and couldn't afford not to draw it and I couldn't if I attended school. (...) I worked for pay since I was 15 years old (I am now 62). (56–65 year old southern Inuk, Labrador)

Another southern Inuk from Labrador (46–55 year-old) said:

[I've] worked since I was 12 years old. ... [I] had to quit school early due to having to go to work to help support my family. [...] Employment is only seasonal so it's vitally important that I work to help support my family. ... I [also] I help care for my grandchild a lot as my daughter is a single parent."

Men of different ages, across the North mentioned leaving school to care for family. Others mentioned leaving one school program to pursue another. An 18–25 year old First Nations man in NWT wrote: "I finished my program this year, and my plans are to attend college and/or university." A 36–45 year old Inuk in Nunavut wrote: "Once I completed the program, it was very important for me to build a foundation on a career. Especially one I find interesting."

Similar to men's positive or neutral explanations as to why they left school (Figure 4), closed questionnaire results relating to reasons for leaving jobs (Q. 11) also reflect that, most commonly, reasons for moving out of a job was that the job was simply over (44%; 73/166) or that the man was going on to another job, school, or responsibility (33%; 54/166) (Figure 6). The high level of respondents indicating that the "job was complete" points to the seasonality and/or temporariness of work for many northern Indigenous male workers. Still, these results call into question again the stereotype of the disengaged Indigenous male.

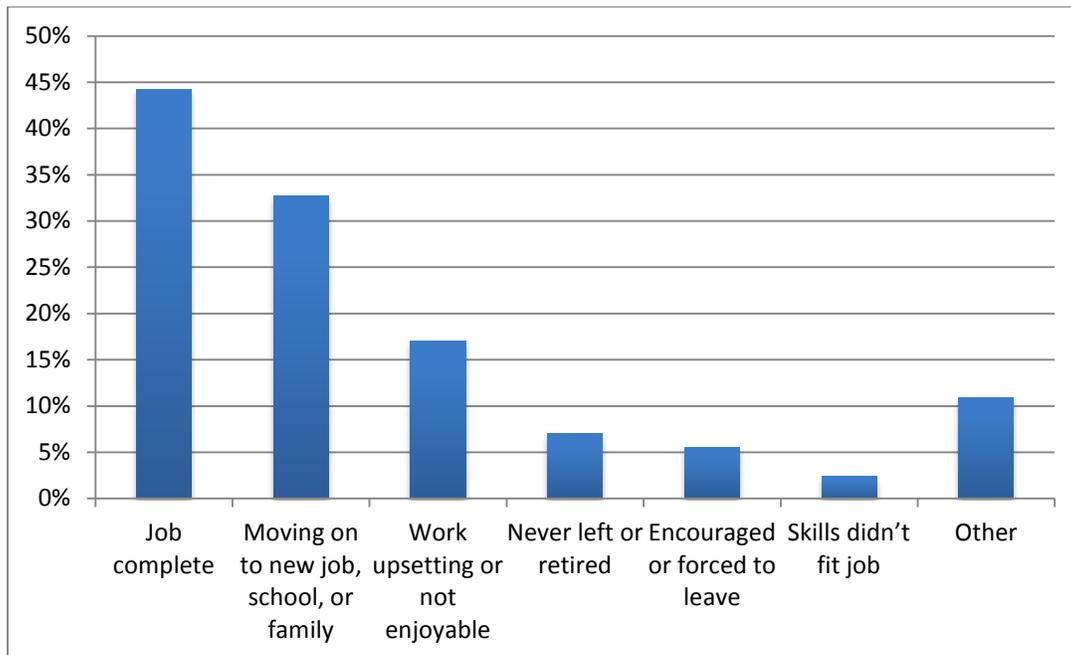


Figure 6 Reasons for Leaving Most Recent Job

Our challenge in considering men's participation in learning and work is to recognize that non-completion of a program, or leaving a job, may well be a positive choice and a stepping stone to new paths that fill men's needs and aspirations, and is not always an indication of disengagement and lack of success. In framing men as disengaged we risk contributing to the oppression of defining men's experiences from the outside in ways that are incongruent with men's own perceptions and definitions of their lives and realities. In this research, we attempted to move away from the deficit portrayal of northern Indigenous men's experiences and recognize the strengths of what men *are* doing. Through our interviews, questionnaires, and workshop, we sought to understand, on men's own terms, where men feel they are doing well, and where the gaps are, in order to better identify positive pathways to opportunities that men identify as desirable but inaccessible.

Men's roles and expectations of men have changed rapidly over the century, much more so than for non-Indigenous men, and perhaps even more than Indigenous women (Condon, 1990; Hensel, 1996; McElroy, 1975).¹³ As for many Indigenous people, their learning experiences have changed from informal learning through observation and experience to formal learning through schooling. Their role has shifted from filling survival needs primarily through subsistence activities to providing for needs primarily through paid work. In a most optimistic light, northern Indigenous men may have greater breadth of opportunities available to them than ever before. Unlike First Nations in more densely populated areas, and groups who have even more stringently imposed

¹³ While women have taken on new roles, they have also been able to hold on to key traditional gender roles and rites of passage, such as child-bearing. Men's traditional rites of passage and traditional cultural roles have become more difficult for them to access.

rules about land use and access, many northern Indigenous men have some access to a land (or sea) base on which to practice subsistence. Indigenous rights and land claims movements have opened up doors to locally controlled education, as well as new job opportunities. In a more pessimistic view, real subsistence practices have been curtailed by sedentarization and the concentration of people in smaller areas relying on the same resources. Schooling and the cash economy remain entrenched in long histories of non-local control. While men are working and learning, and reaching for the good life, they are caught up in the challenge of multiple and competing goals, which cannot be simultaneously obtained. Our research suggests that the stereotype of the disengaged Indigenous man may be a myth that overlooks strengths in men's practices. At the same time, the challenge of multiple and competing goals, combined with limited resources to obtain any of them, can be an oppressive factor that pushes men toward disengagement, and will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 | Barriers to Learning and Work

Men in the North have diverse goals, opportunities and resources, and thus experience a wide range of potential barriers with regard to carving out the lives they desire. When we analyzed the stories and the diverse barriers men expressed related to their specific goals and contexts, the overarching theme at the times in men's lives when they were disengaging was a feeling of living in an inescapably oppressive context. They expressed difficulty finding stable footing in the rapidly changing intercultural context. Intergenerational effects of the trauma of residential schools and the shift from the land into communities is part of the oppression, as is ongoing interpersonal and systemic racism. Other barriers men mentioned were related to the northern context of small, geographically isolated communities, in which school and paid work opportunities are limited or unpredictable. The common thread was a sense of futility and frustration in contexts where one's own and others' expectations of oneself could not be met due to conflicting goals that cannot be filled at the same time, and a lack of resources and support to reach any of the goals. The resulting disconnect between what men want and value, what they feel is expected of them, and what they are actually doing, contributed to shame, followed by disengagement and negative life choices, which in turn perpetuated barriers to learning, work, and well-being.

Trauma

The trauma of residential schools and the shift from the land into communities is still being felt, even by young people (Ittusardjuat, 2015; Stout & Peters, 2011). Some of the older participants in our research spoke first-hand about their experiences in residential or federal day schools, being separated from families, treated as less than human, abused, and forced to assimilate into English language and culture. 'Ferry worker' from Yukon told this story of his experiences and how they impacted his willingness and ability to study, to work, and to live healthily:

Six years old...I was pretty lonely, [I] remember crying, lot of kids crying. [...] You get used to it later on, not used to it but still lonely. [It was] hard to even learn...It was all stress...these strange place and people here...people strapping, glancing over you, hitting you with a ruler over the back of your hand. Stand in the corner and the trauma is all you gotta learn. It's hard. [...] Next time I had to go back, I just had enough. [...] [They] scared people. Liked to do that, scare people. [...] And you have to survive...so all the boys and the juniors, so there is a lot of awful stuff there. People don't know that now. It is hard to learn in that school, failing, failing. I was glad to get out of there, but it is no better in Whitehorse, stricter too when I was there...I still remember all the things there right through. Never forget that. When I came back, was in jail, jail, trouble, drinking. [...] It is pretty hard [now] to remember how to write a test...You know the words but can't seem to write it. Your mind is slow, like the school expects it, and every time you are supposed to do something, you think awhile and [then] you click in...It's just what that school did to you. There's lots of people that had the memories but something blocks...off...that has happened to you. Over the years, block it off and it finally has to come out some way and it comes out in the wrong ways. You [don't]

want to say anything because it marks you, what happened to you. The whole thing, "Shy!, Shy!", but it's not the shyness, just holding something back. You don't trust. Until those guys from Lower Post, I guess, opened up. The Trail Blazers opened up and then it was like everyone coming out of the woodwork.¹⁴

The men suffered and now live with the shame of what they experienced, what they witnessed, and what they were forced to inflict on their peers.

The men told heart-breaking stories of boys who were trying their best and yet it was not good enough for the teachers, and resulted in physical violence. 'Truck Man' from NWT remembered, [W]hen I was about 11 years old...we [started] going school. We didn't know how to write or speak the word of English...When the teacher say something, [we] didn't know what he was saying... We didn't know the A-B-C-D much and 1-2-3-4, not even that. But we try and try and when we couldn't do it, they would hit us. But what else can we do?

'Chubbs' from Labrador recalled:

And they were brutal on them kids [who were the weakest], you know, I pity them. I feel for them. Because they have no one at home to teach them...Neither one of their parents would have known their name if they'd seen it written on a piece of paper. And they were brutal on them kids. You know, I didn't think it was very fair for them to treat them like that. [...] That was a bit too far. But see you could get away with anything then.

Children who most needed the help, in 'Chubbs' recollection, were those who were least likely to find it. The impact on the children was devastating and continues to impact unhealthiness in communities (Kirmayer & Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2007).

'Man 1' from Yukon commented on trauma added to trauma as he lost friends as a result of the pain his peers were living with:

Some of them died because of drugs, some of them died because they took their own life over alcohol. So, [that] really set me back because you come back to school and say; "Where's my friend?" They say, "Oh, you didn't know?" In those days, news wasn't carried around like now. I'd usually find out about stuff like that when I'd go back to school in the fall.

The children were not the only ones affected. Parents and siblings suffered the loss of their sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, and the guilt of not protecting them. Bob Patles, speaking from the stories he heard as a community-based researcher in Yukon, as well as his own life experiences as an Indigenous man and counsellor explained:

¹⁴ The Trail Blazers were a group of former students at Lower Post Residential School in northern British Columbia, who were among the first to lay charges of abuse at the residential school, winning a landmark case against the Catholic Church and the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs in 1999 (Dick, 2013).

It was harder on the men because the men are tough, we're strong and we can stand up to anything. But these little people came and took my children and I never stopped them. I never done nothing. And now, the shame that followed that. "I'm not a good man. I'm not a good dad. I'm not a good uncle. I'm not a good grandpa. I couldn't stop my children." And the kids came back, and you shied away from them. You didn't want to face your children because of the shame that went on for two or three generations.

Compounding the experience of their children being taken, fathers were living their own trauma of transitioning from a nomadic lifestyle on the land to settling in communities and beginning to engage with the cash economy. Noel Kaludjak, Nunavut, reflected on his family's experiences:

I can say the other part of the problem is, for myself, my father was a hunter, he lived off the land. And then he married my mother and they lived off the land. And they were moved into a settlement in mid-50s, and they had to try to live in a community which they had no clue of how to adapt to. And they had to learn as they went. So they were very disrupted by this movement, being moved into community. They had to raise twelve children in a small house. You know, before they were living in sod houses and just enjoying their lives. Now they have to go to Co-op and now my father has to try to find work. To provide. [...] And he had a dog team but you know, he turned to snowmobile. [...] Being moved into a settlement has a lot to do with it. It has.

Others have commented on the transition from the land to the community, and how this transition was particularly difficult for men (Qikiqtani Inuit Association [QIA], 2010). Stories that are coming out in the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QIA, 2010) show how brutal, in some cases, relocation of families from camps to communities was, including recollections of camps being burned, and families losing everything, including the tools and the clothing they needed to continue going out on the land. Stories of dog slaughters are another example of the dispossession men suffered as they moved into communities and were unable to get back out onto the land to continue hunting and providing. Ann Meekitjuk Hanson (2011) wrote that the men who had been leaders, and the most respected and proficient providers on the land, were often the last to move into communities, and thus experienced even more difficulty getting jobs and being able to provide for families in the new context, "I saw once-powerful hunters and leaders becoming poor" (p. 67).

Men spoke of how this dispossession and trauma is passed on from generation to generation, as boys raised in residential schools become fathers who do not know how to parent, because they never had a father figure (e.g., Ball, 2009), and men raised by their fathers in communities follow (in some cases) the example of their hurting, dispossessed fathers. Noel Kaludjak spoke from personal experience, as well as from the stories he heard as a researcher when he reflected:

I had problems...I passed on some of my problems to my children. And now it's...from generation to generation. It's going to take a while before maybe my great-grandchildren really know how to live in this society and with less problems than we had. And what is the government going to do to quicken this? At least my children's children can enjoy life more

with less issues, problems. Of course we'll have problems all the time. But being sent to residential school - my four older siblings were sent to residential school - and their children are having problems. So it has a lot of effect on them. What is the government going to do to help these people? These children. And their children. [...] The vicious cycle will continue until our people heal from those past issues, residential schools, being moved into communities, and the stuff that came along with it. Verbal abuse! Emotional abuse! Sexual abuse! How do you say? When they try to assimilate our identity, our traditional way of life. They tried to eliminate that from us. Ethnic cleansing. We're trying to get that back.

The legacy of residential schools and the trauma of transition from the land-based economy to the cash economy, and from the nomadic lifestyle to sedentary communities (Legacy of Hope Foundation, n.d.; QIA, 2010), was an obvious and explicitly mentioned barrier to current engagement with learning and work. The trauma, for past students, led to ongoing difficulty concentrating and thinking clearly, as well as to an unwillingness to be visible and speak up. Men who had been hurt at school were reluctant to push their sons to continue in a schooling system that is still foreign and that they mistrust. Even where it was not explicitly mentioned, the trauma of northern Indigenous men's earliest experiences with formal schooling and employment in the cash economy echoes in stories where schooling and work are still synonymous with assimilation (see also Aylward, 2009; Battiste, 2013). This tension creates a challenging dilemma for men who feel that they and their sons need schooling and a job to survive in the new economy, and yet for whom schooling and the cash economy represent agents of destruction of what they were and what they value.

The traumatic clash between the colonizing southern Canadians or Settlers and Indigenous people in the North also put undue pressure on families and communities in other ways. Some people, who became leaders, struggled to find their own stable grounding while also fighting political battles advocating for more equity between southern Canada and the northern Indigenous peoples. The political activism that was necessary to put a stop to colonizing, assimilationist, and destructive policies came at great cost to the (mainly) men who took on these visible and challenging roles, to the detriment of their family lives (e.g., Skookum, see Chapter 6 of this report).

Reclaiming what was lost and moving forward in healthier ways requires continued efforts to overcome the silence and ignorance surrounding the trauma that Indigenous people in Canada have suffered, including aspects of the trauma that were most deeply experienced by northern Indigenous men. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2012), the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QIA, 2010), Legacy of Hope Foundation (n.d.), and the Federal Apology (Harper, 2008) that bring such stories to light are moves in the right direction, but our research suggests there is further need to share these stories. While stories of trauma through the residential school system have been brought out, many men still keep their stories inside.

Other traumatic events are just starting to come out as more and more adults come forward with stories of what they suffered at the hands of possibly well-meaning interventionists from southern Canada. Mike Nitsiza (Chapter 6) from NWT told the story of being taken from his family as a young child with tuberculosis, coming back knowing English and French but not his parents' language, and effectively being disowned by parents who did not know what to do with him. Many Canadians—including those who go to work in northern communities and become teachers or colleagues or health care providers—are unaware of this trauma and how it continues to affect men in the North (e.g., Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada, 2009; Berger, 2009; Møller, 2005). The cycle of pain is perpetuated as men re-enact the trauma they learned, and feel badly about themselves and yet feel unable to move forward differently. In many cases, family members, sons, and daughters have not yet heard the stories and do not understand the background to the pain that has been passed on to them.

Much more remains to be understood about the ongoing impacts of the trauma of residential schools, and particularly the intergenerational effects on men, fathers, and sons. Stout and Peters (2011), in their study of daughters of mothers who are residential school survivors, pointed out that almost no research has distinguished between men's and women's experiences, although research and experience in communities suggest that men and women have responded and are responding differently to historical trauma and its intergenerational effects (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1999).

Racism and Racial Bias

Racial bias is still entrenched in the colonizing institutions, including schools, workplaces, policing, and government. This systemic oppression was a prevalent factor in men's stories about learning and work. Men across the North told stories of past and present encounters in schools and workplaces where they were made to feel "less than" because they were Indigenous.

Some men had the perception that jobs were available, but not for them as Indigenous men. 'Samual' from Yukon shared about his early encounters with workplaces:

For me, in the late 70's and 80's, there were jobs around but not for an Indian. ...I remember one time a friend and I were in a Whitehorse bar. Me and my friends all went to school together, some of them were white and we all heard about jobs up at the mine. We all jumped in our vehicles, right. Just coincidentally, all the white guys were in one car and we were in the other. We got there before the other guys. Right? We were there in the office, they said, "Oh yeah here's the applications." So we all did. We were leaving the office, thinking we'd beat the other guys when the other guys came, white guys right? Our white friends. They rode by us going up to the mine and we're already leaving. They say, "We are going to get the jobs even though you got here first." Anyways, we got back to town and those guys went back to the bar. Those guys came back two hours later. We asked, "How did it go?" He said, "Well, we start tomorrow." You should have seen the looks on all my friend's faces. I was pissed off, because they were no more qualified than we were but they were white and I'll never forget that for all my life. That was like a real stick in my face for being

brown. And our white friends felt really bad when they found out, they thought we had jobs too. But we told them, "They didn't offer us any job." Because we'd just filled out the application, that was it. [...] [They wouldn't hire you] if you were brown, even if you were skilled. I had a category 3 welding ticket in the United States and they still wouldn't hire me. And I went down in Alberta I got a job just like that. It really turned me off as a young man. But it is different now, right. I think I, the people here fight for their rights for the last 25 years, whereas before they didn't do that. They didn't know what their rights were.

Even today with policies that encourage preferential hiring of Indigenous community members, men expressed the perception that employers looked down on and discriminated against Indigenous people in hiring. 'Guest 3' from Labrador stated: "...the employers... figures they're just not as good as if they had somebody come in from the Island [Newfoundland] or even from another country for that matter."

A letter to the Editor of *Nunatsiaq News*, one of Nunavut's weekly newspapers, in July 2013 expressed frustration in feeling like southern Canadians would have better access to jobs in the Territory than even a fully certified and experienced Inuk would. His letter is reproduced here in its entirety, reflecting the layers of frustration he felt:

I am a journeyman carpenter. I have 16 years of work experience within our territory. I have worked for a few establishments within Nunavut as a carpenter. I started out as an apprentice with Nunavut Construction Corp. and I worked for the firm as a journeyman after I got certified.

I have been writing to the person who does the hiring of trades people with the firm since 2009, only to get the same response every time. He tells me that the company is slow and work will resume after the boat has arrived with the material. I would write in advance anticipating the arrival of material and I let the guy know that I am available immediately and I leave my contact information with him every time I write.

The last couple of responses I got from him told me that there is work in other communities and that I could be hired if I happened to be in one those communities. He has not offered to bring me to these communities at all as he does with bringing in southern workers. It is easier for his father in-law to come up from Nova Scotia to work as a cleaning hand than it is for a certified person like myself to work for the firm. The firm has a few certified Inuit within their structure, but most Inuit hired are not certified and they only do labour work or the work that the southerners do not like to do!

As a certified carpenter, I voice my concerns with work-related matter when I feel that I need to correct the situation. Some of my opinions do not go well with the decision-makers and it is used as an excuse to label me a bad person or worker! I have tried to let the right people within the group of owners know of this situation only to be ignored and shrugged away. They tell me that these people are making money for the company and I should just move out of the way and let them carry on. I decided that I should write this letter for the

public to voice their own opinions or even relate to my matter so that the right leaders will read and hopefully correct the situation.

I hope that immediate profit doesn't stop Inuit from getting hired because that is what NCC is doing! [Name withheld by request]

Whether it is intentional disparagement of Indigenous workers or whether it is just that non-Indigenous people, who still hold many senior positions and make hiring decisions, are just more comfortable hiring people they know, men's stories reflect a sense of futility that even as qualified workers, and even where affirmative action policies are in place, they do not feel welcomed or valued in the work system.

The experience of racism makes it doubly hard when Indigenous men are under-represented in the workplaces. Roy Byrne, Innu liaison coordinator with Nalcor (Labrador), explained: "[T]here was one Innu guy who was working by himself, there was another group, they were non-Innu. So he was by himself. So he got really intimidated and he quit." Mike Nitsiza, NWT, asserted that he saw this kind of ostracism in the workplace, "not belonging", as a contributor to disengagement.

Other stories showed that while northern Indigenous men bring specific resources into their education and workplace including Indigenous knowledge, local knowledge, and the Indigenous language, these are framed as deficits rather than resources. 'Simon' from Yukon and many others, expressed their experience of racism, alongside the feeling that Indigenous knowledge is not acknowledged and respected by government, workplaces, or schools until it is repeated by southern consultants. Simon recounted:

Barriers, barriers for me are here all the time. If I want to facilitate over there...would the government believe me? I don't know, I don't think so. ...[T]hey still have it in their mind that you are an Indian. You're classified as a drunkard and...you don't know our world... So they hire white people to do the consultation. And we consult, and then they believe it. That's where my barrier is. ...Anything we want to do, we can't...unless there is a consultant too.

The contempt for the knowledge and expertise Indigenous men hold is shown by the pattern of bringing so-called experts into the community from the outside, and the lack of attention that was paid to what the men themselves were saying. The flip side of this disrespect is the appropriation of Indigenous knowledge without proper credit, which has become an impediment to Indigenous men's willingness to share their cultural knowledge, or to write it down for future generations, even though they would wish to do so.

Men shared that they have felt silenced in schools and workplaces due to racial discrimination, also leading to disengagement and making it more difficult to learn:

Bob Patles: ...[I]t doesn't matter what job you are. If you come from an isolated community or reserve or something, and they send me to this meeting and I'm the only native person here, chances are I'm going to only sit here and listen.

Roy Byrne: They don't want to bring attention to themselves, pretty much, right? I find a lot of people don't want to bring attention to themselves.

Noel Kaludjak: They don't want to be seen.

Sam Tutanuak from Nunavut told the story of being "the only native guy around the table with a whole bunch of white people." He said, "What I had to do, to gain the respect, unfortunately, was to *prove* that there's actually something in between these two ears that can function as well as a white person's brain. [...] What do you do with that? How do you deal with that? It's very *frustrating* to be labeled!"

Even if local governments, and possibly the broader Canadian society, are attempting to celebrate the value of Indigenous knowledge and ways of being and overcome systemic racism, Indigenous men continue to hear negative messaging of who they are ("less than", "incapable", "not good enough"), or messages that do not line up with how they see themselves (including negativity toward values of their Indigenous culture or their generation). Byron Hamel, a community-based researcher from Labrador, reflected back on the damaging messaging he heard when he worked in media:

I came, and we were all there to watch their presentation, what they showed was this long slide show video presentation about all the things that were wrong with the Innu people! [...] And this was their promotional video to try to inform incoming doctors and nurses about what they would be facing when they talked to people from Sheshatsui and from Natuashish. Only really bad, negative stuff: alcohol problems, solvents, this or that, and they didn't say anything about the efforts in the community, they didn't say anything about the fact that they were doing much better now than they were ten years ago because of their own personal efforts, right. Nothing was said about that. [...] It's offensive, it's ignorant, and...it's not the whole truth.

Byron emphasized that this negative messaging has self-perpetuating impacts as the people coming in to teach, police, or provide health care to community members hear these dehumanizing messages. In the particular case he referred to, the video was shut down by the First Nation, but comparable messages are still being shared in media and interpersonally.

While colonizing, racist attitudes and systems affect both women and men, research suggests that men may have been particularly affected, and for a longer time. Lomawaima and McCarty (2006), for example, argued that across North America, tolerance and eventual embracing of Indigenous cultural practices was first extended to the aspects of Indigenous culture that least threatened the national status quo, and these were largely within the women's domains: handiwork, sewing, beading, etc. Their research suggests that traditional practices relating to land and resource use, which are arguably more anchored in the men's domains, have continued to be sources of tension (for example federal government-First Nation disputes about subsistence rights) and, as a result, positive imaging of Indigenous males has been slower to reach public attitudes and school textbooks.

More insidious forms of racism and racial bias are also prevalent. These include expecting the Indigenous majority in the northern community to accommodate linguistically to the non-Indigenous, English-speaking minority. Men feel a lack of support when teachers, colleagues, and bosses come from different cultural and language backgrounds and have difficulty understanding where they are coming from. Several participants commented on how having to work and interact with colleagues and bosses in their second language set them at a disadvantage. 'Igaji' from Nunavut explained, for example:

It is important to get along, but also understand them. It is difficult when you are not able to fully understand the other person like a southerner. I would really like to see an Inuk working there. It would be very helpful too if I was not able to communicate properly in English, but be able to be understood well in Inuktitut for things like complaints.

'Simon' from Yukon emphasized the importance of being able to accommodate to "white people," including understanding their language: "...Communication and all that. Get used to white people, that's a good experience there, things like that. ...[Y]ou have to have a high grade to understand when they talk to you. When the employer talks to you, I know you have to understand everything, things like that." Roy Byrne from Labrador shared the perception that cross-cultural communication breakdown also contributes to the misrepresentation of Indigenous men in the justice system: "I find too, with, even in the justice system, a lot of them, when English is the second language, the judge is reading them their rights, like you know why you're charged and all that stuff, and they always ask if they understand, and the majority of the times they say yes. When really they don't."

Despite positive efforts to make the institutions introduced from southern Canada more reflective and welcoming of Indigenous people and the good intentions of many who work there, many still experience them as extensions of oppressive, colonizing systems. Overtly unsupportive practices include favouritism, unfair hiring/promotion practices and pay structures, bullying, negative peer pressure, and punitive rather than rehabilitative justice. Having non-Indigenous workers in the higher positions perpetuates the problem of Indigenous knowledge and ways not being valued, and not having role models in those roles. Internal colonization, in the context of rapid cultural change, is sending conflicting messages even within the First Nation or Inuit community about what is valued, and whose knowledge, language, and ways of being are acceptable and desirable in schools and workplaces. Men are left feeling unvalued and shamed and, as a result, are disconnecting.

Multiple and Conflicting Goals and Values

Added to these very overt forms of oppression, men's stories had an underlying current of oppression that researchers have called "the double bind" (Bateson, 1972) or, in popular terms, the feeling of being "damned if you do, damned if you don't." Men face multiple expectations of who they should be, some coming from themselves and some imposed on them by others, both positive and negative. Their definitions of success (Chapter 3) showed an expectation that they

would be students who are graduating and getting certified, workers who are bringing home paycheques, hunters who are on the land, husbands and fathers who are spending time with their families, men who are healing, providing, and helping the community. In some ways, of course, these goals can be mutually reinforcing. For example, schooling helps one to get a job and then make the money that is needed to go on the land and to support one's family. However, they are also experienced as mutually exclusive, where pursuing one goal seems to mean abandoning another. The common thread in diverse barriers men mentioned was a sense of futility and frustration in contexts where one's own and others' expectations of oneself could not be met due to conflicting goals, which cannot be filled at the same time, and a lack of resources and support to reach any of the goals. The perception that any and all choices mean giving up something that is too valued to give up is experienced as hidden oppression and trauma. The double bind leads to shame—the feeling that they are not enough. This feeling can block men from moving forward in any of their valued areas, including learning and work.

Harkening back to men's self-definitions of success, many men's stories showed they experienced ideological and practical tensions in the pursuit of being strong like two men. Schooling and employment are intricately associated with what Indigenous scholars Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel (2005) have called "shape-shifting colonization" (p. 601). Men thus struggle with simultaneous and conflicting beliefs, expectations, and imperatives such as "You have to go to school... but schooling has destroyed who we are"; "I want to access opportunities through schooling... but I don't want to act like a white person"; "Speak English well to get good grades at school... but don't speak like a white person"; "You have to make money... but don't assimilate into the wage economy"; and "Be who you are... but in school and at work pretend to be someone else in order to fit in."¹⁵

Many of the jobs that are available to Indigenous men in their home regions, notably those in natural resource extraction, conflict with Indigenous values of being caretakers of the land and treasuring Mother Earth and what Inuit call *sila*. Men are left struggling with paradoxes that can be summed up as "I value working... but the work available in mining destroys the land that I value"; "There are jobs at the mines... but the mines are destroying the earth I'm supposed to take care of"; "There are jobs available ... but the available jobs go against my values" or, as one participant from Yukon said, "We know the land is disturbed and it's not good... but we know our town wouldn't be there without mining."

The pursuit of being a good person, characterized by humility, equality, and putting others first is also called into question in a competitive schooling and employment system that requires men to put themselves and their skills forward to get good grades and jobs (Douglas, 2009). Many of the men who had held leadership positions explained that they did so only because someone else had put them forward (e.g., Arvaluk, 2008; Quassa, 2008; Skookum, Chapter 6 of this report). Some men felt that the high value they placed on helping as a defining characteristic of a successful man

¹⁵ Double bind statements, unless otherwise noted, are not direct quotes from participants but rather syntheses of underlying messages in their stories.

and the values of their past egalitarian societies was contradicted by the need for money, for example when they wanted to contribute freely to community through volunteer work, but could not afford not to get paid. As 'Family Guy' from NWT put it:

I do look at it in both ways. Today everything pretty much costs money: rent, heating fuel, the food. Food's not free, eh? I find...that now sometimes I don't feel comfortable working for money, if it's volunteer. I kind of look at it in both ways...You need the money to pay for the bill, on the other hand, you don't need it sometime when you're just helping the community or a group.

Mike Nitsiza (Chapter 6) also explained how the goal to be a helper is a heavy burden in some of these northern communities where the needs are diverse and pressing.

Most men placed high value on traditional and subsistence practices, and being on the land, describing these practices as most enjoyable (Figure 3, Chapter 4), grounding, and even healing (Chapter 7). However, they described the paradox of needing to make money in order to get out on the land, but not being able to get out on the land if they are working. A 26–35 year-old Inuk in Labrador, for example, wrote that what he enjoys most is being “in the woods, cutting firewood for the winter and taking the opportunity at the same time to enjoy a boil-up with my family for lunch” but also wrote “Today's work schedules don't allow much time for traditional activities and are eliminating the opportunity to take part in those activities for the most part” and “[Jobs are necessary because] funding is hard to come by for a family.” ‘Truck Man’ from NWT explained that subsistence is not just men’s desire, but a cultural expectation: “Yes...the men are important, even when it [is] cold they will provide for the families. They will hunt to provide food and why is that there's less men working within the community.” Being a hunter and being a wage-earning employee are experienced as conflicting because of the amount of time a full-time job takes, and because of the contrast between established office hours and the unpredictability of weather and the presence of animals (Arvaluk, 2008; Hensel, 1996; Stern, 2003). The associated double binds men face could be summarized as: “You are supposed to be the provider making money... but you are also supposed to be the provider out hunting” and “Be a good student/employee by attending school/ work every day, but also be a good hunter by being available and ready to go out when the animals are nearby.”¹⁶

A further conflict in men’s roles and aspirations as provider through the land base was introduced with governmental restrictions on land use. Indigenous men’s roles as experts and caretakers of the land and sea, and as providers through this relationship with the land, was called into question by colonial rule by federal, provincial, and territorial (and international) bodies that set themselves up as the experts and caretakers (Poppel & Kruse, 2009). Some men felt that they could not simultaneously act as law-abiding Canadians and as providers through the land base. For example, ‘Arnold’ and ‘Miagi’ in Labrador spoke of the importance of subsistence for food security, but

¹⁶ In some cases, men and women describe complementary roles, where the woman now works to earn the money that is needed for subsistence practices. Usher et al. (2003), for example, explain how the household is the primary economic unit. However, there is some evidence that men in this position question themselves as to whether or not they are really providing.

pointed out the futility of fishing due to government limits: "When you goes out fishing, you're allowed six salmon. [That's] six meals. ... And no matter how many's in boat, you're only allowed fifteen fish aboard a boat. If six was aboard a boat, you're still only allowed fifteen fish." In different words, across the Arctic men's stories expressed the feeling: "My culture tells me to support my family by hunting, fishing, and collecting wood... but the law prohibits me from hunting, fishing, or collecting wood here/now." 'Family Guy' from NWT emphasized how following such regulations forces men to go against their own values:

...Somebody down the road, some Elderly person down there sick and can't go in the woods, and he's there suffering cold, I think it's a crime that somebody can't go in and cut that person a load of wood if they feel like going and doing it. I think they should have that right to go and do it.

His values tell him that taking care of people is the right thing to do, and that the land is there for provision, but the government tells him that he cannot use the land to help a neighbour.

The above scenarios assume that the men can still access a land/sea base and associated resources. While northern Indigenous men may have greater access than Indigenous men in more densely populated areas (e.g., Hensel, 1996), this access is decreasing. In some cases, the resource itself that men have depended on for subsistence and industry is unpredictable or decreasing, leaving men facing the double bind: "You need to set goals and plan ahead... but you need to be flexible and adaptable to unpredictable industries." For example, 'Chubbs' from Labrador said: "The crowd that went at the crab... they couldn't get enough hours to qualify for their EI, because the crab just wasn't there to catch."

For many Indigenous men, the call to higher education or more job opportunities requires leaving town and distancing oneself from the land. Comments from 'Bob Blais' in Yukon sum this up when he says at one point in his interview that success is being able to be on the land and being around family, then says later in the interview that success is getting out of town, going somewhere else where there are jobs: "I guess him getting educated. ...just get as much education as he possibly can get and go off to school somewhere. Definitely get out of this town." While some men do aspire to leave town, and some successfully do (whether temporarily or permanently), for many, it comes at a cost to other core needs, values, and aspirations.

Not wanting to move away from home, for whatever reason, was a major factor across the North in why men did not pursue particular learning or work opportunities. The high value placed on good relationships as a defining characteristic of a successful northern Indigenous man (Figure 1, Chapter 3) was part of the reason. For example, 'Samual' from Yukon explained:

It's funny, there are lots of opportunities around if you are ready to move away. Right? But...I see lots of young guys struggling. If they went somewhere else they wouldn't be struggling but they'd rather stay here and struggle. Stay close to their families. But that's the price they have to pay I guess.

'Simon' (Yukon) confirmed: "I always come back here. I come back here so I can trap a little bit. But I looked for jobs outside of here. It's better right here, because your family is right here." The men rely on their extended families for support, and moving away removes them from this support system when they need it most (starting a new job or undertaking a learning program). 'Daniel' (Yukon) followed up, saying:

[T]his is their safety net, and that's what they will do, they will stay close to it. Where they know there is family. And you'll see it in the past, they tried but it didn't last because they needed their support all the time. So, they'd rather stay in the community.

So men again face the double bind: "You need to stay within your support network to thrive... but the available work and learning opportunities take you out of your support network."

Men also have responsibilities to both older and younger family members, which make it difficult to leave town. 'Simon' from Yukon said: "[R]ight now there are, for young people, a lot of barriers here. They shack up early and don't want to leave for upgrading or go on to further college and things like that. As far as I know...that's a major barrier." 'Mr. Hockey' from Yukon brought his family with him, but explained:

The hardest part about that course for me was that my daughter, she's nine now, was born right when I started the course. So we were struggling with a new child and going to school at the same time so, I didn't get the diploma.

Family responsibilities were an important factor even when the learning or work did not require leaving town. When asked why he left high school, 'Igaji' in Nunavut explained: "I had a child in grade eleven and this was main reason, because I had to stay with my child." Others explained that they left or did not pursue further learning because they needed to work to provide for their families. 'Co-op worker' from NWT said: "I really want the education, but it's just that it's not possible." These men live with the conflicting imperatives of "Be a family man... but leave your family behind to go to school/work" or "You need to stay in school so that you will be able to get a good job and support your family... but you need to drop out of school so that you can get a job and support your family (or stay home and take care of your family)." Raising a family is a top value, but is experienced as a barrier to education, which is also valued.

In other cases, men take the work or learning opportunity, but regret what they are leaving behind or losing as a result. For example, 'Mr. Diamond' (NWT) explained: "For me, I work at a mine, two [weeks] in, two [weeks] out. So I've been there fifteen years and I spend my half a life, half a year in the camp, right? My half a year here. So it's just too long to be away from my family." Eddie Skookum (Yukon) said he regretted the high personal price he paid for the time he spent away from home, travelling as Chief of his First Nation:

Don't work good with your partner either too when you do that. That's why I lost the first one. I was away from home too much. Couldn't hack it, so. You have to forsake a lot of things. Sometimes it backfires on you even though you think it's good.

In these ways and others, men expressed the feeling that no matter what they do, they cannot concurrently live out all of their values and fill societal expectations. Positive choices in one area have negative impacts in another. Disengagement was one response to what felt like an impossible context.

Two of men's most important characteristics of success were "living a healthy lifestyle" and "having good relationships" (Figure 1, Chapter 3), and even these were conflictual for some men, at some times. Sobriety—living free of addictions—was acknowledged across the North as important for living the good life, but men who walked away from alcohol and drugs felt that this healthy choice had also distanced them from friends and family. Mike Nitsiza, an Elder from NWT, explained: "When I went on a sober path it was very hard because I had no friends." Roy Byrne, a young adult from Labrador had a similar experience: "That was the hardest thing to quit, because of my friends. [...] If there's friends that you just see them at parties, then you don't see them much anymore at all." Taking care of one's body also conflicts with work when many of the jobs available "take a lot of toll on the body", as 'Ferry worker' in Yukon put it.

We have named a few of the most common conflicting goals and values that underlay men's stories, but there are others. Each man's story was different, and each man faced specific barriers within his own life journey. Still, this feeling of the double bind, not being able to live out the life he chose because each positive choice betrayed another positive goal, was a common thread in barriers to men's efforts to live out a successful life.

Insufficient Resources and Learning Gaps

Added to the conflicting and mutually exclusive goals, many men's stories showed they felt that they had insufficient resources to achieve their goals, even if they could accept one choice as satisfactory. They experienced the covert oppression of the double bind when their expectations, goals, and values conflicted in ways such that they could not simultaneously meet either or any of them, and also when they faced expectations and mandates—whether from within themselves, from other Indigenous community members, or from the colonizers—without the corresponding opportunities or resources to fulfill them. The impossible expectations can create confusion, and feelings of shame when the men feel that they are not meeting expectations that they should meet, or want to be meeting, and do not critically step outside of their experience to realize that of course they cannot reach those expectations within the resources and opportunities available to them.

Issues of poverty, lack of housing, food insecurity, and limited health care make daily life hard and present additional challenges to how men are able to engage with learning and work (Dorais, 1990; Impact Economics, 2012). Going away to school, or changing employers, can mean losing your house, for example, making it more difficult to take the associated risks. The unavailability or uncertainty of resources can make the future particularly unpredictable, and thus difficult to appropriately prepare for. For some men, success was simply having enough, in particular, having secure housing. But even this goal conflicted with pursuing learning or work opportunities for some

men, at some point in their lives. Some men felt that the way that social assistance was set up meant that working to earn money would actually put their family further behind financially. Noel Kaludjak summarized what he heard in one of the Nunavut group interviews:

I guess that's one of the reasons, like, you're on social assistance, you're paying fifty dollars a month, so you apply for a job, you get a job, you get \$1500 every two weeks, three quarters of that goes to rent. So that's one of the...biggest reasons why some men don't want to work. They'd rather maybe carve or do odd jobs here and there where the SA [social assistance] will not find out if they're getting an income. Otherwise their rent will go right up because of housing regulations or rules or guidelines.¹⁷

'Inuk lady', in Nunavut explained:

There are many capable young males out there who are on social assistance. People that receive social assistance sometimes seem to think and maybe they are able to gain more than if they were to have a job. And this may be a cause why young males, who are capable of working don't work.

Social housing policies, combined with a shortage of housing, made it so that those with homes did not dare leave town for fear of not being able to get a home again when they returned. 'Bob Blais' in Yukon spoke of a desire to work in a different industry, which required moving, but said: "I don't see myself moving anytime soon because houses and jobs everywhere else are pretty hard to get and I'm lucky to have this one." The double binds are stark: "Take risks to improve yourself... but don't give up what you have"; "Go to school so that you can have a secure life; but if you go away to school you lose your house."

In addition, men's stories of times when they have felt blocked, or seen others feeling blocked, show a sense of futility that no matter how skilled one is, or how much training one goes through, the man will still not be able to access the jobs. In Labrador, men's stories reflected the uncertainty of natural resources. 'Arnold' told of his son's experiences: "He got all of his courses done now, for that...We're just waiting for a call now from the shrimp company." His son 'Miagi' followed up saying: "Last year I was waiting all year. Never called, so..." The jobs just were not there, despite his being ready and qualified to work. Steven Kormendy (Yukon) described his efforts with a work opportunities program in similar terms:

They went into the program sort of with the expectation that they would come out with a really well-paying job. [...] When this program was done, a lot of people came out expecting they could start working at really good camp jobs, making \$20/hour, or anything, starting to do what they were trained for, and they came out and there was just a serious lack of opportunity. [...] Maybe two did something, and I don't think either of them are doing anything now. Serious lack of opportunity coming out of it.

¹⁷ At the time of the interview, social housing policies were changing in Nunavut to address this concern, but the changes had not yet been rolled out.

Even where there are jobs, some men still reflected the sense that the jobs were not for them, as seen in the previous discussion of racism.

In some communities, the jobs and learning opportunities simply are not there. In other communities, jobs and training might be available, but gaps in men's learning creates a barrier when they do not have the essential skills that are needed to attain or demonstrate the competencies required to move into the jobs or be accepted into the training programs. In these cases, the lack of resources was at a personal level, blocking men from moving forward toward their goals. Language and literacy are barriers for many men, although community-based researchers observed that talking about difficulty reading or writing appears to be somewhat taboo. 'Daniel' in Yukon spoke about literacy barriers he observed in other men who, he believed, might not be able to access opportunities because they could not read the job postings or written information: "I think barriers again, could stem around literacy. Not being able to know what's on the paper that is an opportunity for work or training. So, I think that could be a barrier for some of those guys."

Men's references to struggles with literacy often reflected certain types of practices that they had little experience with or instruction and support in. 'Co-op Worker' in NWT and others explained that paperwork was a big barrier, including filling out forms and applications: "It's just filling out applications. I always fill out the application but miss something. [...] It's just sometimes when you are reading it, and when you see what is in the whole sentence, you see what you actually missed." 'Inuk' in Nunavut explained how the paperwork and financial management skills needed to access and then account for funding blocked the creation of programs that could otherwise help men in the communities:

When our committee is mostly comprised of Elders and I want to do a project, but the group is discouraged because they are not capable of doing the administrative part. Something like that. [...] I need skills to write and to put it in writing to make it a success for the whole community. [...] Because they are not able to transfer their ideas onto paper. It just gets stuck in their heads. [...] They have ideas but are not sure where to go from there.

Men's stories frequently reflected a sense of missing out on stepping stones that then made it difficult to continue learning or access other opportunities. 'Strong Spruce' (Yukon) said: "I tried to go to vocation school to become a carpenter, but I didn't know my numbers. So, I didn't stay." This sentiment is reflected across the North, less so in the men's own stories, more so in their stories of others who, they say, struggled to get through school, and/or struggled to get into college because of literacy. Many needed to do upgrading, and sometimes had difficulty even accessing the upgrading programs. Even for high school graduates, then, literacy levels were sometimes identified as a barrier to moving forward.

In Nunavut high schools, many teachers suspect that one reason why students have difficulty keeping up and staying engaged is because they are having difficulty with the level of language and literacy required (Berger, 2009). Rather than reflecting on a system that is failing them, teachers

expect Indigenous mother-tongue students, for example, to just “know” academic English by the time they reach high school, without ever teaching or giving appropriate opportunities to learn academic English. As a result, students too often receive the message that they are failing and, by extension, are failures. This messaging persists in colonizing institutions that neither recognize the specific resources the Indigenous men bring (e.g., appreciating the Indigenous language and knowledge as tangible assets), nor adequately provide access to new types of resources the men need (e.g., through effectively designed and implemented second language instruction, curriculum, and training).

This lack of access to the resources needed to build a foundation and gradually develop needed knowledge and skills does not rest solely in literacy and financial management, but also in traditional skill areas. Many men did not have the opportunity to learn, or to continue to grow in their knowledge of their ancestral language, as ‘Strong Spruce’ (Yukon) explained:

That is something that really bothers me today because I don't know my language. Just somewhat, but not fluent. [...] Every June we would count down the days and get excited to go home for two months of the year. That was two months where we spent the most happiest time in our young lives, to be sent home. But we, our parents talked their native tongue to each other but we just couldn't understand. So, it was an issue at the time. I guess the church could see that it was possible and impossible to learn our language in that time. So, that is what came to be.”

Bob Patles (Yukon, community-based researcher) observed that boys and men are sometimes not given the chance to be learners, when expectations of what they *should* know blocks them from being taught:

I think that is the mentality that's not ours—creating high expectations. When, long ago, even today, when I'm teaching [him] to hunt, as a little boy...I can't wait until he goes out and he gets a moose. That's a high expectation for a young boy to live up to. But if I *nurture* him and keep taking him out, “some day, when you're ready, you'll get a moose.” *That* kind of support works a lot more.

Even though these men were robbed of their language (and many in the younger generations have neither been given the gift of the language nor the opportunity to learn traditional skills), they still feel ashamed for what they do not know or did not learn, in both the Indigenous language and traditional skills, with negative repercussions on their willingness to put themselves in situations where competence in these skills is assumed, but could be learned (Wyman, 2009).

Finally, men's stories reflected a lack of role modelling or negative role modelling, which made it more difficult to achieve what they would consider success, or even recognize how their behaviour was blocking it. Noel Kaludjak from Nunavut, for instance, explained that all he knew of parenting and being a husband was violence, and that was what he repeated:

When I was growing up and being taught by my father about manhood, I thought it was, "If your wife ain't listening, beat her up." "If your kids ain't listening, whip them." I thought that was the way we lived. But every time, when we drank, I would beat up my wife. I got into trouble with the courts a couple times. Luckily, well, I don't know, unfortunately, fortunately, I never went to jail for it. But I learned my lesson there. I didn't want to live that lifestyle my parents went through. I did not want to put my children through what I was put through.

When he reflected on what he was doing, he became motivated to make a change. That recognition and commitment for change is common across the men in the periods where they became more engaged in learning, work, and well-being (Chapter 8).

Social Isolation and Lack of Support

Men are navigating confusing and oppressive pathways, in some cases with very little support. At the times in men's lives when they were disengaging with learning and work, their stories reflect their experiences of social isolation and not knowing where to turn. They felt alienated from the world due to geographic separation; alienated from the land when they do not have the time, money, vehicle, or gear to get out; alienated from family when they have to go away for school or work, or when they stay away because home is not a safe and welcoming place; alienated through shunning, racism, and bullying at work and at school; alienated through addiction; alienated through incarceration; and the list goes on. The social isolation blocks them from, and marks the absence of, support systems that could otherwise help them through challenges they are facing at school or at work.

Families may be the primary support system, and yet many parents are struggling themselves, and are not able to provide sons with the practical or emotional support, safety, and the role modelling they need. Some parents who did not go to school themselves, or had very negative experiences with school, are not in a strong position to encourage their children in school (although many in this position do find ways to be supportive). High rates of incarceration of northern Indigenous men, and so many men working shifts outside the territory, also take fathers, grandfathers, and uncles away from the sons, grandsons, and nephews who need and want role models and the encouragement of older male relatives (see also Ball, 2009). Where the shift to the cash economy is still relatively new, some younger people are financially responsible for their parents and older relatives (in contrast to the financial support that might be expected from parent to child in many Euro-Canadian families). For some, being at home is neither a safe nor welcoming option, even if they want to be at home to get their homework done, get sufficient sleep, eat healthy meals, or just be with their families. This is not to say that men cannot or do not find support, and some do, at home and through the extended community, but when such support is lacking, men suffer.

Even where families are very supportive, men need to leave this safety net far behind to pursue school and work opportunities that are not available in the community, which in many cases means expensive flights in and out if they want to visit family on vacations. Roy Byrne, who works to support training and subsequent job placement for Indigenous men in Labrador, said that the

biggest barrier to men completing workplace training programs is “basically being away from their communities.” His observation resonated in men’s stories. Many of the men, like Noel Kaludjak (Nunavut), left school, training, or work because of loneliness, lack of support at school or work, and a desire to be with their families. As Noel said: “They tried to send me to Rankin...I guess to go to high school, but with little or no support it was very hard. So I got homesick. So I hopped on the snowmobile and went [100km] home.”

The expression of Indigenous people’s relationship with the land reflects a worldview and a way of being where human-land interaction is real, spiritual, and symbiotic, essential for both humans, the land and sea, and the animals that inhabit them (Cameron, Mearns, & McGrath, 2015). Poverty and social isolation keep men off the land, when it is their source of life. For example, some men who want to continue to practice subsistence find a lack of support when no one will come with them, making it unsafe or impracticable to go out in certain conditions or for certain game. ‘Ferry Worker’ in Yukon said he gets out on the land, but cannot find people to go with him to help: “My nephew won’t go so I have to get someone else or go by myself, but need help if you shoot an animal.” (He expressed later in the interview that he got flack from community members for bringing non-Indigenous people out on the land with him, even when he could not find anyone in the community to take.) Indigenous men who move to cities have no access to a land base. Whichever the case, being disconnected from the land is experienced as isolating, whereas being on the land reconnects men to themselves, spirituality, the land, and each other (Chapter 8).

Even with other people around, some of the men we spoke to, or heard stories of, suffered extreme loneliness and social isolation. One example was the loneliness of trying to give up drinking or drug use in a context where that was the shared activity between friends. As Roy Byrne (Labrador) said: “But then it was really hard to quit. [...] But if there’s friends that you just see them at parties, then you don’t see them much anymore at all.” The addictive behaviour in itself is isolating. Mike Nitsiza (NWT), a community researcher, Elder, and long-term counsellor in his community, expanded on addictions and other social problems that block relationship and lead to more problems:

There’s not only one addiction like alcohol or drugs. There’s so many. In the community there’s gossip. You name it. ...And there’s suicidals. School survivors. And these things are all being picked up. Financial problems. Relationship problems. Always is boiled down, eh. And where, the best solution for these people to survive, [seems to be] to go one way, [to] alcohol or drugs. Because they can’t take it anymore. Where are we? We’re limited in our numbers. There’s very limited help available.

In another example, Mike Nitsiza spoke of issues with anger and anger management, which lead to greater social isolation:

It’s great he can control that [anger] for himself. A lot of us don’t. It controls us. We go along ways. It put us in jail...It’s very powerful. I know a lot of people who are locked up behind bars. It’s not their fault. They just didn’t know how to control their anger, or frustration, or

jealousy, and all that kind of thing. It just controls the human being, and they're there. It's amazing that some of them have opportunity to change their ways.

Mike's comments, and comments from the other interviews, role models, and community-based researchers emphasize the vicious cycle when emotional and social problems cause greater social isolation and new problems when men do not know where to find help, making it even more difficult for them to navigate toward their goals.

In the closed questionnaire, men's responses to the question "What helped you to stay in school?" (Figure 7, Chapter 7) suggest that an underlying factor in leaving was not knowing where to find help. Although participants could choose as many responses as they wanted from among the choices, barely half of the respondents (51%; 84/166) indicated support and encouragement as a factor helping them stay in school and, most strikingly, only 20% of respondents (34/166) indicated that knowing where to access help supported them to stay in school. For those who did not choose the support-related responses, we cannot know if the support was absent, or if the support was present but the individual just did not see it as what helped them to stay in school. Still, the results suggest a need for greater support and encouragement (from parents, teachers, principals, and others); more (and more effective) supports in place to help struggling students; and better communication about how to access existing supports. Indeed, in the interviews, the community-based researchers were often aware of resources in the communities that the men they were speaking to were not aware of, and were thus unable to access.

While in the closed questionnaire only 5% of respondents (9/166) indicated that a major reason why they left school was that they were encouraged or forced to leave (Figure 4, Chapter 4), in the interviews, shunning, bullying, and ostracism were identified as practices within communities, workplaces, and schools that contributed to social isolation and to disengagement with learning and work. 'Nippi' in Nunavut reflected on discipline in the schools that comes across as scolding and punitive in a culture where a primary value is *tunnganarniq*, being welcoming, and as a result leaves students feeling unknown and misunderstood:

This is what I've seen and wanted to say. We need to look at why students start to not wanting to attend school. We need to find out what this factor is for not attending. In everything we do we must be welcoming, whether it's at home or work. What ever it is, let's be hospitable if we want good relations with others. There is much to say here. [...] I also didn't just scold kids when teaching...Right now youth, if I were to be with them now, don't just scold them, but be with them and get to know them, understand them. They learn to understand and listen more.

Without realizing it, non-Indigenous staff members in schools and workplaces sometimes alienate Indigenous students who are used to different communicative norms and thus take the communication as overly aggressive or harsh (Arnaquq, 2015; Crago, Eriks-Brophy, Pesco, & McAlpine, 1997; Douglas, 2009).

'Qimiata' in Nunavut followed up on 'Nippi's' statement:

Yes, this is what needs to be talked about and I would like to make a comment regarding education in schools and students. There are some people who used to be in school and eventually were bullied and expelled but would like to return. There were issues and the former student gives up to pursue furthering their education. They were expelled for whatever incident and this has caused some to not gain further education. This can also cause a barrier for office work. ...[I]t needs to be fixed and we need to find a solution. I know it is a difficult stressful topic, but the result and end can be a good one. And that is what I wanted to say.

Men leave work or school due to interpersonal conflicts, which are sometimes a reflection of racism or cross-cultural miscommunication or sometimes conflicts between two people (or between two families). At other times, expulsion or firing reflects serious misdemeanours. Whichever the case, as 'Guest 3' in Labrador explained, once one is alienated from a school there are no other places to go: "[Some people] maybe got in trouble [and] then [it] was, "I had to quit school." And, you know, there's no other school here for them to go to, once they're kicked out of school."

The same is true for workplaces and peer groups, and this contributes to social isolation. Unfortunately, stepping away from school and/or work due to social isolation and lack of support can compound the problem, taking men away from where they could have found support and camaraderie even as they try to escape its opposite. Again, men here experience the oppression of "damned if you do, damned if you don't..." where, for example, being home all day is not a good solution, but neither is continuing to be in school or in workplaces where they experience bullying.

Suicide is an indomitable force, which has been described as an epidemic among Indigenous men (Kral, et al., 2011). The community-based researchers found that they could not talk about and examine men's disengagement from learning and work without facing the ultimate expression of walking away from everything, including life itself. Each man, and each person involved in the research, was impacted by the loss of loved ones through suicide. Some had walked close to that path themselves. In attempting to understand what is behind suicide, Noel Kaludjak, the community-based researcher for Nunavut and also a counsellor and wellness worker in his Territory, said:

We recently had a youth gathering and...we talked to the young men in one tent. One of the young men talked about attempting suicide. There was other young men sitting, so I looked him in the eye and asked him, "What led you to actually attempt? What does it take for you to think, to really actually attempt to do it?" He said, "Feeling unloved. Feeling worthless. Feeling nobody cares." Once he said those, three or four young men just started to cry, uncontrollably. This is...I guess I could say, number one cause of suicide. They don't feel loved. They don't feel useful. They don't feel anyone cares. That really sent a strong message to me. We have to start...making the young people feel loved. Somebody cares. They need that. That's one of the best ways to fight suicide. ...The best solution is what we do with

young people in our community, making them feel worthy. Let them know somebody loves them. Somebody cares. And the youth gathering we did, just to let them come to...one place, community, in the camp, and they enjoyed it! "I feel important!" "I feel loved. Someone cares. I feel needed. I'm part of you." Just that. They don't need to give you anything big, just to be part of that. This is what helps the next generation.

The community-based researchers strongly believed, based on observations in their communities that are substantiated across the interviews, that the factors contributing to disengagement from learning and work are also contributing to the high rate of suicide among young northern Indigenous men. We all felt the urgent call to address these factors for the survival and mental health of the communities' sons, fathers, husbands, nephews, brothers, and uncles.

Social isolation and lack of support are shared challenges of men and women in the North. However, the prevalence of these themes in men's stories, specifically, led us to question ways in which men might be facing them in particularly acute ways. One interpretation is that boys and men are, in a general sense, less nurtured and supported than girls and women, and less groomed for success in schooling and office-type work (where they are notably under-represented), as McElroy (1975) suggested. Over the shift from the subsistence to cash economy, ethnographers in northern Indigenous camps and communities have documented differences in ways parents supported and nurtured their boys and girls, which reflect the conflicting goals and gender roles discussed above. Girls were more encouraged to be in school and to go to work consistently. Boys did not get as much support in those areas, because they were being encouraged to continue on the land (Hensel, 1996; McElroy, 1975).

Another observation is that while marriage is a supportive factor for engagement in work, learning, and overall well-being, northern Indigenous men's opportunities for marriage are decreasing in this context of cultural contact and increasing mobility, including in-migration of non-Indigenous community members. More non-Indigenous men than non-Indigenous women are migrating to the North, and the frequency of mixed marriages between a non-Indigenous husband and a northern Indigenous wife is much higher than marriage between a non-Indigenous woman and an Indigenous men, contributing to a gender divide in northern Indigenous men and women's ability to build support systems around themselves (Hensel, 1996).

Throughout the interviews and workshops came a sense that men's issues and needs have been invisible, and thus not addressed. Possibly in line with a value on humility and putting others first, and not wanting to draw attention to themselves, men may have found it harder to bring their specific needs forward, while international movements focusing on women's issues have brought women's needs to the forefront, including in the North. Men across the North commented on the number of organizations, policies, and programs specifically aimed at supporting women. Poignantly, Eddie Skookum (Yukon) and Noel Kaludjak (Nunavut) overlapped each other commenting (paraphrased): "Women have all these programs and that's good. But what is there for men?" "Jail. Men have jail." Jessica Ball's (2009) research with Indigenous fathers in Canada also reflected this conclusion that men are not being reached out to. She quotes a parent support

worker who said: "It is not so much that we [social workers] have failed to reach Indigenous fathers, but that we have never tried" (p. 3).

Part of the strategy for increasing northern Indigenous men's engagement in learning and work needs to address social isolation and the factors that contribute to it. Ideas would include initiatives that bring men together to share stories and realize they are not alone in their struggles; programs that support men's connection to the land; addiction recovery programs; programs that support their connections to their families (including parenting and marriage counselling and workshops); initiatives to improve communication and relationships in schools and workplaces; and increased use of community-based restorative justice. Such efforts are crucial not just for increasing economic productivity through school and work and engagement, but more importantly, for saving the lives of sons, brothers, fathers, uncles, nephews, and husbands, and breaking the destructive cycles that are taking northern Indigenous men completely away from everything in their communities.

Chapter 6 | Northern Indigenous Role Models

One of the barriers men identified through their stories was a lack of northern Indigenous male role models. As the final stage of the research, the project team invited one northern Indigenous male role model from each community-based researcher's home region to share their stories, first as a workshop, and subsequently within this project report. Their stories are presented in this chapter.

The team defined role models, for the purpose of this workshop, as northern Indigenous men who are well-respected, inspirational, and open-hearted, with a track record of helping and supporting men. The team chose men who have something that other men in the community admire and would like to have, whether traditional knowledge, learning, particular skills or experiences, or successes. These men have their own story of overcoming or helping others overcome, and are willing and able to share their experiences from the heart. We chose men who we believed were most likely to take inspiration from the workshop to go back and support men in their communities.¹⁸

The inclusion of these men's stories is not to suggest that they have lived perfect lives, or are admirable in every aspect of their lives. To the contrary, each of these men reflected on areas in which he had struggled, and ways in which he had hurt himself and others. Part of their path in healing is admitting these mistakes, seeking forgiveness, and forgiving themselves. We believe these men are opinion leaders (Valente & Pumpuang, 2007) of sorts in their communities, and that their positive stories are useful for inspiring positive change. These are men who, like so many others we spoke to, struggle with the in and out cycle of wellness and engagement in different areas of their lives, but they are also men who have found some degree of success in reaching what they consider to be the good life, and in helping others to get there.

The northern Indigenous role models in this chapter are men who were willing to share their stories, on the record, and with their names attached, in the hopes that those who read their stories might learn and benefit from their trials and victories in ways that would ultimately increase the well-being of their brothers, sons, nephews, uncles, fathers, and of all those they care about across the North.

¹⁸ Three of the community-based researchers' stories are also included here. These men self-identify as Indigenous, and call a northern community home, thus fit our research criteria. The research team and the selected role models felt that they, too, are role models and should be included as such.

Roy Byrne (Innu), Innu Employment and Training Coordinator, Nalcor Energy

My name's Roy Byrne. I'm from Goose Bay, Labrador, but I grew up in Davis Inlet, a small community on the North coast of Labrador. There are only two communities in Labrador that are Innu communities or reserves: Natuashish and Sheshatsiu. So I grew up in Davis Inlet¹⁹ the first twelve years of my life. My father's actually from Newfoundland. He was a teacher in Davis Inlet, and he met my mom there. My mom's Innu, so I'm half Newfoundlander, half Innu, I guess you would say.

In 1994, I moved to Goose Bay and that's when I got junior high and high school. I've been living there ever since. I moved around a lot for work. I usually work in the mines. So I worked in Voisey Bay, then I went back to Natuashish for a few years, then I went to Labrador City for a year, then I went to Schefferville to another mine, for a couple years, then back again in Goose Bay. So now I work for Nalcor. I'm the Innu employment training coordinator. People looking for work give me their resumes and I find work for them. I'm at the Muskrat Falls site, where they are basically building a dam.

I did quite a bit of work with youth when I was growing up. I worked at a treatment centre for the youth for a year or two. With the mines, I worked security first then I moved into Innu liaison then I worked safety quite a bit. I'm usually in the human resources department. I speak the language and I can communicate, so I do interviews and all that stuff, and I get people hired. We also opened a bed and breakfast in our home. A lot of people from back home are coming through Goose Bay for their medical appointment, to deliver babies or Medevac, the miners come through Goose Bay, so we opened a bed and breakfast to have community members stay with us.

Living a healthy lifestyle is important to me. I stopped drinking twelve years ago. I never had a big issue with it anyway, but one of the reasons why I stopped drinking was basically just showing that it's possible. I see a lot of people back in communities, they have problems with alcohol, so I'll try to show them that people *can* quit drinking and all that stuff, because I know it's a big issue. Seeing so many relatives going through that same thing, I kind of thought, I don't want to go down that same road. I could have taken that road. But, I basically want to show that that you *can* live a healthy lifestyle, and that there is a way out. So I try to lead by example.

The hardest thing about quitting was missing my friends, because a lot of my friends still drank and everything. So it's kind of hard to quit when all your friends, that's what they do on the weekends, when that's the thing in common that you have. Then it was really hard to quit. It took me a little while, but then after a while I guess you really know who your friends are. Friends that I just saw at parties, well, I didn't see them much anymore at all. They were still living that lifestyle.

¹⁹ The Innu community Davis Inlet was moved by the Canadian government in 2002 and renamed Natuashish.

A lot of my family don't drink either, on my mom's side. They were good role models to us growing up, too. I think I'm just the same as anyone else. Anyone can do it. I'm just trying to lead by example. There is a way, if you have problems, there is a way, you can get out of it. The place to start is really in your own family first. Take care of your family first and from there the circle will grow and grow and help the other families. Help your family first and the circle will grow after that. And in our communities, we take care of each other. They say it takes a community to raise a child, and that's what I experienced in Davis Inlet.

For me, growing up, I got involved in a lot of stuff when I moved to Goose Bay, a bigger community. I got involved in a lot of sports, so I travelled quite often with that. I did pretty much everything: volleyball was a big thing, judo, table tennis, soccer. I did a lot of travelling through sports in my younger years. I even represented Newfoundland at the 1999 and 2001 Winter Games, in two different sports. I want to show that you can work hard and what you can do, and anybody can do it, if you work hard at it.

Living in town, in Goose Bay, is very different from living on a reserve. I don't live on a reserve, I live in Goose Bay and I bought a home with my family. On a reserve, you have a home but you usually don't own it. Usually it's owned by the town or band council, or whatever and you're given that house. It's good in a way, but sometimes it's bad because you can't sell your house if you wanted to sell it. It's really hard to get credit if you want to buy a vehicle or whatever. 'Cause I grew up living in a reserve community, but then moving up to another community was kind of hard, because of two different cultures, because my English wasn't perfect. Innu was my first language growing up. Transitioning, trying to adapt, took a bit of time and then after a while it got easier.

Trying to understand my parents, how they grew up, is different, too. My mom was more traditional. My father was a baby boomer. So I got two sides from my parents, different ways that they were brought up. My father was really education-oriented and my mom was strong traditionally. Both of my parents worked, and I think that set an example for me. I think it helped, growing up that way, to figure out the values from both sides. You see what it's like living in both ways. You understand the problems of both places, and their values, and how they do things. You understand how they do things around there. And you go to another place and you kind of understand they do things around there too. So you see both sides of it. There's lots of good things in each. You see how the way things are now is important, work and being at the mine and all that stuff, and you also see why it's so important to be more cultural, why culture is more important than just work. You see both sides of it and you try to balance that somehow. There's a way to balance it, but sometimes it's hard. And that's what causes conflicts: different values and different ways. What one group thinks is okay might not be okay with this group, and what's okay here isn't okay in that group.

What's very important is the development of virtue. Courage. Sharing. Honesty, Trustworthiness. To show kindness to people. To show patience in listening to people's stories. That's what we need in this world. We need to develop spiritual arms and legs, and that's what's important. I think that's what's going to help us, if we develop all that, it's what's going to help us lead a happier life.



Noel Kaludjak (Inuit), Director, Kivalliq Counselling and Support Services

My name is Noel Kaludjak. I'm Inuit, from Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, on Hudson Bay coast. I consider myself Inuit because I grew up Inuit. My parents were Inuit. My father was a quarter black, so I've got a mixed blood in me but I call myself Inuit because that's how I grew up. My father was a hunter. He lived off the land. And then he married my mother and they lived off the land. They were moved into a settlement in the mid-1950s, and they had to try to live in a community which they

had no clue of how to adapt to. And they had to learn as they went. Housing was a big part, and jobs, and school. That all started changing their way of life from hunting on the land and just travelling on the land to being sort of controlled by the government, to live in the community and be provided houses. They tried to make the best of what was given to them, but they were very disrupted by this movement, being moved into community. They had to raise twelve children in a small house. You know, before they were living in sod houses and just enjoying their lives. Now they had to go to Co-op and now my father had to try to find work, to provide.

I grew up in that era. Growing up in Whale Cove, in a small community, I thought that was the only community in the world. I had no clue what the other world represented until they started showing us in school. Whale Cove had only up until Grade 8. So I completed Grade 8. They tried to send me to Rankin Inlet to go to high school, but with little or no support it was very hard. So I got homesick. So I hopped on the snowmobile and went home.

But my desire to work was great. My first job, even before I went to Rankin, was to pour gas into drums for the hunters. That was my very first job. That was during school. And I would run down to the Co-op at recess time and do my chores and come back to school before the bell. Right from the start I desired work. I didn't care what it was. I wanted to earn money. And that's where I started. So I've been working all my life, since I was fifteen or sixteen. I've never really had no job. My life was never really difficult because even though I did not finish high school, I went on to become an oil burner mechanic, a plumber, a carpenter, and a sort of semi-electrician. Not a certified electrician, but I can do it. I did my daughter's house and electrical and everything and it passed inspection. So I can do a whole house. That was my desire, to know how to do things. And all that came from my father. He urged me, he encouraged me to break things and fix them. Take it from the dump, fix it up, use it. Take it apart, figure out how it works, put it together. That was his encouragement. My father had a lot to with it, along with my brothers. Even without education, I went to college to get my trades and I've been successful all that time, you know, to be able to build my own house and repair other people's houses, be it plumbing, furnace, electrical, carpentry.

I had that trade for almost 25 years. During that time, when I got older, alcohol was a big problem in our household. When I was younger, I told myself, when I grow up, I won't ever drink. But, of course, like a lot of other young Inuit people, I got off to start drinking, and drank for another 30 years. When I was growing up, and being taught by my father about manhood, I thought it was, "If

your wife ain't listening, beat her up," "If your kids ain't listening, whip them." I thought that was the way we lived. Every time, when we drank, I would beat up my wife. I got into trouble with the courts a couple times. I don't know if it's unfortunately or fortunately, I never went to jail for it. But I learned my lesson there. I didn't want to live that lifestyle my parents went through. I did not want to put my children through what I was put through. And so I did something about it.

I finally quit drinking in 2008, and then I started going to men's groups and men's healing circles. We started the men's group in Coral Harbour in 2009 to support each other in our addictions. Right away I picked up on it. I got my training in counselling, and we started to work with men in Coral Harbour. We call it the men's support group, where men can go and talk and support each other if they have any addiction. We met weekly. I can compare it to AA, but it's for men, and it's also healing. It's where we can talk about our abuse when we were kids, and we can cry within that group of men who care, and understand exactly what we go through. If there's a woman in the circle, it's so hard for men to open up. It's just the way we are. It's not because we don't like the woman, it's just that they don't really get what we're talking about when we talk about our own personal things. It started helping us, and other men, to get away from the addictions. That sharing greatly helped me to become a better father and a better husband.

In those men's meetings, I listened to myself and I listened to other men about their problems. And we realized how we are treating our women and our children. Be it verbally, physically, emotionally, we were hurting them without knowing. And with that, we were hurting *ourselves*, mostly. We were hurting ourselves because we were angry men. When we're angry, you know, we get angry over little things, that can come with your work or your school or whoever. We learned where that anger is coming from, in our men's group. And it helped other men to realize, "I have to change. I didn't realize I was hurting my wife and children and my brothers and sisters, mother and father, whoever's close to me. I'm hurting them because I didn't know any better." So in this men's support group, we hear other men talk about their issues and problems. Younger men listen and learn from the older men who have learned from their mistakes. It was very, very helpful to the men, so we decided we would share it with other men in our region, in the Kivalliq.

We went to Arviat first, then to Baker Lake, Chesterfield Inlet, Repulse Bay, and Rankin Inlet. And the Coral Harbour men's support group has touched all those communities. We try to encourage each community to have their own men's support group, to help other men have a place to go to talk, and to share with each other if they have problems. And that is encouraging the communities where there's a support group for men. And it works really well. It gives the men a good feeling, that "I have a place to go. Somebody cares. There's a group of men that really care about my feelings." It really helps them. Men who have gone through our men's support group have gone on to be more successful than they were before. Some of the men were drinking so much, or struggling with another addiction or anger, that they couldn't keep a job. But now, they have overcome addiction and they are learning to be a better husband and a better father. We remind them, "You will never be perfect, but you can do better." I will never be perfect, but I can do better.

I had problems, and I passed on some of my problems to my children. And now it's from generation to generation. It's going to take a while before maybe my great-grandchildren really know how to live in *this* society and with less problems than we had. At least my children's children can enjoy life more with less issues, problems. Of course we'll have problems all the time. But what are we doing to quicken our healing? How is the government going to help quicken this? The vicious cycle will continue until our people heal from those past issues, residential schools, being moved into communities, and the stuff that came along with it. Verbal abuse! Emotional abuse! Sexual abuse! When they tried to assimilate our identity, our traditional way of life. They tried to eliminate that from us. We're trying to get that back. I'm really inspired by the work that northern Indigenous men are doing with their own people. This kind of stuff works! Their own people helping their own people. If the government can provide funding for these, start with the *people* first, we can move forward more quickly. It's good for the government to realize what the community wants, what's good for the community, and respect their beliefs.



Steven Kormendy (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in), Social Work Student, University of Victoria

I'm Steven Kormendy. I am a Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizen from Dawson City, Yukon. My father is a Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizen. My mother identifies as what we call in school, 'Settler' (that's what we say instead of Caucasian). I have two brothers, both younger than me, and a dog.

Currently I am a student at the University of Victoria, studying to obtain a Bachelor of Social Work degree. I'm in my third year, and I'm thinking maybe after this, a master's. We'll see how it goes. In my class, there are 35 or 40 people, maybe five males, and I'm the only Aboriginal male. It's pretty low representation, for sure.

I got some actual practical experience working this summer for my local First Nation in Dawson City. The job title was "Work Opportunities Mentor." I worked with people on social assistance trying to help them get back into the workforce full-time. It was good, and everything went well and it really instilled my passion again for why I'm getting the Bachelor of Social Work degree.

In terms of my education, the reason why I wanted to do what I'm doing, and why I wanted a university degree was, growing up in a community with no lack of social issues, I could see a lot of young Aboriginal men heading down a certain path. And, I guess I could easily have taken that road too. I guess it just got to the point where, you kind of just feel like you didn't want to be like the rest, you wanted to set a path for yourself, and show it doesn't have to be that way.

My grandpa really pushed me. He always wanted me to get a university education. He said to do that was important. But even more, he taught me to question everything, whether you're being taught something at school, or anywhere else. That really stuck with me. He was a really big player in me doing what I wanted to do.

My old boxing coach, Charles Eshelman, was a very influential person for me, and for my whole community. He took a lot of young, angry Aboriginal men off the street and gave them something to work toward. I was no exception to that. I was in the same spot as everyone else. He really encouraged us. He taught me to be really humble, in whatever accomplishments you might have. In sports and school and stuff, he always said, "Don't gloat, no reason to gloat. Be humble. The hard work pays off in the end." It was little things he said like that, kind of in between different interactions, or talking to him on the street, and if something successful did happen, it was just the way he was, too. He never asked for anything in return either. He never ever asked for recognition. He is a real role model.

When I told him I was thinking of going into social work, he gave me some really valuable advice. He basically said, "Don't do it until you love yourself, until you can actually truly sit down and look

at yourself and realize that you're a good person. It's tough to help other people if you don't love yourself, right? That's where you have to start." What he told me really sat with me.

The other person who really influenced me was my math teacher in high school. He's the official liberal leader of the Yukon now, Sandy Silver. But he's another guy who put a lot of life experience into me. He taught me to be respectful to everyone. He was the kind of guy, the kind of teacher, who would stay during every single lunch hour to help students, not getting paid for it. He'd leave the door open every single lunch hour and whoever needs it could talk to him. You didn't even need to talk to him about math. You got a problem, his door was open, to anyone.

When I think about the people who I look up to, or who I consider role models, I guess they inspired me to be the person that I want to be. Not necessarily even education-wise, but just to be a human being, to be humble, to be respectful, to be down to earth, to teach you how to live a good life, to have a good mind and a good soul and show a true level of respect to everyone and hopefully that respect is shown back to you. When I think about the people who were role models for me growing up, they were very different, but they showed me, more than anything, just to be a good human being. That is a good place to start.

Every person has every single thing inside of themselves to be where they want to be. It's just a matter of having a little bit of help. My vision for working in a helping profession is to facilitate that, not to tell struggling people what's right. I want to be working, not to oppress them, but to free that oppression that they're feeling. Give them assistance. *Empower* them to make their own decision. That's important.

I find it very valuable learning from other Indigenous men from across the North what their experiences are and sharing what works for Indigenous men. Because we don't learn about our Indigenous history or our own knowledge or ways of healing at school, and our bosses and supervisors don't necessarily understand or share these perspectives, even if they have master's degrees. I probably used to take what they said as they truth, but as I'm getting connected to other northern Indigenous counsellors, I am looking for the solutions that we have in our own cultures and communities.

I would like to be part of empowering traditional knowledge and learning, incorporating it and making it a valuable aspect of work. I am concerned that even our self-governments are focusing too much on the economic value of everything and we're losing sight of the importance of traditional values. These are things that can't be lost and things that I definitely want to take and hold on to. I am the young guy, but I appreciate the chance to voice my input.



Joseph Kitekudlak²⁰ (Inuit), Inuit Elder, Hunter, and Retired Entrepreneur

I am Joseph Kitekudlak. I was born and raised out on the land. I used to live in camps, seventy miles from Ulukhaktuk, all year round. When my dad passed away in 1967, we moved to Ulukhaktok. We were one of the very last families to move into town, after the Government started putting people in communities. Back at the camps, there were lots of animals: lots of foxes, seals, polar bears, everywhere. Except not too many fish.

Not much Arctic char. One year, before there were quotas, I got nine bears in one year. I started going out with my dad when I was really young. I started following him and I learned to hunt. When I was ten years old, in summer time, we went to Ulukhaktok in a thirty foot boat. When we got there we went to see someone. And when we got there, s/he had a little girl. S/he gave it to me. I carried it. When I was ten years old. I didn't know it was going to be my wife. It was Helen.

People say I'm a role model, but I'm not. I'm a regular guy. I call my daughter Karen and my wife role models. Karen went to Edmonton for four years. That's my role model. She helped fundraise for western drummers. One day, we took those drummers to Kelowna, British Columbia. They were drumming. That was good. We saw them on TV. People helping people. And my wife, she worked teaching for forty years and she was a principal for four years and she retired four years ago. She's my role model.

I went to kindergarten for three months or so. The reason why I never went back to school, was I really like hunting. I taught myself to read and write, syllabics and roman orthography. I learned by my hands how to do carpentry, electrical work, plumbing, mechanics. My wife calls me "Joe of all trades." I built our own house in four or five months. I worked hard! I had my own limited company, a carpentry business, for twenty-five years, until I retired. I hired all local people, except the electrician I had to hire from outside. We built a good number of the houses in Ulukhaktuk. But it was uncomfortable working. I got headaches too much. I had accountants in Yellowknife. The accountant would phone me, "What's this all about?" Sometimes I couldn't even answer. One time I brought my papers to Yellowknife. They were going to fix them. I told them, "You've got one missing part." She said, "You've got everything here." I told her, "You're missing Tylenol! If you open my books, you're going to need it!"

I helped lots of people sometimes, with work. We built a community hall out of nothing, with no pay. If someone calls and says, "Something's wrong with my furnace," I'll go, because when people own their own home, the hamlet housing office can't do the repairs. A lot of the time, I'll do it for free. Sometimes they really want to thank me so they'll buy me maybe \$100, \$200 worth of fuel, or

²⁰ This testimony was told jointly by Joseph and Helen Kitekudlak, with interjections from his wife Helen, who emphasized strengths that Joseph omitted. It was edited to form a single story.

something to help keep our house. After our kids moved out, we ended up on our own, in five bedrooms and two bathrooms, so we decided to open up a B&B. That's what we did.

I am really committed to my family. After Helen and I were married, she says I sort of nurtured her into learning how to do stuff. I've got a son, and two daughters, who are adults now. And they are successfully working in the community. And we have two adopted twins, and grandchildren! One of the twins really likes to work on skidoos. I made a little mechanic shop in the garage, which the boys put to use daily, almost! Those nineteen year-old twin boys always need to be fixing something! If it's not a Honda,²¹ it's skidoos. One of them, he'll buy parts and practically put a machine together! These are old skidoos. He'll buy one, then buy another one. He'll use one for parts, and fix-up the other. And then the machine's running! I keep the little shop running for them. They like to work on snowmobiles.

People say my daughter Karen is just like me. She really thinks a lot before saying anything. They call her, or me, when they just need to talk or say something or get something off their chest. I really love my children and grandchildren. I encourage my kids and grandkids to do as much out on the land as possible. We go camping every spring and summer. We love doing it. One of my grandsons, 15 or 16 years old, went out last spring and got his first muskox with a bow and arrow. I encourage them. I help them. People ask what it takes to be a good husband and father. You just need to spend time with them. That's what it takes: spending time with them.

²¹ "Honda" is used widely in Nunavut to refer to any make of ATV.



Lawrence Nitsiza (T'lich), (Past) Recreation Coordinator, What'i, Gameti, Fort Providence, Tsiightchic and Lutselke

I'm Lawrence Nitsiza, from What'i, Northwest Territories. My whole background is in the recreation field. I've been in recreation for a long time, since I finished college in Inuvik. I enjoy that field I've been involved in for so long. Now I just passed it on to my sister, who's working there now. I've been recreation coordinator in Fort Providence and in Gameti, as well as What'i. I'm not doing anything right now, but mainly just volunteer. I really enjoy the bush, that's where I grew up, so that's what I did with this summer. I went out with the youth twice. I enjoy working with the Elders. It was really fun. I deal with a lot of projects. I go to a lot of meetings.

The one who encouraged me most to follow this path is not around anymore. Most of my skills and experience came from my late grandpa. He was a really good role model. He was a drum leader. He also played hand games. He's the one who encouraged me to stay in school, whatever I do. Even though he knew that it was far from home. But I stayed there twelve years. While I was working, I dealt with a lot of Elders, too, mostly men. I've been involved with men's groups. Mostly it was my late grandpa: he raised me in the bush since I was young. I look after my grandma right now. Every time I look after her, something advises me that I'm doing something good. Twice I worked this summer in the bush. And, you know, it just reminds me what my late grandpa taught me around this time of year, when he was around. When he was still healthy, we would usually go around the lake every fall time and I really miss that. I guess I really miss him too. What he said to me is still in my head. He encouraged me to be in the recreation field and I've been there for so long. That's what he said to me, to stay in school, "Just put your mind to it. It doesn't matter what all the fuss is, coming around you. It doesn't matter, just stay in school. Do what you've got to do." That's what I did.

I see most of my late grandpa's children following his footsteps. He used to be involved in church. Most of them are doing that. Hand games, drumming, some of them are doing that. Like living in bush, working in the bush, that's what he taught us, and we are following him. He was a really good role model. He used to do all the drumming, especially, hand games. I always go first. They still holding all these songs, through drumming. It's really awesome. I'm really surprised, that I can't even drum. But most of my brothers are drummers. I like going fishing, going out on the land, participating in traditional skills like that. My favourite sports are Dene games, northern games. We do different kinds, like hand games, sawing, and log splitting. I enjoy working with all the people, of all ages, including men, women and youth. They support me. And my family.

While I was in the recreation field, there was a lot of young people, boys and girls, who looked up to me, when I was working, like I'm a really big guy. The parents, too. I did a lot of things for them. I

took the young people out for the games out of town. I supervised them. They liked me doing things for them. I opened the gym for them, let them play soccer and all that. I opened the youth centre, too. I had a lot of activities going on for them, as well. A lot of young people looked up to me. Even men, Elders, you know, they liked what I was doing. Especially coming back from the trip with youth, parents were really surprised. They always appreciated me for doing a good job bringing the youth out to other communities. The youth just made a lot of friends. They had this bond. It made them want to go back, want to do it again. They want to travel somewhere else. You know, I usually saw the same old kids go all the time. I encouraged more different youth to go next time. Instead of taking the same, you know. I advised the parents. Sometimes they gave me really good advice from their other parents. They said, "You're doing a good job." Now it's not the same anymore. Hardly any youth go out. They gave me good advice so I just continued what I was doing, every year. But the reason why, I just put *myself* there. When I was in a high school, I had to get out of the community to come here, to go to school. That was the advice from my late grandfather, my real mom as well, "You got to go to school. Nowadays it's different, you have to get an education."

I had no money, but they said if you go to school you don't need money there. Everything's provided at the residential school there. I was really afraid to go, but they were right. "You're going to meet a lot of people out there." They were right. I made a lot of friends. School was no problem. At the same time I was involved back home. I looked after the gym for men. That's what carried me through to when I got that diploma from the recreation field. And I did that. I lived there for three years. That was really hard for me. But what my grandpa said was still in my head: "If you want to do it you can do it. The door is open, right there." I *liked* doing it. I'm still in the field. I'm interested in going to other communities. I apply for the openings. I like travelling and meeting a lot of people. So, that's work, that's my grandpa's advice that put me there. You know, but, it was *hard* but I went there. It was too *far* for me, but, to go to Inuvik, to live there for two years. But I did it! I was proud of myself after too. I was proud.

My grandpa raised me. He wanted me to learn traditional skills and how to live in the bush. I did that, yeah, but, you know, I'm not a really good hunter or trapper. If I *have* to do that, if I'm going to live like that, all my life, then I don't need education. But if I want to put that on the side, I've got to go school. So I went. It was my goal. When I was in the high school here, I was really in love with the education. I just kept on going. Education is open. I would advise youth, "Education is open. It's never too late to go to school." That would be my advice. That's what my grandpa said. "If you're going to do it, just do it." Maybe you say, "I failed." I failed the last exam from the recreation field, the practicum. I kept doing it, kept doing it, kept doing it. I wouldn't get my diploma until I passed the practicum. I failed and I failed and I failed. I went back. I couldn't finish. I worked at home because you can't keep on going, they don't have money. So, finally, to get back in there, I did it on a volunteer basis. And I got it. I went back until I got it.



Mike Nitsiza (T'lichó), Retired Teacher, Guidance Counsellor and Cultural Coordinator

I'm Mike Nitsiza, from What'i, about 104 kilometres northwest of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The only access there is by winter road, otherwise you fly in and out, or go by canoe. What'i is very popular with the fly fishermen, hunting, fishing, and trapping mostly. We have a mine site close by, which is called Fortune Mine. I'm sure the town is going to be growing because of the development.

I'm very proud of who I am and what I do. I'm a retired teacher, guidance counsellor and cultural coordinator. I've been involved with healing for quite a while. I work with corrections, with the Dene nations. I work with people at risk most of the time. All my work is on the land. I've seen lots and I've helped a lot of people with addictions and who were suicidal, and, by golly, I've been there! I'm not talking about it through books. I lost my home, my marriage, you name it. I was suicidal. I wanted to end my life, so many times, because I'm a residential school survivor, and I *know* what he did to me. Luckily, I'm alive and speaking from my heart, not my head. I follow what's in my heart, and that's the most important part of who I really am. I wish I was young again and then I could have saved my family and loved ones earlier. It took me a long time to learn all this. I had to go through school. I went to a lot of work just to learn what makes a good parent and a good family. All my life I've been challenged, and I enjoy that challenge. I've been a role model for a long time. I wanted to maintain that and I wanted to see little children grow up and make sure that they don't go through what I went through. I want to guide them, and make sure they have a smile on their face. That's what I really want.

For me, as a child growing up, I was born with TB [tuberculosis] so the nurse and nuns took me. They taught me all the English and French and I lost my language. Then I came back home, and they didn't understand me. So my parents were going on the trap lines and they didn't know what to do with me, so they adopted me out to three Elders. They became my teachers, but the only problem was, I had to earn it. You see, for the Elders, I had to make sure that there's a lot of water, a lot of food, and a lot of wood piled up, so that they would tell me a story. There was no such thing as TV or radio at that time. But they became my teachers, and they taught me everything about animals' behaviours, how they can alert you, how they try to send you a message, the weather reports, and all these things. I'm so overwhelmed by their teaching. I really observe what they're saying and go back and say, "Why did they say this? What made them say that?" They never explained why they said that. So we have to look back at what they're saying and slowly begin to understand. One Elder, she was about 101 when she passed on to the other world, and she said, "Grandchild, I lived this long, but it didn't make me feel like I'd done anything. Look at my hands, so wrinkled up it looks like I'd done nothing." But she did a lot. She taught me all about the plants and medicine. And she said, "Grandchild, you know, you're not my son, but you did everything I told you and every time when you have problems, I'll be there to guide you and help you."

Remember I'm there." So, every time when I have crisis in my life I think about her and that brings me back to who I am.

When I was young, and because I went to residential school, I became an interpreter for my people, a translator. I did all the correspondence for my own people. I made phone calls, prepared trips, and prepared them for meetings and all that, and today I'm still doing the same thing. The community used me a lot, and I enjoyed that. I'm there for them. I like knowing that. What drives us to help and serve? It's within us. It cannot be taken away. One way I help is taking people on the land. There's so many distractions in communities: phones, TV, Bingo, things that we do not wish. One time, I took some men on the land for five days. On the last day, I went to them and they were all busy. I think they decided to set nets, so they helped each other untangle the fish nets. They were talking and then I went there. My oldest brother said to me, "Why do you want to go back early?" I said, "It's up to you." He said, "We don't want to go back. We've bonded with each other. We're happy with each other here. We feel comfortable. We like being here." I said, "Okay. Well, stay as long as you want." "We don't want to go back right away to the community. The only time when we see each other and spend time with each other there is when there's Bingo." And I thought, that's the truth. My brother told me that because he loved being with the people. He doesn't want to play Bingo, but he wants to be with his people and his friends there. Now I coordinate a tournament under his name. It's a lot of work. But I honour his memory because he was always there, volunteering his time. Every time there's a potluck, or if you called a feast, he would be right there, and then he would fill up all the plates, pour the tea and coffee. He would serve his people. That's who he is and that's where I'm coming from. That's how I want to be with people. In some way, it's within each and every one to do this. Why does it bring us all together? Because we care. Because we want to help, not just for ourselves but for others to follow our footprints. I find that it's within us and that cannot be taken away.

I hold a land retreat for staff members. It's good because some of the staff, they have given so much of themselves to their community. Taking them on the land for the retreat really helps them to focus on themselves and then go back to the community to put their efforts into their jobs again. It really helps. We often encourage people to go on the land because we all need that, each and every one of us. We need to be with ourselves out there, and discover who we are, and what we're here for. There are so many distractions that can distract our life, but when we're on the land, we're back to our normal self.

Sometimes I'll go for holiday to the city, but it's not the same as getting on the land. I went on the land last summer, wow! Overnight, for one night, that did it. I spent my time with the people, the Elders, the children, the mothers, and all that. They all connected with me. I enjoyed every minute that I was there with them. That's not like going out for holidays into the cities. We try to make a balance, like strong like two people, given the choices that we have. Whether we want to live and survive in the city, or survive and live on the wilderness, we have to have a balance and be strong like two people. I am grateful to have the opportunity.

One of the things I know with the children is if I want to go fishing, they'll all want to come with me. I say, "You have to go home, and tell your parents, and get their consent, and then you come." Then they all dash home. I can only take four or five because of safety on the boat. I take them out on the land, in the wilderness. And when they catch a fish, they are really changed! And when they see their first eagle, they rock the boat with excitement! It's good to see all that, because a lot of them don't have the opportunity to go on fishing trips with anybody. Maybe their families don't have a boat with a motor that they can use to get around. So, when I'm going out, I want to make sure that the little ones have that opportunity. And that's where you build the bond with them. And then when you want to do something, they'll always be there to help you. And then, they'll help others too.

I have a very, very challenging position sometimes. As a school counsellor, one day, the principal wants me to do a proposal, and wants it done. And then at the same time, the teacher wants me to do a home visit because of the attendance. And at the same time, I have a call coming in, from the parent, saying that their child is suicidal. That's one day. So what do I do? I drop everything! I drop everything and go attend to the suicide. And I don't just work with the suicidal child, but all their parents and the little ones that they know. And it's very challenging, and the next day, you have to, if everything works out smooth, you have to work on the proposal and do the home visit, as you are told. But sometime, at one point, the principal sent me this little child. This little child sitting there, with his head down.

I didn't say nothing. I know what's going on. The principal says, "You do what you want with him. He's disruptive. He can't go back to the class." So I just let him sit there, all day. Just let him sit there. I didn't want to say nothing to him, because it's very disruptive to talk to an individual who's all boiled down, like that. Calm him down? You can't. So I just let him be, all day. And then the next day, the same thing happened. I told him, "I know why you're here." He said, "No you don't!" "I know why you're here." "No you don't." I said, "You know something, I really care about. I like you. I want to help you, but I can't do that," I said, "because, I'm not going to be there for you all the time. Neither are your parents. I know why you're here," I said. "I know that you're at home, alone, your parents left to Yellowknife and went for a trip and you're left home alone and you got nothing to eat, no clean clothes, no nothing to eat, and all that." And I said, "You're the only one who can help yourself. I can't do that. If you continue to be disruptive and be a not good person, you know what's going to happen, where you're going to go. You're going to be locked up behind bars. But *you* decide now what to do."

That child, from that day on, he took my advice. And he went home, he went to the Elders and got snow for them, he worked for them, and he got a little bit to eat. Ever since that day, he's been beside me. He's been working with me, on the land, no matter who, where, or when. And all he did was to help the community, to do a little errands for people, taking the groceries home for them and all that. Today, he's graduated, and he has work. He may have his own family. And that is the very challenge, the fact that we work to change that individual's life around like that. There's so many out there that need help and they're just not getting it. But sometimes it's good for them because they brought themselves all here. It's a good thing here, to share that knowledge, to share

that experience that we have in life that really needs to be shared with others. In fact, it's *hard* to say what we did and what we've done, because it came from the heart and we don't want to talk about it. We want to save it for ourselves, be humble with it, feel good about it and do more.

The days of our life, the trauma that we go through, it's not just going to go away. But in the back of our mind, we all have this teaching that our great-grandparents, mother, and father told us. They told us all this, and we think about it now. Sometimes I wonder, "Why did they tell me that?" It's because they cared about me. When I went on a sober path it was very hard because I had no friends, it was like no family. Nobody wanted to talk to me, nobody wanted to see me. But I stayed within it because I knew that someday I would have a family that was sober, and very caring, where there's a lot of love. And now I know I'm not alone. I never thought people really cared about me until I got really sick. I had been doing all this work and I had a stroke, and I ended up in the hospital in Edmonton. I didn't realize anyone cared about who I really I am, or about what good I did and what good I didn't do. But all of a sudden, everyone came. And all the letters and everything I received from them! That's touching! It's rewarding. That's what I was working for. That's all I want, you know, and it's there: people do care.

When we talk about the past and what good we can bring from there, it's carrying on the sharing. We should help each other. I want us to have a lot of respect for one another. I know things are changing, and I look at the future generations. What can we do for them? Can we make *their* life a lot easier? That's our objective, to make things a lot easier for the next generations. I feel pretty proud that I have time for the journey in this life. I am grateful for this sharing.



Eddie Skookum (Northern Tutchone), Past Chief, Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation

I'm Eddie Skookum. I'm Northern Tutchone from Carmacks, Yukon. I've been involved in our First Nation administration for many years, being in council for 10 years, then the Chief for 16 years. I really enjoyed those years. I hoped I would lose that last election, three years ago, and I did, but I hope I'll get to run again in the future.

I like cultural stuff. I like to go in the bush, hunting and fishing, and I spent a lot of time in the bush this year. I also like trying to sew, but I can't! I used to play a lot of sports. I didn't care whether we won or lost, it's still participation. I really liked that togetherness, and using the energy somewhere else. These days, I have hardly any energy that's why I go curling now. Old timer's hockey is more my speed. I do a lot of MC-ing for potlatches and funerals nowadays. I like meeting new people too. I'm a father and a grandfather. Kids are getting adjusted to life in a different way these days. I'm slowly trying to get adjusted to it. I have a partner, and two dogs.

Probably the first role model I ever had was my Grade Three music teacher at residential school. She was the only teacher I knew who had patience. Patience and time. She was an older woman, too. She would say sit down. Then she sat down and would tell you how music works and why they have those symbols there. I learned a lot about music and I talked to her. Another role model was my Grade 10 English teacher. He was like a hippie teacher, I called him, "Welcome back Cotter!" He was pretty relaxed on rules, but he'd still tell you the time of the day. I think everyone's a role model in their own way, because each person's got a different gift and a different experience. And we learn when they talk about their experiences, their true life, which is what I want to share.

I grew up with my language and I talked it fluently until I went to residential school. When I went there, I learned a bit of French and mostly English and other skills, but when I came back to my grandmother, she talked to me and I said "What?" She was really mad! She said, "Did you forget something? How to talk back to me in your language?" I said, "Uh, yeah." That's why I started going to see Elders again. My grandmother taught me the language again. I can understand it, and I can reply back in a few sentences, but not fluently. I'd say I speak it 30 to 40 percent. And I learned the ways now, and even when people pass away, I know what to do.

My grandmother was real strict. Got me home at nine o'clock! When she talks, you have to listen, because she'll tell you everything. How to make a net. How to sharpen an axe. What to do when you dig the ice, ice fishing, or berry picking. When to be quiet, going hunting. I watched her cook and I watched her go fishing and all that stuff. She was my mom and dad. She's the one who took care of me, because my parents were drinking lots in those days. She would always say, "Come and look, and then you'll learn how to do it. I'm only going to do it once." But usually she did it all the time. And then the men would pick you up and go hunting and you learned from the men. They

would ask you to come with them when they got a moose and teach you how to cut it. Or they'd take you out and teach you how to navigate the river, how to set nets, and everything else.

My father had nothing to do with it, at all. He was too busy drinking. He worked six months out of the year at the mines, with heavy equipment. When he came back, he would drink until he got no cash. Just before he died he started telling me stuff, but that was a little bit too late. A few years before he died, he told me about life, about this and that.

My grandmother taught me, "Even if he's your enemy, even if you don't get along with each other, but when it comes time to help people, help them." She said in the old days, we'd go up and down the river, somebody might need help, and you'd go over there and you could help them out. She said, "One day you're going to need help yourself. One day, you're going to get sick. Everyone gets sick, and you're going to need help. And you'll need more help in other ways. All you got to do is get up early in the morning and make sure you're ready to do your job, if you got a job." She explained all that. I don't say helping out is natural. You learn it from the wisdom of the people.

There was a time, about 18 years ago, I applied for a Class 1 driver's license. I said, "I need a real regular job." So I made a lot of phone calls in the Calgary area. I wanted to go from Calgary to Yukon, Calgary to NWT, Calgary to the United States. I put all that in place by myself. And then, I don't know what happened there. All the Elders started coming to my house and said, "You got to run for Chief. I think we need you as Chief here." And I said, "What?" Well, I used to help people all the time, before I was Chief, getting wood, little things like babysitting, or hunting or fishing, helping some families and all that. People knew I used to help out a lot. And they said, "We'll put you in as Chief." I said, "I know I was counsellor before. I know that Chief is a tough job. I've got a job where I'll be my own boss and in 10 years' time, I'll own my own truck." They said, "No, we want you in as Chief." So that's how it got started. I was re-elected for three terms.

I went through a lot of changes with our First Nation. I was involved in negotiations and I took the government to court and I won. We took the government to court because they weren't consulting with the Native people. We said, "You know what, you're not consulting with us on this. Our health. Forestry. Water. Money. Education." And I think it's a good idea we took them to court because you know, they went and peed on our land and then did stuff we didn't know about, and then next thing we know there's a company there and, what are they doing there? And we want to benefit, too. From that time on, you could really notice the government sending us letters and saying, "We're consulting with you." That was a result of the court case.

When we were Chief and Council, at that time, we told the government, "We want language in our schools." We made sure there were at least six or seven teachers put into the education system in our home town. A lot of young people were dropping out. We thought kids would be more comfortable with someone they know. When I was that age, wow, it was different. If you spoke your own language, you got punched for that. You couldn't even talk to your female cousins. I remember that, as a person at a young age, far away from home with no help or no guidance. It was a learning curve and a half there. Luckily we had our cousins with us or other First Nations

people. That's how I got to know a lot of people, people in Dawson and other places, who went to the same school, which helped me out.

I have some friends who are now gone because of alcohol and drugs, same with family, my brothers, and my dad. They were lifelong alcoholics. I never drank for at least 18 years. I started late, around 35. I lost a couple jobs because of that. But after that I took a little while to smarten up. You just got to work on the negative somehow, even if you ask for help. I used to never ask for help unless, oh, I'm not getting anywhere! Finally, I just took it like a man and said, "Hey, I need help." That's what I'm like when I go to treatment. I didn't go to treatment *once*. I went to treatment three or four times, until I got it. I got it, but I didn't use it like that, as planned. When I was Chief, I never drank for a while, there, because I was too busy for stuff like that. It seems like you have to be the social worker, you have to be the policeman, everything. That's why I went crazy.

To make things easier, too, in our community, we made sure we put a two-week orientation for all new teachers, the nurses and the RCMP. We had an orientation for the new people coming in, because they're new and it takes time for them to get acquainted to how our customs and culture are. They don't know why we do stuff. They don't know the nature of the potlatch. There's lot of hurdles that we try to clear up to make our lives a little bit more enjoyable. There are some rude teachers, and there are some rude RCMP people too. But we don't try to shun people away. We try to work with them. It's better to work with people from different factions of life. It doesn't matter where they're from. We recognize that they went through years of school just to get where they're at, and then they find themselves in a little community. Some of them become our good friends, too.

Depression sets in too after a while. Working as Chief is just overwhelming. In our ways, we don't believe in being governed by time, like governments run from 8:30 to 4:30, and at 4:30, that's it, lights off. We try to make sure that our administration is cultural, and what can we do, just tell culture that we have no time? Sometimes things take a lot longer than 8:30 to 4:30, your potlatches, your funerals. The things you do, your hunting and fishing, there's no time for that.

My inspiration was to follow the ways of the old chiefs. In their day, they used to hitchhike to town. They used to stay with other people wherever that meeting was, and they would sleep right beside the stove and the fire. And I said, you know, if those guys can forsake that much! But when you're away three weeks of the month from home, when you're travelling for court cases and different meetings and different functions you have to go to, it just adds up. You're just alone in a hotel room night after night, and at the same time you've got a family there to think about. Then, for me, it didn't work out. So I decided at that time, "I think the Deputy Chief should travel now. And if the Deputy Chief can't go, then the council should go." Even though it was too late for my family. When my daughter first was born, I said, "I'm going to make sure she has a better life than I did." Even though I broke up with her mom, I left her with three kids, I gave her the house and the property and everything. I make payments to them to this day.

Nowadays, I'm just taking on contracts and just staying around home. I sit on two or three boards now to keep me awake, I guess. I sit on a renewable resources board, a finance trust board, and another finance board for investing. It's not as hectic as before. Some of these meetings are just structured to go every three months, so I have a lot of leeway in between. Sometimes I get a contract or two and that's a good thing too. It's been a struggle the past three years now, but I'm slowly adjusting to the notion that I'm not in the office anymore. I still get up at five or six o'clock every day. I'm doing my own thing. Looking back, I think, gee, I want to be a truck driver yet. The road's still a little bit bumpy, not because of alcohol and drugs, there's just other things in my life. How to pay the bills? Which cost are you going to put as priority? This truck's going to break down, but fall time's coming and I got to get wood! That's what I'm up against right now.

I've been learning to pray. I started doing that later in life. I pray to the Great Spirit. I'm still working on learning the language, too. It's a struggle, but I'm working on it. I'm working on being more communicative, whether it's listening to the Elders, or taking the time to talk to people. It's a good thing to see when you knock on the door to go see Elders because usually they're alone all the time, and that's not a good thing sometimes. So I try to get out and be more communicative to everyone. It doesn't matter if they're drinking. They're still people. They're our people. It's a good thing to say hi and to wave. Sometimes I get bored and I drive around town and I end up waving at everyone all day. I run into the students and some of them are drunk, and they say, "I hope you're not mad at me." And then I say, "That's what I used to be like. I used to be like you." "No need to worry," I says. There's a lot of role models. Even the common drunk is a role model because he's got a lot of experience. He's better than you in some stuff. I never put myself above my people. That's why I took a really long look at what my grandma said. She said, "You're never to put people down. Even if they get mad at you."

I'm still a regular person. I never did call myself perfect anyway. There's no such thing. I'm trying to learn not to judge people, because there's only one judge. I learned to be patient. Because if you don't got patience, you're not going to make time for anything. We have to be more respectful of people, and their beliefs, and their opinions. We're all different here, but we all do more or less the same thing, just in a different way. Honesty. Respect. I'm learning that slowly but surely. Even though I'm not Chief anymore still lots of people phone me up and they forget and say, "I need wood" and "I need this." I haven't been Chief for three years now! They're just too used to it. But, I find that I gain their respect through work and through going to their homes. Even if you don't get along with them, when there's a death in the family, you've got to come together, all the time. Some people find that hard to do but I try to explain when I'm MC-ing at funerals that you've got to be that chain and you've got to be that link. All of you, come together, through hard times and good times. And I tell the younger chiefs, working together is better than going at it alone, as chiefs.

I learned how to have priorities. But sometimes priorities fall out of the way too. There was lots of peer pressure in those days, and there's still lots of peer pressure, but I usually go right past it because I know what it's like. I tell them, "I've been to court. I've been through that stuff already and I know what it's like!" I say, "Smell that air! Come on over here and smell the air." They say,

"How come?" I say, "You can smell that every day when you're not in jail. You remember that," I tell them.

My grandma used to tell me, "When they play hockey against you, they try to stop you, not the puck." She said, "When you go out, they're going to try to stop you, too, another way." She said, "All you got to do is go around, and talk around it." She said, "Just be patient." My life has had ups and downs, negatives and positives. I hope something from my life can help others gain from my experiences. You've still got to have the negative and the positives! You know, that's how a battery works, that's how it works with you.

Sam Tutanuak (Inuit), Musician, Rankin Inlet

I'm Sam Tutanuak, from Rankin Inlet. What I'm most proud of right now is that I'm a dad to three beautiful children, three beautiful young adults. I'm a grandfather to two and I'm very proud of that. I know my faults, with my children. I know where I went wrong or didn't go the right path. I don't want to do that with my grandchildren. I said to my son, "I know where I went wrong with raising you. I know where I can make my improvements on my granddaughter." I know what I did right with my children, and I'm going to keep going *that* way with my grandchildren. And I know where I needed improvement raising my kids.

My mom always told me, "Learn that white man's language so you can go far." I tried that. I went as far as Grade 11. When I was 15, I went to Iqaluit²² first semester and when I was going back for second semester, my father told me not to go back, so I could help him around the house. Three weeks later, he passed away. Much later, I went to the adult education centre. I remember looking right into the instructor's eyes and I said, "I want to get some more education." And the instructor goes, "Well, we don't have any more spots for students to be paid." I said, "That's strange. I don't want to get paid. I just want to learn. I just want to get an education." He thought that was kind of weird for someone to want education if he wasn't getting paid for it, when all the other students were getting some kind of payment for going to school.

What really drove me to want an education was opening the cupboards at home and seeing empty cupboards. I wanted to make sure that, if I want to become something, or if I want to *live*, I have to find a job to have food, to keep food in the cupboards. My sister was my role model. She became a teacher. She has a bachelor of education. I thought, if she can become a teacher, I can become one too.

When I was learning, and taking workshops, I was sometimes the only native guy around the table with a whole bunch of white people. I've been in that situation. What I had to do, to gain the respect, unfortunately, was to *prove* that there's actually something in between these two ears that can function as well as a white person's brain. That was very challenging for me. There was one scenario where we had to write a report. We were put into groups of four. These three white guys from Alberta, all looked at me, like I wasn't as good, like I was just a piece of crap. I said, "Okay, I'll start writing my own report." One of them looks around and says, "Oh, geez, look at what you're doing!" "Read your report!" So I read it. Out loud. There were twenty of us and I had the most accurate report. And then these people starting sucking up to me because I actually know how to think. What do you do with that? How do you deal with that? It's very *frustrating* to be labeled!

I went through a lot, but now I'm receiving training to help myself so I can help my fellow men in my own language. I had to look deep within myself. I had to ask myself, "What has happened to me as a child? Am I going to let it ruin my life or am I going to gain for it?" I always thought, "Nobody

²² Iqaluit is now the capital of Nunavut, approximately 1,000 kilometres from Rankin Inlet, accessible only by plane.

can hurt me!" I was a bully in school. I always was in the principal's office every day. I thought, "Nobody can hurt me!"

I started smoking dope when I was 12 years old. I went through a 28 day sobriety program. And I was sober for two and a half years. Within that two and a half years, I volunteered myself to go to the schools, and talk to the Grade 9, 10, 11, 12 students about addictions. I started by asking "Who here wants to become a mechanic when they grow up?" and "Who wants to be a nurse when you grow up?" Then I asked, "Who here wants to become a drug addict when you grow up?" Not a hand went up! So, I said, "Please, keep it that way! There's really just tons of people who want to grab you, and take hold of you and have you part of their issues." I was talking to a class of 27, and one student went home to his mom and said, "There's a guy in town, he's been stoned 27 years, he's actually sober now! I hope you can be like that, mom. I hope you get to be like him some day, mom." Just that impact, was totally humbling, that I touched the students' heart level. And that works. Even if it's just one person, what we do counts. But then, the constant pressure of, "Hey, bud, you're still sober? Right on! Good for you!" got to me. A lot of them were saying that, and no support. That's when I just said, screw this. I went right back after two and a half years.

I couldn't be here without the support of my wife and my children. Even through my struggles, they were very supportive, and they still are. They believed in me, even when I couldn't believe in myself. My wife, 27 years I've been married to her. I made big mistakes, she still accepted me back! She's my role model. Even up to today, my wife says, "I see *change* in you. You're changing still."

When they started having men's meetings in Coral Harbour, my two older brothers were invited. In my family, all of us are adopted, so we've never really had a good connection. But after that weekend, the younger one called and started apologizing and crying and you could just hear the difference in his voice. And he said, "Just hold on a second, someone else wants to talk." The older one comes on, "*Nukalaak*," that's what he used to call me, "little brother," he said, "I'm really truly sorry for whatever I did to you in the past." And to hear the change in their voices, to hear them say, "I'm truly sorry," that impacted me so much that I started crying. When I hung up the phone, I said to my wife, "I don't know what the hell these two guys had, but I wouldn't mind having it!"

A couple years later, we had a men's meeting in Rankin Inlet, and that's when I experienced my sharing and listening to the people that were around. It's mind-boggling. Here you think you're all alone, have bills, family problems, whatever, all building up inside of you, but here, the guy sitting across the room has the exact same issue. And we start feeding off each other, and we suddenly, somebody says, "We're the same." That's how it grows! It's just like wildfire. There's a flame within each man that wants to burst out so much, but they just don't know how, so they store it inside.

What a transformation! I was sitting in the corner. I was asked to speak. We were given a little ornament, and whoever had that ornament had the power to talk. Nobody said a word. It was just the person that was holding the ornament. When that ornament was given to me it was like, "Oh... I can talk." "I'm allowed to talk!" "And someone's going to listen!" And that day was the first time I committed to saying, "This happened to me as a child. And I truly hate that person who did this to

me as a child." The guy sitting over there came, and gave me the biggest hug. Wow! I now see that little mustard seed slowly growing. It's good to see. I learned to be me! To forgive. It's a hard thing to do. To accept to love myself. It's not bad saying "I did something good." It's OK to say, "I screwed up."

Me admitting this got me to a path where I've cut down tremendously on my drinking. I'm still smoking. But I'm communicating with my children now, whereas before I was just there. They would hear the odd "I love you," but it wasn't from my heart, it was from my head. Now I can say it from my heart! When we had that meeting, it transformed me. I'm running out of excuses for my addiction. And I say that to my wife! And I can actually say it to my wife without fear of, "Oh shit, there goes the money I was going to spend on it!" I can actually open up to her. I'm running out of excuses to go on the back porch. And she says, "You know what, it's *nice* to have you sitting here instead of being back there. It's nice to see you sober." I've experienced that transformation from pure anger to being content, all because of a thought to develop men's groups in the North.

Chapter 7 | Freedom to Engage with Learning and Work

While Indigenous men across the North are living in similarly challenging contexts, some have been more resilient than others, or more resilient at different points in their lives. While the barriers seem to start from the outside and then be internalized, the supportive factors seem to come from the inside, beginning with personal healing and transformation, which is then externalized through greater connection to family, community, culture and land, and greater freedom in living according to one's values and goals. While northern Indigenous men's stories of stepping back from schooling or employment frequently reflected a sense of operating in an inescapably oppressive context, their stories of engagement in learning work, broadly defined, and more generally of engaging and pursuing their desired life pathways reflect a sense of inner freedom.

Men, in the role model stories in the previous chapter, as well as in the interviews, talked about embracing their personal and cultural identities and histories, healing and forgiving, and in different ways overcoming the oppressive history and context they are part of. Connectedness to each other, to the land, and to spirituality, and strong support, even from a single source, were significant factors in their stories of engagement. Also contributing to well-being and engagement was the feeling that one's work, schooling, or other life activities were consistent with one's vision of oneself and one's life goals (i.e., were internally congruent). As the community-based researchers hypothesized early in the research project, engagement was directly linked to overall well-being.

Healing

In the parts of men's stories when they were engaged toward learning, work, and well-being, the men expressed a sense of freedom in who they are and freedom to set and pursue goals in line with their aspirations. For example, when 'Igaji' (Nunavut) was asked "What kept you in school?", he responded: "I wanted to be a better person. [...] I also wanted to complete what I started and learn more and reach my goals." For some men, the personal freedom was hard-earned. It came through deliberate emotional healing and overcoming addictions. Several participants explicitly said that what helped them to get back into learning or work was stopping drinking. 'Ferry worker' in Yukon described his path: "I did a lot of upgrading. I quit drinking alcohol. I did a lot of writing." 'Man 1' from Yukon, when asked "What factors affect how long you stay in a job?", replied:

You gotta like the job, for sure. ...You gotta make sure that you have...something good in your life, wellness. It's okay to drink on the weekend but you have to stop, you have to go to work Monday. [...] I had to go to treatment three or four times before it got into my head. If you go to treatment, you have to understand why there is a need for a counsellor, why there is need for treatment.

'Captain Planet' from NWT also described healing and overcoming addiction when asked, "So what helped you get back into work?":

I don't know, one day I just decided to quit. I quit drinking because I was getting just too sick. I had no meaning in life. I was just tired of that. I seek help and that's how I got sober. It took me time to rebuild my life and to rebuild my work history in order to have a good life. So that's what I did.

Addiction recovery and emotional healing go together. The men who were engaged toward learning, work, and well-being were looking within themselves and choosing to accept and love themselves. They were also admitting ways in which they had been hurt and had hurt others. Sam Tutanuak (Nunavut) reflected:

What advice would I give? ... To be you! Forgive. Hard thing to do. Accept to love yourself. It's not bad saying, "I did something good." It's okay to say, "I screwed up." Toughest thing I had to say. Two weeks ago, "I love myself." You can see I'm still having a hard time.

'Man 1' (Yukon) said:

If you learn from your mistakes, you don't want to do it again. [...] That was my fault so I had to own up to that stuff. If you don't own up to that stuff, you're going to keep doing it. And then it took me a long time to say, "Yes I did that, and I did that."

These men were acknowledging that they will not be perfect but they can do better in acting out their values. They were willing and motivated to change, and courageously doing something about it. As Noel Kaludjak (Nunavut) shared: "I did not want to put my children through what I was put through. But also, I did something about it. I quit my drinking and then I started going to men's groups. And men's healing circles." For all these men, healing from trauma and resulting behaviours is an ongoing journey, and one they see as an essential foundation for living well themselves, and for creating a healthier context for their children and grandchildren to live well in the future. This healing was an essential step in engaging positively in their desired work and learning, as well as in all areas of life.

Another aspect of freedom in one's vision of oneself was resilience to racist messages. NWT Elder Mike Nitsiza found resilience and pride in considering the strength of his ancestors who survived against amazing challenges in the northern environment,

But I know that one thing and I learned that from my great grandmother, my great grandparents, and all that. They had done so *tremendous work* to survive and put me here and that cannot be taken away from me. I know that. And I strongly believe that. And that's what got me here. And I'm very proud. And if every individual has that strength, and I know we all have that strength, and we all have that talents, and that skill. ...We need to honour that. ...We have all kinds of skills and talents that we need to *use*. ...It's not being recognized [but] we need to recognize that more often as we can.

'Strong Spruce' (Yukon) shared how, although he faced discriminatory messages at work, he was able to maintain a sense of pride in who he is:

[I was] also treated well [at work] but some of them were discriminative because of me being Native. They figured you were more inferior, but I saw it different at the time. They can go in the bush and get lost but I wouldn't, so to speak.

Being able to stand up for oneself and overcome racism, unfairness, and bullying, in 'lgaji's (Nunavut) mind, was essential to succeeding at work and school: "Not just being compliant with everything. I have seen many times, people being put down and abused but not being affected by it and overcoming it. Not taking vengeance and prevailing."

In the men's stories, personal resilience is something men do for themselves, despite the context. However, healing also happens through being with other Indigenous men, sharing stories, and realizing one's normalness'. Men were greatly helped on the path to feeling good about themselves by seeing themselves positively reflected in others' eyes: being respected, trusted, affirmed, treated kindly, and feeling loved. As Noel Kaludjak (Nunavut) summarized: "It all comes down to respect. I think that's one of the biggest things with our youth, and older people too, is respect. Regardless of what it is. Respect." It also helped to have Indigenous leaders, teachers, and counsellors who understood them and recognized the strengths in Indigenous men and communities, and to have Indigenous male role models who reflect similar values, language, culture, and life experiences, while showing a range of positive possibilities for Indigenous men's lives.

These results show the importance of healing and personal wellness as a foundation for engaging in learning and work, for the current generations and generations to come. Recommendations based on these results include recognizing wellness as a foundation to education and labour force engagement, and enhancing counselling and wellness options in schools and workplaces, and in communities in general.

Support

Interpersonal Support

Without a doubt, interpersonal support is one of the strongest factors in Indigenous men's empowerment. It made a huge difference to men's lives when they knew who they could rely on for support, whether a parent, grandparent, sibling, teacher, Elder, counsellor, co-worker, boss, coach, or support personnel in school, at work, or in the community. It helped to feel secure that basic needs were taken care of, to have someone who encouraged them. Men's stories reflect that their involvement in school and work is mediated and sustained by connection. At the times in a man's life when he was most engaged in learning and work, there was a sense of not doing it on his own, but that he was doing it because others believed in him and were alongside him.

The role models' stories show how a single supportive person could make the difference. Often parents were the source of support, but even if parents were unavailable to be supportive, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and other community members taught the child and supported the child. Eddie Skookum's story, told in the previous chapter, showed how his grandmother had an

incredible impact on him, teaching him skills and values, including how to get along and persevere, even with little or negative input from his parents. For Steven and Lawrence, it was a grandfather who encouraged them to go to school, stand up for themselves, and persevere. For Roy, Noel and Joe, it was their father who taught and instilled a work ethic, skills, and practices, even if the role modelling was not perfect. Roy also credits his mother, and Noel his brothers, for encouraging them in different directions. For Sam and Joe, the support came from their wives and daughters. The testimony that Becky Tootoo (2015) collected about young men who were considered successful in Baker Lake, Nunavut, confirmed that although these men were raised by single mothers, male role models had stepped in to teach these boys what they needed to know, and to support them.

Some participants felt that in their younger days, or during their time in smaller communities, they had benefited from a sense of openness in the community that allowed anyone in the community to encourage or discipline any of the children. 'Fisherman' in Labrador shared:

[Support came from] mostly your parents. Brothers and uncles and all that, we were all mostly related. An uncle lived up here and over right there. You look up to them all and they teach you the right things and from the wrong things. You know, if you were going to do something, "No, don't go out there," and, "Don't put that there." Because then, you know, if somebody seen you were going somewhere and you weren't supposed to be over there, anyone could bawl you in and you had to do that now. You try to do that now, you being a First Nations, you could be put in jail until the next day. But then, anyone could bawl at any of the kids then.

The men said they appreciated and benefited from words of encouragement, as well as actions, role modelling, and discipline. This support helped them to stay in school, apply for and stay in jobs, and pursue well-being in a number of ways. 'Captain Planet' (NWT) said: "[My parents] always encouraged me to do better, like, get a job or just put the bottle away. Find a job and do something for yourself. They always say that. All my family said that to me." Across the North, men's stories reflected that their parents' emphasis on the value of school rubbed off on them. 'Igaji' (Nunavut) said:

[My parents] wanted me to do well in school because they said it would be hard if I did not complete my schooling. They said education was important. [I stayed in school because] my father wanted me to keep going. I also wanted to complete what I started and learn more and reach my goals.

'Family Guy' from NWT explained how his parents, even though they never attended school themselves, were able to encourage him to stay in school for as long as he did:

But I have family member that do talk to me about it, say that education's important. So yeah, I did hear that, yeah. [...] Both my mom and dad didn't attend school but ... they talk to me, and also friends, relatives, cousins said education's very important. So that's the reason

why I went back to school, to Smith. [...] Support could be conversation, "It's going to be hard but if you finish, if you continue what you're doing you'll live great and you'll live fine."

Even though he didn't finish his Grade 12, and would still like to go back and learn more, 'Family Guy' now encourages his children: "Well, you know I'm talking to my kids and I'm always telling them today it's education, it's a ticket, if you want to live to live in decent, as they get older. Education's very important, so I'm behind them, my childrens and their learning."

Simple words of support came across as of top importance in many men's stories. In some men's stories, encouragement was paired with action and discipline. 'Mr. Diamond' from NWT's story reflects the strength of verbal encouragement paired with instilling discipline, work ethic, and values: "Learning from my parents, and I mean like, my parents disciplined me, right? Always told me to stay in school and you'll have a better life. Chores around the house for helping my grandparents." 'Mr. Hockey' in Yukon described his parents' help at every level:

[B]oth parents really pressured me to do good in school. [...] Even when I was 19 and still going to school, I went out after hockey to have a beer with the team and my Dad came down and got me out of the bar, "You have school tomorrow." [When I was in college, away from home] my Mom and Dad helped me out a lot...financially...There was a time when I ran out of fuel, so they helped me out with that. My Mom would come down every now and then, and just buy us groceries and help us out...

While not all families are in a position to support their children financially through school, these results are a reminder to each person who is involved with northern Indigenous men's learning and work, whether as family and friend or as professionals, of the power of encouraging words.

Men's stories also reflected that sometimes people supported them without saying a word, just by modelling that particular life paths were possible and desirable. Noel Kaludjak (Nunavut) reflected back what he heard in the role models' stories:

So you saw her do that, so that encouraged you, like "I can do this too." Yeah, there's people that encourage us even if we think they might not be, not have an effect on our drive to finish school, but they are, in a way. Just by living the way they are. Without even telling us anything, just by seeing them do that. They could be our role model without them knowing...role models make role models.

The men benefited from positive examples around them, and seeing what was possible, in addition to spoken encouragement. In a context where men are struggling with feelings of futility, it is helpful to profile role models who find elements of success in their lives, to continue to inspire men to see possible outcomes, and pathways to those outcomes.

When men were asked in the closed questionnaire "Thinking of your overall time in school (as a child, teenager, or adult), what helped you most to stay in school? (check all that apply)", their responses showed that the most important factor was believing that school is necessary (64%; 106/166) (Figure 7). This belief may come from observation, but the stories suggest it was often

instilled by someone repeating to them that school is essential. The second most important factor was having someone who encouraged them to stay in school (51%; 84/166).

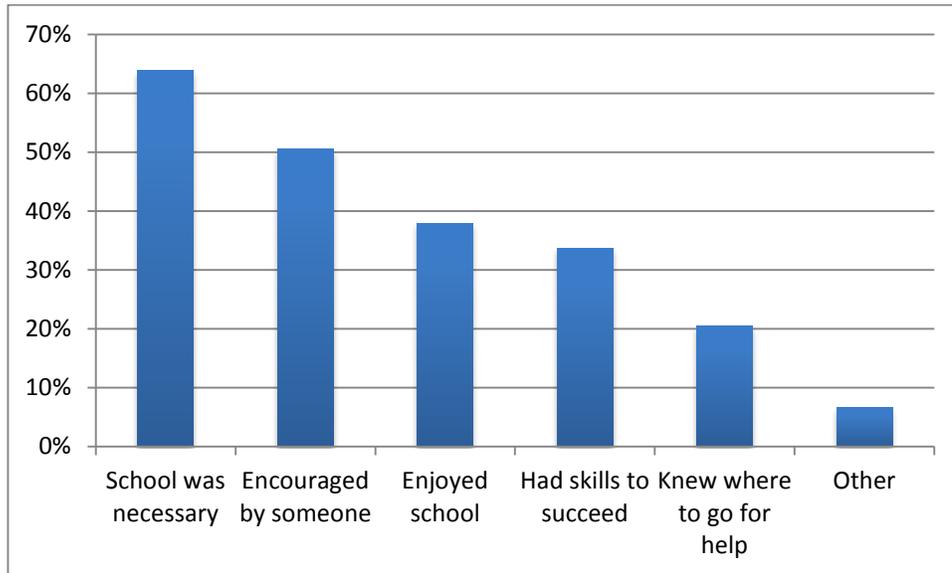


Figure 7 Factors that Helped Stay in School

While some men are benefiting from support, these results, combined with stories of disengagement due to lack of support in Chapter 5, suggest that many men are missing out on one of the most important supportive factors. The results remind everyone of the importance of encouragement and support, and of using their voices with whoever they are in contact with to encourage them to keep trying and to go back and try again. The reported importance of grandparents, as well as of parents (fathers in particular) also suggests a need for policy and programming to be reaching out to these people in support roles, as well as to the men themselves. In these times of rapid cultural change, grandparents and parents may struggle to support their children in schooling and employment that they never experienced, or experienced negatively.

Understanding how much it helps young men when someone is able to support them, policy and program developers should consider programs and policies that equip these supporters, including, for example, communications from the school in forms that are most accessible to grandparents, including in the Indigenous language, and through oral channels such as community radio. Communication campaigns are one way of reaching out to parents and grandparents, through campaigns that show how schooling has changed; inform parents and grandparents about what is going on in the schools; and invite community involvement and input. Another strategy to equip and support parents is to ensure schools are more for community members, including through critical pedagogy and greater inclusion of Indigenous staff, Indigenous knowledge, and the Indigenous language (Barnhardt, 2008; Battiste, 2013; Lewthwaite et al., 2013).

Even if teachers have been criticized for alienating learners from school, starting with residential schools and through to today, the men had stories, even as early as residential schools, of a single

teacher making the difference for them. Past Chief and Elder Eddie Skookum (Yukon), for example, spoke of a music teacher who not only inspired him in music, but modelled and taught him the value of patience. Elder Mike Nitsiza (NWT) spoke of one teacher at his residential school who spoke T'licheo and was able to reach out to the children, teach them, and make them feel more at home. Indigenous teachers from the community were often felt to be most supportive, because they knew and understood the students, and could communicate most effectively with them in their own language. As 'Igaji' in Nunavut said:

[School] was fine. I enjoyed it. We were well supported. There were Inuit there helping. It was not all southerners teaching. It was very noticeable having Inuit there to help and guide us and communicate with us. [...] When you are starting high school it can be confusing and I would get frustrated and mad. But I had good help and did well in school.

All teachers, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous, who made an effort to reach out to students and encourage and support them made a difference in their schooling. The importance of supportive teachers carried on right through post-secondary. 'Bob Blais' in Yukon explained:

I don't know, my education changed quite a bit when I went to the college here because it was more stable and easy to understand. I had a really great teacher who saw where I was and helped me get to where I wanted to be.

Feeling valued by a college teacher who cared about him and paid attention to his needs and direction helped 'Bob Blais' to change track and stay engaged with school. 'MA' in Yukon also observed that the connection between college instructors and the students made all the difference in whether or not they attended: "And there's [an instructor] at the college. Guys like him, he works wonders with the young guys. They won't go if [this instructor] isn't there, they're not interested in going to school."

The impact of encouraging teachers points to another area for creating a broader context of support for northern Indigenous men's experiences in school. On the one hand, most teachers in northern Indigenous communities are still short- to medium-term staff from outside the community. There is a pressing need to continue to invest in northern Teacher Education Programs to educate and certify community members to teach at all levels in the schools, creating a more critical mass of teachers from the community who understand the students and can speak to them in their language(s) (Fleming & Chasteauneuf, 2012; St. Denis, 2010; Tompkins, McAuley, & Walton, 2009). At the same time, enhancing cultural orientations for non-Indigenous teachers can also equip teachers who are not from the community to better understand and more effectively and caringly respond to and support students (Arnaquq, 2015; Berger, 2007; Council of Yukon First Nations [CYFN], 2011).

Institutional Support

In addition to interpersonal support from key people, men's stories also reflected how much they benefited from specific institutional support structures in place. For example, one of the barriers men experienced was related to the paperwork that is required to enter learning programs, apply for jobs, and apply for funding. 'Arnold' in Labrador explained how the Employment Assistance Services (EAS) Offices helped men to overcome these specific barriers and thus supported their shift from unemployment into the labour force:

We has people there in the community, like...we usually goes to them, right? Like, do our resumes and she packages them off for us and all this stuff. Like, if we needs any help...we just goes to she, and, she more or less points us in the right direction or helps them do our forms, or get, if we need certain forms, she usually gets them for us.

Another barrier men mentioned was even finding and reading through materials to discover which opportunities were available, and then having the confidence to apply. An employee at the EAS Office explained how the offices linked men with specific opportunities suited to them that they might not have found on their own:

Cause I've been working with them for so long, and I think, some men needs that little bit of support, and a little bit of push. 'Cause like I know, there's a couple that I'm working with. I call them up and tell them, "They're offering this course, it's paid for. Would you be interested? Is it something that you would like to do?" And "Oh my goodness yes," you know, they were really enthused about it and was interested in applying. ...I guess they're familiar with you, and they work with you to do these things, right? ...You know, the people who have gone on and been successful and have written us back, or e-mailed us back and thanked us for, you know the help we gave them to get on their feet and get started...is unreal. ...But it is a big loss to our area to lose our EAS offices. ...And also...the adult basic education, that was cut three years ago.

At the time of this research, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador was closing all of the EAS offices in southern Labrador. The NunatuKavut government (2013) released a press release emphasizing the important support these offices had been, and would continue to be, for linking their people up with jobs coming to the communities:

For people to avail of opportunities which exist in Labrador, we need these services to create a level playing field so we stand some chance at getting jobs... The Province is gutting one of the most valued services leaving clients and communities with nowhere to go for help. ...The Provincial Government insists that we will have jobs yet they are cutting the vital supports needed to ensure local people can access those jobs.

The absence of these support structures, and the cutting of support structures that Indigenous men find so helpful for linking to learning and work opportunities, is another example of the covert oppression northern Indigenous men are facing. Men feel they often do not know where to go for support. For example, Figure 7 shows that only 20% (34/166) felt that knowing where to find help was a factor supporting their perseverance in school, and feel doubly discouraged when

governments cut the few programs that *can* and *are* helping overcome barriers. Joseph Flower's (2012) assessment of support that the Kativik School Board (KSB) provides to post-secondary students from Nunavik concluded that counseling services were a top priority, and recommended strengthening this aspect of their support.

Affirmation of One's Aptitudes and Capability

Related to the idea of interpersonal and institutional support, men's stories show they found success through specific invitations or directions: being invited to apply for a job, run in an election, or share their story; and being told to get help, go to school, or keep applying and trying again. 'Bob Blais' (Yukon) shared his experience: "Then this job came up...[My co-worker] downstairs said, 'You should apply for it. Just talk a lot. You know all the information, I know you do.' ...I just said, 'Sure, I'll apply.' I got the job...I just couldn't believe it." In the role models' stories, and in published biographies of northern Indigenous leaders (e.g., Arvaluk, 2008; Quassa, 2008), the importance of someone else recognizing the man's potential and aptitudes and pushing him in a particular direction is repeated as a success factor. Even when it came to accessing self-help and recovery programs, men like Eddie Skookum (Yukon) said they resisted when they were told or forced to access such programs, but ultimately were thankful for what they learned there:

And there was times when I was forced to go through my work and I didn't like that. [...] The first two times I was forced to go, I clued in. Then when I *wanted* to go, I clued in more. Probably more conscious of what steps I could do.

Men who were affirmed in their jobs also felt supported to keep going. Lawrence Nitsiza (NWT) reflected back on what motivated his continued efforts in recreation: "When I was working there, it was really, they'd be looking at me like I'm a *really* big guy. You know, the little kids. Parents too. They just really enjoyed me working with kids." This affirmation of Indigenous men as capable and useful sustains their engagement in learning and work, and contrasts sharply with underlying messages men are being sent that they are incapable and useless that were seen in Chapter 5. Again, these results point to the value of understanding men's aspirations on their own terms, and of acknowledging the specific resources Indigenous men bring to learning and work, in order to make schools and workplaces more welcoming and affirming places for Indigenous men. Furthermore, the results support the continued practice of orientation for non-Indigenous workers coming into the communities, so that these individuals can overcome unsupportive attitudes and be effective resource people for fellow Indigenous workers.

Connectedness

Family and Community

In men's stories, connectedness to family, community, culture, and the land was both a cause and an effect of well-being and supported engagement in learning and work. Many men explained that family responsibilities motivated them to persevere in learning and work. 'Bob Blais' (Yukon) shared:

I didn't really get too serious about it until about two years ago, my Dad died. I just had to be there more for my Mom and get a stable job for my kid. Time to grow up, so work became very important.

Love for one's children motivated some men to return to learning paths, to be able to help their children with homework. In a broader sense, love for one's children motivated men to pursue personal and community healing in order to give their children a more stable and healthy outlook on life. Eddie Skookum (Yukon) said: "When my daughter first was born, I said, I'm going to make sure she has a better life than I did." Mike Nitsiza (NWT) echoed:

I wanted to maintain that and I wanted to see a little child grow up and make sure that they don't go through what I went through. I want to guide them and make sure they have a smile on their face. That's what I really want.

The motivation to do better so that other's lives could be better was very strong. This motivation points to the value of policies and programming that support and equip men as fathers and as caregivers in their communities (e.g., NCCAH, 2011).

Spending time with family, Elders, and other community members, communicating, and making an effort to get along, helped men to strengthen the relationships that they rely on. In Eddie Skookum's (Yukon) life story, he emphasized making sure he talked to people, waved to people, and kept an ongoing connection with a range of people in the community, from youth to Elders. Mike Nitsiza (NWT) felt good taking time for others, feeling confident that others would have time for him when he needed them:

They see me on the street and they come and grab me. And they want to talk to me. I say, "I have the time for him." I spend my time as much as I can with the individual. I'm trying to help, any human being as much as I can. Because some day I'm going to need their help. And I need their prayers and I need their strength and I also need their prayers so that I can go on.

Noel Kaludjak (Nunavut) and Sam Tutanuak's (Nunavut) stories show that they found healing through sharing stories and being with other men who had walked similar paths. Sam, for example, shared how having his experiences normalized— by hearing them echoed in the stories of other men— took him out of his isolation and joined him to a community of men:

Here you think you're all alone, have bills, family problems, whatever, all building up inside of you, but here, the guy sitting across the room has the exact same issue. And we start feeding off each other, and we suddenly, somebody says, "we're the same." That's how it grows! It's just, like wildfire. What they had here [in Yellowknife], in the forest fire here...the flames that were here over the summer, that's how I see it... There's a flame within each man that wants to burst out so much, but they just don't know how.

Land, Culture and Traditions

Men's stories also reflected connectedness to the land as a contributing factor to their well-being. Indigenous people speak about a relationship to the natural environment, and practicing this relationship helped the men to feel well, to reaffirm and act according to their values. Mike Nitsiza, NWT, observed from his work as a counsellor that when he saw people heading out on the land, it was a sign to him that they were doing well and were taking care of themselves: "That really helps. And I see that. And every time I see people go on the wilderness and on the land, even for a skidoo ride, or just going out for picnic or something with one another, I know they're in good health. And I know they are looking after themselves." Being out on the land or sea or ice frees men from some of the distractions and contradictions of life in the communities and gives them a chance to know themselves again. As Mike Nitsiza further explained: "We all need that, each and every one of us. We need to be with ourselves out there, and discover who we are, and what we're here for. And there's so many distractions that they can distract our life, but when you're on the land, you're back to our normal self."

The connection to the land was described as magical and spiritual in the ways it contributed to men's well-being. Noel Kaludjak, Nunavut, reflected: "Something about the land, eh? It's magical." Bob Patles, Yukon, responded: "Yeah. It's who we are." Mike Nitsiza (NWT) added:

To be a good model you must connect with our Creator. ...You must connect with nature, which is on the land. ...If you have problems, there's many helps there. ...If you get in nature, your whole things, your physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental, those have to be equal. [...] It cannot be taken away. It's within us. ...We're the Aboriginals of the land."

Bob Patles further echoed the spiritual connection: "And when you're on the land...the spiritual connection that Native people have on the land, is so *strong*, it just has to work. ...I see the spiritual connection that grows in individuals from the land so strongly. ...For me, that's what works. Being on the land."

It was interesting to note in men's stories that getting out on the land was also a way in which they connected with their family members and friends with whom they rarely spent time even when living in the same small community. Mike Nitsiza shared this story of bringing his brothers out on a land camp:

Sometimes we pull away from [the land], or you go in communities, and...there's all kinds of things that you do not wish. There's so many things. You know, and I tell you this because I'm taking people on the land. [My brothers and relatives] I take them, and I took them on the land for a while. Five days. Fifth day I went to them and they were all busy. I think they decided to set nets, so they untangled, helped each other. Three of them untangled the fish nets. They were talking and then I went there. My oldest brother talked to me. "Why you want to go back early?" I said, "It's up to you." He said, "We don't want to go back. We've bonded with each other. We're happy with each other here. We feel comfortable. We like being here." I said, "Okay. Well, stay as long as you want." "We don't want to go back right

away to the community. The only time when we see each other and be with each other there is when there's Bingo." You know? And I kind of thought, that's the truth.

Mike Nitsiza further explained that he responds to men in crisis by asking the employer to give the man time off, and then allowing him to use a community cabin and community skidoo, if needed, to take a break on the land:

Like a dad come from work, from [the mine]. And for two weeks, he's not part of the family. There's emptiness there. And then he comes home and all of a sudden, there's family crisis. [...] And they will come to me... "My relationship is falling apart. She's going to leave me pretty soon ...I can't take it anymore." I said, "Hold it. Hold it....Go on the land. Go with your whole family." He said, "I can't. I have to go back to work." I said, "I will talk to your boss and all that." So I go call the bosses, and the boss give him a week off, and then this person would go on the land...with the family and all that. And when they come back after three days on the wilderness, man, they're a different person! Different person. They're happy. They enjoyed. They're back to their normal self. That's all they need.

Connectedness with the land contributed to healing and feeling well, and it is also a place where people connect with each other. These results point to the significance of organized and impromptu land-based activities as more than just culture, but activities that are fundamental to men's well-being, and thus beneficial to men's engagement with learning and work.

Sports and traditional activities were another way men talked about belonging. 'Mr. Hockey' in Yukon shared: "I think that's something that made a big impact on young men in Dawson. The boxing and sports, that people got really into that." Mike Nitsiza, NWT, observed: "When there's events...like hand games...drum dance...anything that recreations coordinates, in the community, that helps the young people. Because they need to burn some of their energies." Roy Byrne, from Labrador, shared:

When I moved to Goose Bay, a (bigger) community, I got involved in a lot of sports, quite often. So I travelled a lot with that. I did pretty much everything: volleyball was a big thing, judo, table tennis, soccer, I did a lot of travelling through sports in my younger years. I even represented Newfoundland at the '99 and 2001 winter games.

Men found that sports and traditional games in town gave them an outlet for their energy and brought them together with positive role models. Being able to connect beyond their community, for example, through travelling and meeting new people, was helpful. Men's descriptions of their involvement in sports also showed that it taught them that perseverance, humility, and hard work pay off, which are values that also helped them in school and work.

Similarly, northern Indigenous men learned foundational values and skills for their lives through connection with culture, land, and community, including communication, work ethic, humility, self-control, openness, forgiveness, patience, and perseverance. Sheila Watt-Cloutier (2011) affirmed this when she wrote, "[O]ur hunting culture is not just about pursuing animals; hunting is a way to develop character, patience, and courage" (p. 160). It is also within these connections to each other and to the land that men see how they are valued, useful, and desired in the community. Results show the

importance of fostering opportunities for men to connect with each other, for example, through men's groups and men's gatherings, and to connect to the land to foster healing.

Congruence

When men felt free in themselves, and when they felt a sense of choice (in contrast to the futility of the double bind), they were better able to feel satisfied, despite less than ideal circumstances or outcomes. A final factor that supported men's positive and sustained involvement in learning and work was being able to connect their vision of themselves to what they were doing in school or in their jobs. When men were asked in the closed questionnaire which factors helped them to stay in a job (and they could choose as many options as they wished; options were based on analysis of earlier interviews), the most common response was "I enjoyed my work" (67%; 111/166) (Figure 8). The next most common response was "I have (had) good skills for my work" (58%; 96/166). These results suggest that feeling that one is a fit to one's work, both because it is enjoyable and they feel competent in it, contributes to men's success and job retention.

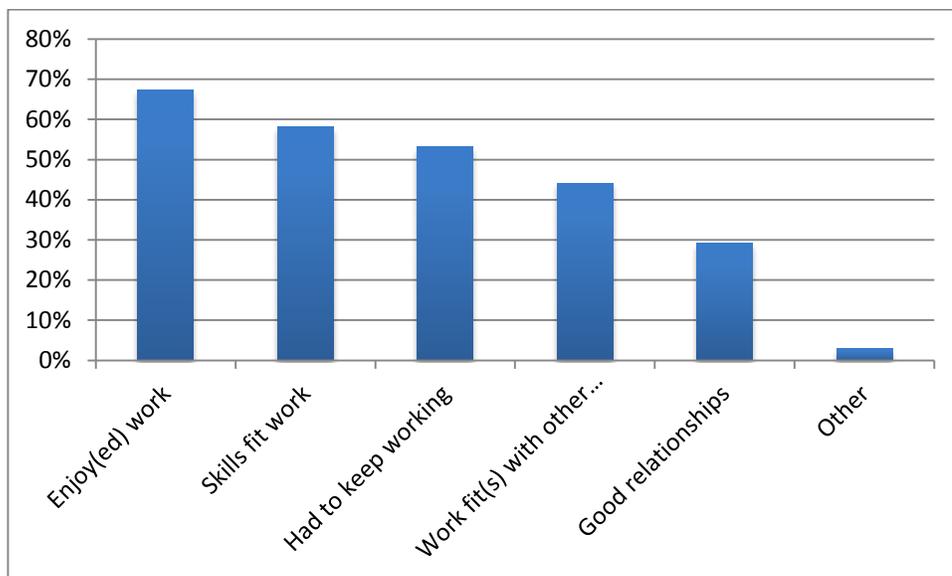


Figure 8 Factors that Helped Men Stay in Job

Men who had a positive vision of themselves seemed to feel more freedom in choosing roles and living in ways that align with their values, and better able to reconcile their vision of themselves to what they were doing in school and at work. For example, Lawrence Nitsiza (NWT) shared that he was brought up to be a hunter and trapper, as well as to succeed at school, but that ultimately he chose to focus on schooling:

[My grandfather] wanted me to learn traditional skills and bush. I did that, yeah, but, you know, I'm not a really good hunter or trapper. If I *have* to do that, if I'm going to live like that, all my life, then I don't need education. But if I want to put that on the side, I've got to go school. So I

went. It was my goal. [...] You know, but, it was *hard* but I went there. It was too *far* for me, to go to Inuvik, to live there for two years. But I did it! I was proud of myself after too. I was proud.

In another part of the workshop, Lawrence said he was surprised that he had not followed more in his grandfather's footsteps as a hunter, but he also explained how he goes out and connects with the land and his First Nation's traditions in other ways. He expressed pride in himself for what he has achieved, without putting himself down for not also fulfilling the societal expectation of being a hunter.

While most northern Indigenous men face the same challenge of conflicting expectations and goals, and limited resources to reach them, some men seemed more content, feeling that what they are doing is good enough, or a good choice, within competing and limited accessible options. Achieving this internal congruence helped them to step out of the potentially oppressive feeling of the double bind. For example, many of the participants in Labrador communicated stories where they saw that they were not going to have everything they might have aspired to, but were content with what they had. 'Chubbs' explained:

Fishing sometimes was good. When everything was going good. But a lot of times things started going, it wasn't so good. But that's probably like working, no matter what you're working at, right? [...] But then one of these days that'll turn around, everything will smoothen out, she'll start going good again and everything'll fall in place. [...] But I guess that's a part of life when you're going through, when you're a fisherman. ...Say we were happy about it anyway. ...We made some kind of a living. We didn't starve. We never had no money, but we didn't starve. We pulled through on it. ...I got enough, I think I can get by on it somehow. I can get by on it, I can get around if I wanted to go somewhere, and I can do things if I want to do things.

He was able to choose to be a fisherman, and stay in his community, and accepted the associated risk of an uncertain resource. Having a sense of choice was important for the men in feeling content with their choices. 'Chubbs' also told the story of when the Government intended to relocate his community (which has been traumatic for Indigenous communities), but he and other community members refused:

[We said] you can give us something if you want to and if you don't want to, you don't have to give us nothing. We're not leaving anyway. So, all the older people...said, "No we're not leaving." So they dug in their heels. ..."Whether we starves or whether we lives or what have you. You can give us something if you want to and if you don't want to give us anything you can go to hell." So anyway, they stayed here. And they all made their living and they all had families and raised them up. They might not have had the best of everything. And they might not have had everything. But they survived. Nobody didn't starve. They all pulled through, and all the younger generation all growed up and got a good education. And like I said, when they got their education, they all left. Once they got their education they moved out.

His story reflects different choices among the generations, the first to stay, and the second to leave, but the overall tone of his interview suggests people did what they had to do, and felt satisfied in their lives having had the freedom to make and live with their own choices.

Contextual factors help men to achieve this sense of their internal and external lives lining up, including schooling, testing, and work environments that are culturally and linguistically relevant and treat men's

range of skills and experiences (bilingualism, traditional knowledge, etc.) as assets. 'Mr. Hockey' in Yukon, working in his dream job, felt good in his work as it brought together his knowledge gained in school with his traditional knowledge and knowledge of his people's land claims: "Definitely, my schooling...helped me get this position. And I basically studied the fish and wildlife section of the final agreement and then just basic knowledge of being on the land helped too."

Specific schooling and work options, including college versus grade school, land-based versus office work, and land-based versus classroom based learning were experienced as more fitting to men's goals, and thus more fulfilling. For example, 'Inuk' in Nunavut explained that having a range of learning experiences contributed to his success in school: "By learning not just in the classroom. Learning by experiencing different things and in different environments. Learning about the community, nature and be given opportunities."

Opportunities for growth in school and work, and feeling one was being treated fairly, also helped. Despite the emphasis and value on togetherness, many men aspired to, or found success in, self-directed work and learning (teaching oneself, entrepreneurship, solitary work such as trucking), which may be another way in which some men escape feelings of oppression at school and work. Overall, men who experienced less conflict between their visions of themselves and the practices and values at school and work were more motivated, enjoyed school and work more, experienced school and work as more meaningful, and were thus more resilient as evidenced by their ability to persevere.

Availability of Resources

It goes without saying that greater access to resources and availability of a wider range of opportunities helps. Being able to access schooling, training, work, and healing programs within one's community removes the barrier of having to leave one's family and gives more visibility to role models who are pursuing these options. Having jobs predictably available protects against the disillusionment of training for work that is not there. Reliable housing options make it more possible to take the risk of leaving one's community. Travel opportunities increase openness to the world. Having transportation and cabins makes it easier to spend time on the land and experience its healing. Availability of funding, together with support for writing proposals, makes it more possible for men to develop and deliver programs for their own people, in their own community. However, our findings show that Indigenous men are drawing on their internal strength, which supports them to live well even in contexts where resources and opportunities are limited.

These results imply that schools and workplaces can do some things differently to attract and sustain the engagement of northern Indigenous men. However, they also suggest that the policy and program changes that might most impact men's engagement in learning and work relate specifically to men's personal well-being. Supporting men in healing, building support networks, facilitating connection to other men and to the land, and shaping work places and schools to be more congruent with Indigenous ways and values are a few of the priority areas identified through analysis of men's stories of positive engagement with learning and work.

Chapter 8 | Promising Principles and Practices

The interviews, questionnaires, and workshop identified future directions the men wished for to address their needs and support engagement in learning and work in ways they found most meaningful. In the closed questionnaires, we asked men a series of questions related to what they would most like to learn about, how they would like to learn, and from whom they preferred to learn. The results are summarized below. In this chapter we also give examples of programming and initiatives, which respond to the underlying learning and engagement needs that came out in men's stories.

Aspirations for Future Learning

What Do Men Most Want to Learn?

In order to identify men's own aspirations regarding future learning, we asked, in the closed questionnaire, what men would most like to learn about, how they would like to learn, and who they would most like to learn from. As in the other closed questionnaire questions, men could choose as many responses as they wished, and the response options were based on themes coming out of the earlier interviews. Consistent with men's self-definitions of success, the two most common responses for what men would like to learn about (Figure 9) were land skills/traditional skills (65%; 108/166) and technical skills for a specific job (63%; 104/166). Fifty-five percent (91/166) indicated that certification for a particular type of work was their priority.

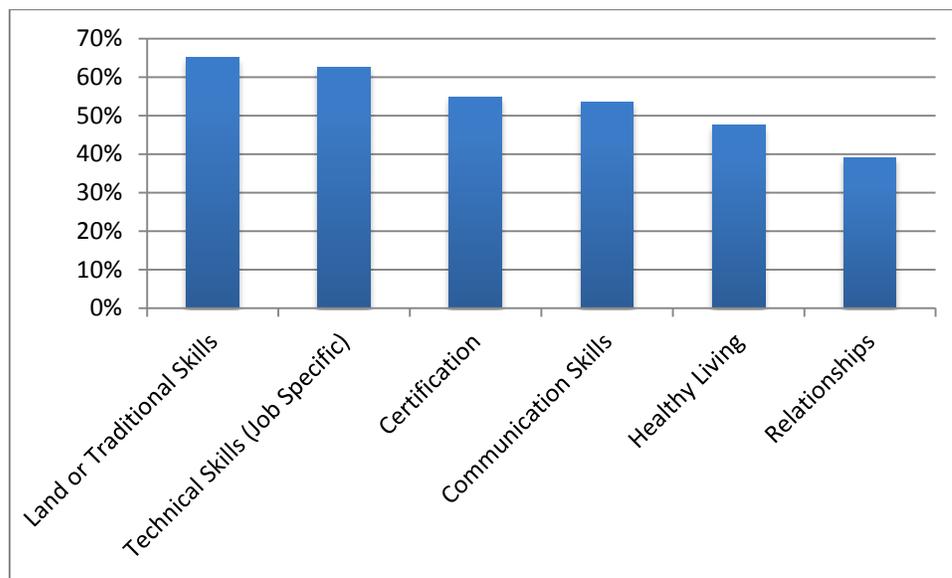


Figure 9 What Northern Indigenous Men Most Want to Learn

Men also chose personal development options, with 54% (89/166) indicating that they would like to improve in the area of language and communication; 48% (79/166) wanting to develop in the area of healthy living; and 39% (65/166) saying they would like to learn more about building relationships, including parenting.

In all, 71% (117/166) of respondents chose at least one of these personal development options. Even though only 17% (29/66; see

Figure 2, Chapter 4) of respondents considered that they had taken part in a personal development-related activity in the past year, these results suggest a desire for these types of program. Indeed, the results show a hunger for any kind of learning. As a 36–45 year-old Inuk commented, “All of the above would help one have a successful life.”

These results suggest that while job-specific training is desired, men have other learning priorities also. Experimentation with innovative learning programs for Inuit women, which embed literacy and essential skills with traditional skin preparation and sewing, have had huge success in engaging and retaining learners and supporting their growth in job-readiness, traditional skills, and personal development (Nunavut Literacy Council, 2014). The Miqqut program targets individuals who are marginalized in some way from learning and work. Tracking of program outcomes has documented 85% of participants either starting work or another learning program within six months of the program end. In many ways, the Miqqut model provides a bridge between the traditional skills community members are most motivated to learn, and the skills and practices required for workplaces. The model is one, among others, that could be adapted to specifically reach Inuit men as holistic learners with diverse learning goals.

How Do They Want to Learn?

Men's responses to the question “How would you most like to learn?” (Figure 10) reflected a preference for on-the-job training (73%; 122/166). On-the-job training ensures learning is directly relevant to men's lives and work. This preference also reflects men's lived experiences, reported in Figure 5, Chapter 4, where men said that regardless of how much schooling they had, what they most needed to know for their job they learned through doing their job. On-the-job learning, whether through official training, mentoring, or observing skilled people, also helps men reconcile two concurrent needs and desires: to continue learning and becoming more capable, while also working to earn money and provide.

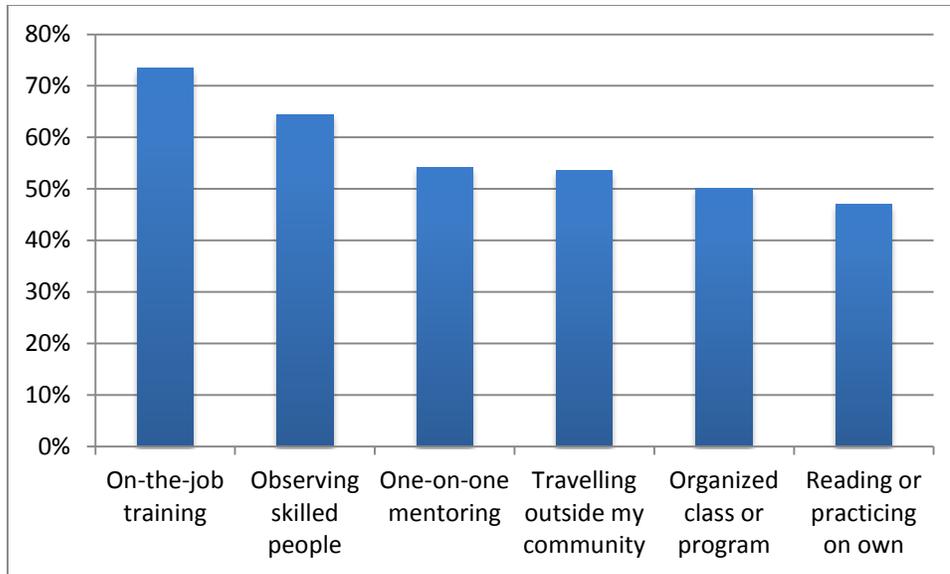


Figure 10 How Men Say They Prefer to Learn

That said, the results also show men's openness to different ways of learning. The second most common response was observing skilled people (64%; 107/166), followed by one-on-one mentoring (54%; 90/166) and travelling outside the community (54%; 89/166), followed by organized classes or programs (50%; 83/166) and reading or practicing on one's own (47%; 78/166). These results remind us that different men will have different needs and preferences for types of learning that will best suit them (Hodgson-Smith, 2000). Supporting men in different directions and in different forms of learning, while paying attention to overall preferences and types of learning that are under-represented in current offerings, is likely an effective strategy and part of decolonizing education for northern Indigenous men.

Where Do They Want to Learn?

The closed questionnaire did not ask men about their preferred location for learning, beyond including "travelling outside of my community" as one of the options for preferred types of learning. The interviews revealed distance from the community as one of the barriers to participating in learning programs, because of men's family and community responsibilities and because men benefit from the support systems of family in the community. A report on the Nunavut Masters of Education program (Wheatley, 2015) offered partly in the North, partly in Prince Edward Island, and partly via distance education, documented the relative benefits and disadvantages of each learning place for students. Since only women participated in the program, it is not possible to know how these factors might or might not equally apply to men, but in this case, blended delivery worked well.

A theme that came out in ongoing dialogue about research results and researchers' observations in the communities was the effectiveness of land-based programming. Of course, the land is the primary place where men can learn and practice traditional skills related to hunting and fishing, which is a top learning priority. Being on the land is also associated with well-being. It is a place

where men can be with each other free of distractions in the community and free from the temptations of bigger cities. Each of the community-based researchers had experience participating in, leading, or observing land-based programs, and their observations were, "They work!" Steven Kormendy, from Yukon, explained:

I found that any kind of on-the-land anything really works. [...] Basically any chance that they get to go to [the camps] they take it... because they know what it does, right. They know exactly how much it helps them. [...] You know, a lot of times, the daily rigours of life, sometimes your soul needs a break. ...And going out on the land is a good place to do it. You don't have to worry about all that other stuff. You can just let your spirit and your soul just take a break, you know, and heal. The only thing I really had to add about the on-the-land stuff was that I found that it was really important to have these things run by your own people. Because I found with the people I work with, they really appreciate when it's their own people. ...That means a lot to Indigenous people, right? There's not that colonial dynamic where, the white person is the boss and you have to listen sort of thing. There is someone who identifies as an Indigenous person and who understands what you're going through, right. So that's what I found to be important.

Some First Nations and communities have established land camps with cabins, and regular land-based programming. For example, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation offers "Uncles Retreats" for the men in its community every year. The T'licho Nation also has a permanent infrastructure of cabins, built for school programs but used by anyone in the community, which makes it possible for anyone to access the land for short individual family retreats and healing, preventing larger crises and disengagement. One of the recommendations of this research is to support the building of permanent infrastructure in each region, which would make it easier to expand land-based programming for Indigenous men.

From Whom Do They Want to Learn?

Across the North, men called for local leadership in developing and delivering programs for Indigenous men. In contrast to their observations that non-local, so-called experts were often brought in to develop and deliver programs, the men advocated for turning first to Elders. Mike Nitsiza explained:

...[W]e have a lot of resources in the community, but we always have the same problems. We have addictions workers. Social service. We have teachers. We have RCMP. You name them, they're all there. They *tried*. But somehow, it's just not working. But, we had always, always for our Elders used to look after our spiritualities, our culture, our recreation, and they were the advisor to our leaders. In our tribe when there's a problem they go to those Elders and the Elders would advise, "This is what you have to do." More or less, this is what we're going to do. "If this is going to continue, this is how we're going to approach it." And that's the way it used to be done. Now, we've taken that away from the Elders, and we wanted to bring back their place. We'd really love to see Elders guiding the hands of the too young, maybe

the grandkids and guiding them through their life. Because today, [there are very few] Elders over 80 years old. We're losing that, lots. When we say role models and Elders, we wanted to give them back that responsibility. They once were our *greatest* teachers. Our greatest guidance. Our greatest advisor. And we seem to be taking that away from away, pulling away from that. To make it easier, we'll go see the teacher, we'll go see social service. We'll go see other resources. While, like I said, it's within the community. It is within the community that has to help themselves. It's not the outside. I kind of wanted to share that.

Elders are respected as time-honoured teachers. The Elders are best situated to teach the depth of knowledge, skill and values associated with the traditional and land-based skills the men want to learn. Beyond this expertise, the Elders are respected and valued for their wisdom, perspective, and experience in resilience and living a good life despite obstacles. Turning back and privileging their knowledge and their role is part of healing the chasm of intergenerational pain that came through rapid cultural change that displaced their knowledge. Bob Patles, Yukon, explained:

We can give ten, fifty thousand dollars to consultants to come in and tell us the same thing that our Elders are going to tell us. That's all part of the healing process, too, because, remember, Elders are hurting too. [...] When we get our Elders to come and talk, we are healing them, with their advice. Acknowledging their gift, and their life, to the people, to the community, and then, in turn, we are creating Elders for our future, so we can exist as First Nation people. We are creating Elders with the same knowledge that our Elders passed on by inviting them in and saying, we need your help. So when our children's children are hurting, they'll turn to us, for the same reason we turned to our Elders. We can't let the wisdom of our Elders, when it comes to healing, slip away. A lot of people turn to our Elders for, "Teach me how to make snowshoes!" "Teach me how to make a snare!" Now we have to turn to them and say, "Teach me how to heal." "Show me how to heal." And in turn, we give them the respect to heal themselves, because they never had this opportunity. And the degree of healing, I guess, is a lot greater when we get it from our Elders than it is when we get it from anybody down South.

Past Chief Eddie Skookum (Yukon) affirmed, "I always considered the consultants our Elders. Need to be used a lot more, utilized. Some know business... Some know the religion. Some know the cultural ways. And how to teach it. And they're all *wise*, you know." The men advocated for turning back to the Elders as teachers and leaders in all areas so their wisdom and life experience could guide men. This includes reinforcing their role in community justice. Bob Patles (Yukon) explained:

Some places are bringing it back in the judicial system, where you take a youth to the Elders when they've done something wrong. A few places are doing that, and that's good. I think if we took more people to the Elders, more families who are having a hard time, somehow we'll find a solution for that family, or they'll find it within themselves.

Noel Kaludjak (Nunavut) said, "I think that's very important, where the young person gets in trouble with the law, first time, maybe instead of going hard core to the court and judge right

away, maybe they send them to the Elders and stuff. We need to put that in record so it will be recorded.”

In the closed questionnaires, respondents also identified Elders as the people they most want to learn from (74%; 123/166). As Figure 11 shows, men were also eager to learn from local experts (59%; 98/166), trained teachers (54%; 90/166), and family and friends (52%; 87/166). The least frequently chosen response was experts from outside the community (45%; 74/166). Overall, these results show a preference for learning from people who are local and familiar, and especially from Elders, but also a general openness to learn from, as a 26–35 year old Inuk wrote, “Anyone who I can learn something from.”

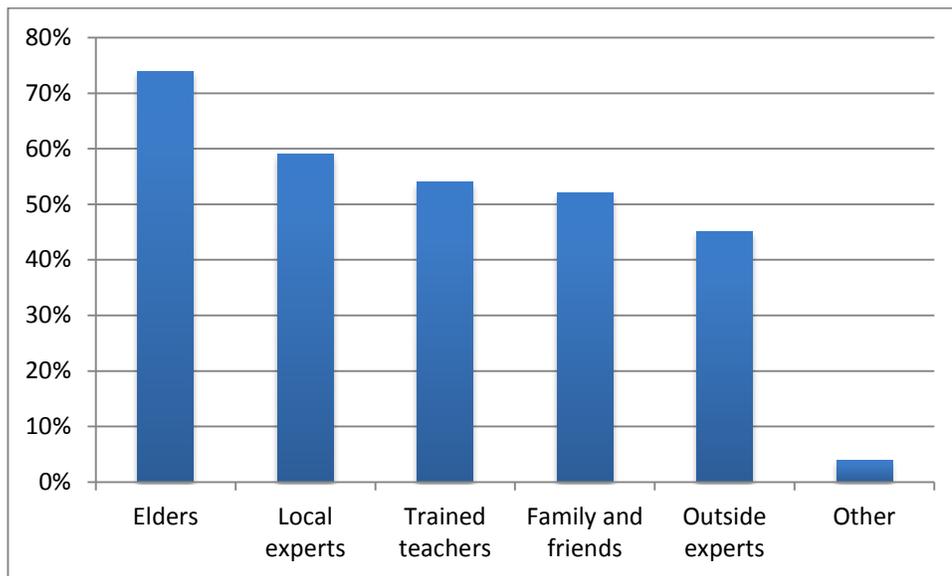


Figure 11 People From Whom Northern Indigenous Men Most Want to Learn

Examples of Promising Programs and Initiatives

Throughout the research, the community-based research team and research participants identified programs and initiatives that they were aware of or participated in that support men's engagement in learning and work. In some cases, such as Roy Byrne's role as Innu Employment and Training Coordinator for Nalcor Energy, the initiative was specific to education and employment. In many cases, though, the programs men saw as making the biggest difference were those that address the underlying barriers of the oppressive context, and support men toward the most significant supportive factors including healing, personal freedom, and interpersonal connection. The following are just a few examples of the types of initiatives that are supporting northern Indigenous men's well-being, and engagement with learning and work.

Pathways to Success, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, Dawson City, Yukon

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For the *Pathways to Success* initiative, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (TH) First Nation collected and published the stories of TH men and women who had achieved different types of success in learning and work. It invited men and women to tell their own stories about what they were proud of, what they had struggled with, and what helped them get to where they are today. The publication is an example of ways to share positive stories of Indigenous role models.

Uncles Retreats, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation (LSCFN), Yukon

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Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation in Yukon runs annual on-the-land Uncles Retreats. These retreats are open to any Northern Tutchone males. The purpose of the retreat is to help people find sobriety and to pass on the Northern Tutchone culture.

The retreats are held at one of two permanent land camps near Carmacks, Yukon (Airport Lake or Little Salmon), which are equipped with cabins, a kitchen, showers, and outhouses. Retreats are timed to follow the First Nations' Annual General Assembly to cut down on logistical efforts and expenses of setting up the facilities. Retreats run for one week.

The format of the Uncles Retreat has changed from year to year, ranging from a conference-style event with invited speakers to an active, on-the-land hunting and processing event. Bob Patles, one of the retreat organizers, observed that the most effective offerings of the Uncles Retreat have been those that focus on the land component and on sharing of knowledge between community members, rather than bringing in outside speakers. Elders are the main teachers, and men of various generations share and learn from each other. Teaching and learning is through observation and oral explanation. Activities are documented to create a permanent record of the traditional knowledge.

In addition to cultural learning and practice, the retreats also include time for healing, with open talking circles. Men also have the opportunity to take walks and have one-on-one discussion with a trained counsellor who comes along as part of the retreat staff.

Outcomes of the camp include increased knowledge of Northern Tutchone culture and increased well-being, including sobriety.

Heritage and Culture Essential Skills (HACES), Yukon College

Contact: School of Community Development and Education, SCED-Programs@yukoncollege.yk.ca

Heritage and Culture Essential Skills (HACES) is a ten-week, non-accredited, community-based learning program offered in partnership between Yukon College and First Nations communities in Yukon. Enrolment is open to all youth and adult community members. Content combines literacy and essential skills with cultural knowledge and practices to document and maintain local heritage, in a context that also favours personal development. The program has been offered in various First Nations communities in Yukon, as well as to inmates in the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. It is an example of learning opportunities that embrace the whole learner and build bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing.

Trails of our Ancestors, T'licho First Nation, Northwest Territories

Contact: Tony Rabesca, Cultural Management, Culture & Communication, tonyrabesca@tlicho.com

Trails of our Ancestors is an annual canoe trip hosted by the T'licho First Nation that travels between ancestral T'licho communities. Younger T'licho men and women travel with Elders who teach them to see and experience the land the way the ancestors did prior to moving into communities. Promotional materials explain: "We need our elders to teach us our way of life to regain our identity, retrace our path and develop skills required to be successful" (T'licho Government, 2013). As participants travel by canoe and camp, they learn traditional skills, develop a stronger sense of identity, practice perseverance and hard work, and bond with others on the trip. They also learn mapping, place names, and stories, as well as GPS use, firearms safety, and first aid. This holistic learning experience is grounded in Chief Jimmy Bruneau's vision of T'licho citizens becoming "strong like two people." The program has run since 1992 and over 2,000 people have participated.

T'licho Elder Mike Nitsiza has observed many past participants, and reports:

[I]t changes lives of the youth, lots. Some say, "I thought about my life while I was on the Ancestor Trail. That helps me with my alcohol and drugs addiction." A lot of them says that. A lot of them tells that they're lonely and they're not lonely anymore since they went on this Ancestor Trail. Some say they're no longer ashamed. They're beginning to speak out! It helps them a lot. And they start speaking out. And they start to begin a sense of belonging in the communities, with their peers and all that.

Angutiit Makigiangninga – “Men Rising Up,” Coral Harbour, Nunavut

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Angutiit Makigiangninga is a men's group that was founded in Coral Harbour, Nunavut, in the 1990s when Inuit men who were determined to set their lives on a more positive course decided to meet weekly to share life stories and encourage each other. Men of various ages participate in the meetings. Inuit men who have completed a counselling course lead the groups. The groups are now expanding to other communities in the Kivalliq region of Nunavut, and the founders would like to see them in every community in Nunavut.

The group also hosts annual or bi-annual regional men's gatherings in partnership with Kivalliq Counselling and Support. Approximately 30 to 50 Inuit men from across the region gather in a single community over a long weekend to learn together, support each other, and reach out to other men who need help. Men share in an open circle format. Translation is provided. Elders are included as participants and as invited evening speakers. A First Nations psychologist, originally from the North, is also brought in to be on hand to lend support.

Men who have participated in these groups and gatherings say that they find healing and support through releasing their stories and shame and connecting to other Inuit men who are also wanting to live a freer and healthier life. They are strengthened to walk away from addictions and to be better fathers, husbands, and community members.

Noel Kaludjak, one of the group founders, said:

I can say a lot more about the men's group, but it does work. It really does work. Some men don't change overnight, but it takes time, some of them a year, but they do change. They become aware of what they're doing to themselves and their families. [...] Men who have gone through our men's support group have gone on to be more successful than they were before. Some of the men were drinking so much that they couldn't keep a job, or any type of addiction, and anger. That support group has helped many men overcome addiction...and to learn to be a better husband and a better father.

Unaaq Men's Association, Inukjuak, Nunavik (Quebec)

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Unaaq Men's Association was founded by Inuit men in Inukjuak, Nunavik (Quebec), in 2001. The founders saw a need to bring Inuit men together, provide opportunities for cultural learning, and foster intergenerational connections in order to support men to overcome addictions, anger, and violence. It is run by Elders and other Indigenous men. Participants are Inuit men of any age, primarily youth and young adults. Activities range from organizing land trips for men to running a small mechanical repair shop. The association hopes in the future to collaborate more deliberately in delivering work-related training programs to men in the community and supporting men's engagement in a wider range of secure jobs (Rogers, 2015).

Innu Employment and Retention Initiatives, Nalcor Energy, Lower Churchill Falls Project, Labrador

Contact: Roy Byrne, Innu Employment and Training Coordinator, roybyrne@lowerchurchillproject.ca

Nalcor Energy, Lower Churchill Falls Project, provides one example of industry efforts to enhance Indigenous employment and retention in accordance with their Impact Benefit Agreement signed with the Innu First Nation. The Project employs an Innu Employment and Training Coordinator and an Innu Liaison Coordinator who work directly with Innu community members to ensure resumes are complete and up-to-date and delivered to the appropriate unions and contractors when jobs are available. These coordinators, as members of the Innu community who speak the Innu language, know the people, and are familiar with Innu ways, are effective advocates and resources for employees and potential employees. Roy Byrne, Innu Employment and Training Coordinator, reports:

I've been working for just over a year and half. When I first started, we had about 26 Innu who worked on site. Since my role, trying to help people get jobs and everything, I have over 200 now. It wasn't easy getting that number. It was a lot of team work involved in there.

The Project also requires that all employees participate in Aboriginal cultural awareness and respect in the workplace training, and provides specific workplace orientation for Innu, Inuit, and southern Inuit employees. Finally, Nalcor partners with the Innu Nation, the Nunatsiavut Government, and the NunatuKavut Community Council in the Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership, which assesses past learning and supports further training of potential employees (Nalcor Energy, 2014).

The initiatives and programs described above support northern Indigenous men to achieve personal wellness, connectedness, and congruence (described as success factors in Chapter 7), ultimately supporting stronger engagement in learning and work. These are initiatives that the team was personally familiar with, or that were referenced as promising models by participants. Other innovative programming is ongoing. Follow-up research to track these initiatives, and to document men's (and women's, where applicable) responses to them would further support evidence-based policy making and program development in the North.

Recommendations

In light of the results of our research into the barriers and supportive factors northern Indigenous men face, we propose the following recommendations for creating more supportive contexts for northern Indigenous men to engage with learning and work. These recommendations reflect principles emerging from men's stories of what helps or could help. We acknowledge that communities and regions vary greatly in terms of most pressing issues and available resources. Some of these recommendations are already well established in some contexts, but not in others. We affirm the need for local evaluation of these suggestions, and for adaptation and implementation of these suggestions in ways that make sense for particular communities.

1. **Avoid assuming a single vision of success for all northern Indigenous men.**

Northern Indigenous men face multiple and conflicting expectations of who they should be. They do not necessarily share the same values and aspirations as non-Indigenous men with regard to what is important for the life of a man.

2. **Acknowledge and support each man's freedom in designing a desired future within a changing context.**

The pursuit of becoming "strong like two men," functioning in and benefiting both from the traditional subsistence and the new cash economy is an ideal, but can also be a burden. Men's overall sense of well-being is enhanced by a sense of choice and self-direction.

3. **Evaluate needed and desired support in terms of men's own identified goals.**

In order to most effectively support northern Indigenous men, policy and programming supporting their positive engagement in learning and work must reflect men's own goals and priorities for their lives.

4. **Broaden sense of learning to reflect the range of pathways in northern Indigenous men's learning.**

While formal schooling is an important part of equipping men to participate in the cash economy, men highly value on-the-job training, observing skilled people, learning from family members, on one's own, and from a range of mentors or teachers. Programming and evaluation that takes such learning into account is more reflective of men's experiences and expectations.

5. **Broaden sense of work to valorize the range of men's contributions and more accurately reflect engagement.**

Assessments of northern Indigenous men's productivity miss part of the picture when they only take into account employment. Many northern Indigenous men contribute economically

through subsistence, family responsibilities, and informal helping in the community. Recognizing the importance of these contributions provides a more accurate picture of men's engagement and can contribute to higher self-esteem, which also supports engagement.

6. Acknowledge well-being as a fundamental predictor of engagement in learning and work.

Northern Indigenous men are living with the impacts of intergenerational trauma and are suffering from the ongoing oppression of colonizing practices in the North, leading to self-harming behaviours. Men who are positively engaging in learning and work are doing so from a place of personal wellness, healing, and resilience.

7. Develop policy and programming to reflect the priority of supporting well-being, including as a means to support learning and work engagement.

Well-being is at the core of northern Indigenous men's engagement or disengagement from learning and work. Policy and programming that supports northern Indigenous men's well-being will also have positive impacts on educational and work-related outcomes.

8. Open wider spaces for men's voices to self-define their visions of themselves, what they wish, and how they want to get there.

Northern Indigenous men face conflicting expectations in what it means to be a successful man, coming from southern Canada and coming from their culture's traditional ways and values. Rigid expectations of men may contribute to feelings of shame (not meeting expectations) and resulting disengagement. Freedom to set one's own path is associated with greater engagement.

9. Develop and deliver more effective and consistent cross-cultural training for teachers and employees coming into northern communities.

Non-Indigenous, short- to medium-term workers hold positions of power in northern Indigenous communities as teachers, bosses, police officers, and health care workers. Cross-cultural breakdowns can alienate men from these people and the institutions in which they work. Supporting cross-cultural training and orientation for newcomers can enhance supportive and understanding learning and work environments where Indigenous knowledge and ways are accepted and valued.

10. Build critical awareness, among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members of the oppressive factors at work and the need for deliberately decolonizing practices.

Well-meaning non-Indigenous (and sometimes Indigenous) workers sometimes unintentionally perpetuate colonizing attitudes and practices, contributing to ongoing oppression and disengagement. Northern Indigenous men who could name and critically

assess colonizing attitudes and practices were more resilient to persist in learning and work despite them. Non-Indigenous community members also need support to critically assess their own attitudes and worldview and to adopt deliberately decolonizing practices.

11. Recognize and affirm the strengths and resources that northern Indigenous men bring to families, communities, schools, and workplaces.

Men's stories of disengagement reflected a sense of repeatedly feeling incompetent and useless whether at home, school, or work. These feelings of shame contribute to disengagement. The knowledge men have of local history, culture, language, and values is an asset to their learning and workplaces. Men who recognized their strengths, and had their strengths affirmed by others, were more resilient to persevere in learning and work.

12. Continue to address social injustices such as inadequate housing and food insecurity in the North.

Issues of poverty, lack of housing, food insecurity and limited health care are daily threats to northern Indigenous men's well-being. These issues create practical barriers to learning and work, and also create a context where it is more difficult to take the risk of pursuing higher education or changing to a more fulfilling career.

13. Incorporate healing components in learning programs and workplaces.

Healing is an essential part of northern Indigenous men's journeys through education and work. Embedding counsellors or healing programs within schools and workplaces makes such support more accessible and can benefit retention.

14. Train community members to locally fill counselling and support-related jobs.

Currently, many of the social workers and mental health workers in northern Indigenous communities are non-Indigenous. While appreciating the efforts of such individuals, this research pointed to a desire for greater access to trained counsellors who could support Indigenous men drawing on shared histories and understanding, as well as promising practices in mental health.

15. Increase visibility and accessibility of supportive people and programs.

Men's stories reflected that, at points when they were disengaging from learning or work, they did not know where to go for help. Knowing where to access help was a strong supportive factor. Increasing visibility and accessibility of supportive people and programs can help sustain northern Indigenous men's positive engagement in learning and work.

16. Equip supportive individuals, including parents and grandparents, to more effectively support men in learning and work.

As interpersonal support is a key factor in men's engagement with learning and work, policy and program developers should find ways to equip these supporters in their roles. Initiatives

such as schools reaching out to parents and grandparents in the Indigenous language, and through oral channels such as community radio, can increase parents' and grandparents' ability to support their son's school progress, for example.

17. Profile northern Indigenous male role models.

Observing or being aware of the stories of positive role models supported northern Indigenous men to envision broader and more positive futures. Documenting and disseminating stories of inspirational northern Indigenous role models may have positive effects on northern men's engagement.

18. Develop and deliver parenting and family workshops for men.

Northern Indigenous men value their role as fathers. A destructive legacy of residential schools is that whole generations of men grew up without father figures, never learned to father, and thus could not pass down a positive model of parenting to their own sons. Delivery of parenting and marriage workshops can support emotionally healthy homes and positively shape the wellness of the new generation entering schools and work.

19. Facilitate opportunities for northern Indigenous men to mentor each other and to gather to share stories and experiences.

Social isolation is a major barrier for men in the North. Coming together to share stories is healing and inspirational. Geographic distance and small communities lead to many innovative men working in isolation, whereas sharing positive practices can contribute to dissemination and wider implementation of "made in the North" solutions.

20. Build infrastructure (e.g., cabins) to support delivery of land-based men's retreats and healing programs.

Programs on the land motivate northern Indigenous men and are effective for engaging men in learning and healing. The building of a permanent infrastructure in each region would make it easier to expand land-based programming for Indigenous men.

21. Share and adapt promising practices in local and culturally relevant schooling and training.

Men's positive involvement in learning and work was sustained when men saw the learning and work as relevant and were able to connect their vision of themselves to what they were doing in school or in their jobs.

22. Develop innovative non-formal, community-based learning programs with Elder instructors, which teach traditional skills alongside literacy and essential skills.

Research results suggest that men are most motivated by learning opportunities that include Elders as teachers and that focus on traditional knowledge and skills. Programs that respond

to these motivations, and also embed literacy and essential skills, can be an effective bridge supporting the goal of being “strong like two men.”

23. Affirm the importance of traditional values and knowledges in workplaces.

Men feel alienated from workplaces that only value Western knowledge and ways of being and that are run according to unfamiliar value systems. Valuing traditional knowledge and values in workplaces makes these contexts more welcoming spaces and frees men to work in line with their values and build on their assets.

24. Provide greater access to funding for community-driven initiatives by northern Indigenous men for northern Indigenous men.

Locally created and community-driven programs are often most effective for reaching northern Indigenous men. Funding is a barrier to the creation and delivery of such programs. Even where funding is available, paperwork requirements make it difficult to access. Increasing access to funding requires creating funding envelopes for the types of projects that best support men (e.g., on-the-land programming) and provide access to individuals who can help with applications and reporting.

25. Increase use of prevention programs and restorative justice, led by community Elders.

Too many northern Indigenous men are trapped in destructive cycles that take more and more northern Indigenous men completely away from their communities. Men in this research reflected that the only path for struggling men was jail. Efforts toward increasing prevention programs and favouring restorative justice over incarceration are crucial for breaking these cycles and supporting men to reengage with their communities.

Conclusion

The Northern Men's Research Project was an innovative study by the Northern Literacy Councils and Coalitions, along with their community partners, into northern Indigenous men's experiences with learning and work. The objective of the research was to identify barriers and supportive factors to northern Indigenous men's engagement in schooling and employment. The research came in response to observations in northern communities, reflected in federally and territorially-collected statistics, that northern Indigenous men are not fully benefiting from existing and expanding education and employment opportunities in the North.

The results of this phenomenological study into northern Indigenous men's lived experiences of learning and work showed that men are more engaged in learning and work than statistics might reveal. They are involved in learning in and outside of school, in employment as well as also other economic activity (including subsistence, family responsibilities, self-employment such as carving or small engine repair), and helping in the community. However, the research also showed that statistics suggesting exclusion from certain areas of work and learning resonated with northern Indigenous men. Many struggled with feeling that they—and their fathers, uncles, brothers, sons, and nephews—were not as fully participating in all areas of life as they would want.

While men faced a number of specific obstacles to fuller engagement in education and work, the overarching barrier that resonated across men's stories of disengagement across the North was a feeling of living in an inescapably oppressive context. The history of colonization in the North, which researchers and men's experiences suggest persists in ever-changing forms (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005), has led to trauma and oppression that impacts men's wellness. Those who are engaging in education and employment felt they were doing so at great personal cost, and/or were drawing on a depth of personal resilience to overcome negative and conflicting messages about Indigenous men's identities and roles in schools and at work. At a fundamental level, personal well-being was at the heart of men's stories.

These results put a new slant on initiatives to support northern Indigenous men in schooling and in work. Results suggest that the most successful initiatives will be those that address northern Indigenous men's well-being as the core of engagement. Some examples of such programming were presented in Chapter 8. Recommendations are made throughout the report, and summarized in the preceding section.

Our research is exploratory. The number of men in this study (210 in nine communities) does not necessarily reflect the diversity of men in the North. Further investigation and dialogue is needed to bring breadth and depth to our understandings. Still, given the gap in research specifically addressing northern Indigenous men's experiences, our research creates space for new understandings of the difficult context men, specifically, are navigating in their efforts to secure a positive future for themselves, their sons and their grandsons. In so doing, this research opens

doors for new paths of inquiry and action by those who are concerned with supporting the engagement of northern Indigenous men in learning, work and well-being.

In addition to identifying barriers and supportive factors in men's experiences, a further goal of the Northern Men's Research Project was to enhance capacity for research conducted in the North, by Northerners. The lead researchers in the project were Northerners (mainly men, and mainly Indigenous) who were identified by their communities as individuals who had the credibility to examine and talk about northern Indigenous men's challenges and opportunities. With the support of an academic research guide, the team worked together to develop and implement strategies for inquiry that were academically rigorous and respectful of ways of knowing and gaining knowledge in the local communities.

Beyond the results of the research itself, this project has contributed to the expansion of understandings of who researchers are and can be in the North. The partnership with community-based researchers who are already working with men in counselling and equipping roles (e.g., training and work placement) allowed for timely and localized implementation of results as they emerged. It is our hope that this grounding in the communities will also contribute to the formal and informal dissemination of results across communities in ways that will positively impact policy and programming affecting northern Indigenous men.

Ultimately, the goal of this research was to support Indigenous men in the North to participate in learning and work in ways that are most meaningful for them, addressing a gap in current policy and practice. We affirm the commonality in many aspects of Indigenous men and women's experiences. The focus on men is not intended to belittle, ignore, or detract from the specific challenges women continue to face but rather to bring out voices and stories that have not yet been heard. Taking care of men is ultimately about taking care of families—wives, sisters, daughters, mothers—and communities. As Inuit female activists have stated, "If we are going to help women, we also need to help their boyfriends, husbands, and common-law partners" (Adams, 2011, p. 22) and "our culture can only be whole and rich when both the man and the woman are working together in all aspects of life" (Evic, 2011, pp. 56–57).

This report is not intended as the definitive word on men's barriers and success factors. Our hope is to contribute to dialogue, prioritizing men's voices about their own experiences, in order to support everyone in the North to make the most of and create new opportunities for shaping the life paths they desire to walk on.

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Appendix A - Project Genesis: An Interview with Quluaq Pilakapsi²³



Quluaq Pilakapsi has been working for the Nunavut Literacy Council – Ilitaqsiniq for the past nine years. Quluaq's main roles within Ilitaqsiniq are as a community researcher and Inuktitut resource coordinator.

Quluaq believes in helping young people to step up and take control of their own lives by making their voices heard. She hopes young people realize their importance and role within their communities. She believes in supporting them to reach their full potential to become independent individuals who can survive obstacles. She hopes that we as a society in Nunavut are able to graduate confident young people who are capable in both Inuktitut and English so that they are able to fully function in today's ever-changing world. Yet, she would like us all to remember and realize that we are losing Elders at a rapid pace so we need to quickly record and document as much as we can to preserve and learn from the Elders' knowledge and wisdom. We can't wait any longer because it will be too late.

How did the idea of the project come to you?

I've thought about the men's research project for quite some time now. I've been concerned about men and their overall well-being. The idea of the men's research project became a concern to me when I noticed the large amount of young men who are not in school, males who grew up without fathers or functioning parents or male orphans. Growing up in this situation is a reality in the lives of so many young men and the effects follow them throughout their lives. I've noticed that some of the knowledge that would have naturally been taught and learned through a process of observation and sharing through the bonding of a father and son is becoming a missed opportunity for a variety of reasons. This also adds to the fact that men aren't going out hunting and practicing traditional skills like they did in the past because so much time is being spent in the home and not engaging with the environment. There are limited cultural programs that are geared towards men's learning and needs. The cultural programs usually offered are mainly for women such as the many sewing programs we see take place in the communities. I am mainly concerned about the men in general because the younger and middle generations have gaps in their education as well as limited opportunities to learn in cultural programs and other kinds of programming. It is very important that men have the knowledge about the different seasons and weather when out on the land hunting. The men need to have knowledge about their surroundings in regards to hunting, land skills and animals. These are the things I think men need to learn about; the land, the weather,

²³ This interview was conducted in Inuktitut, then translated and transcribed in English by Adriana Kusugak in 2012.

dangers within the seasons, areas of caution, the proper harvesting and hunting methods of all the animals, astronomy – being able to read and use the stars as navigational tools - wind patterns, the names and stages of the animals and so much more.

Why is there a need for this research?

I believe that men of all generations need to be supported and uplifted. There is a need for this research because I would like to see men of all generations supported and uplifted to a point where they feel strong, confident and capable on their own in areas of learning traditional knowledge. I feel men today need to be taught traditional skills thoroughly and precisely. Nowadays, because men aren't observing the traditional skills of men's roles and hunting skills, the art of these practices is being lost. Because men aren't being shown, taught or participating in hunting skills, survival skills and traditional skills these skills are weakening with each generation. When men don't have these skills to be able to provide for themselves, their families and their communities they often feel frustration due to the feeling of failure or feeling lost with no sense of direction or purpose. The older adult males are a group of individuals that are often forgotten about and they are the ones who often experience frustration within themselves. Within this group of males, many have not completed high school or formal education training. They also have limited Inuktitut communication skills. All of this leads to the feeling of being lost or not belonging. We have to remember and remind others that life is not easy and there will be struggles, obstacles and hardships that we must cope with and get through.

What caused you to be concerned with men's well-being?

I have been concerned with men who have not joined the workforce or who are not engaged. This lack of direction or purpose often leads men to look and seek out negative, unhealthy lifestyle choices to fill their time and give them something to do. Even though there are men who are working and engaged they too need support and help in learning traditional skills. If men were to engage fully in their cultural practices along with being involved in modern society they would feel whole, more confident and less unsure of themselves. If men fill the voids within their lives with negative, unhealthy choices it will not fulfill them. I have realized that men's knowledge, roles and responsibilities are integral to the functioning of our communities. The following skills of men must not be lost or forgotten: hunting and harvesting, tool making, resourcefulness, planning and preparation for the future and unforeseen dangers and survival skills.

Why do you think this research about understanding men's experience is important?

The men's research project is very important to me because I think it is important to question and understand all aspects of life. We have to quickly conduct this research while we still have the Elders around who can contribute to the work that needs to be done. Even though we won't be going back to living a traditional lifestyle it is still important to realize, understand and know the concepts and practices of traditional knowledge and life. There are still many Elders around today who have the traditional knowledge to share but it is up to us to seek out the answers because

most Elders are patiently and quietly waiting to be asked. The younger generation is missing out on learning opportunities and the development of their skills because they are distracted by other things. If they had the opportunity to learn and be engaged in their learning then they would be more capable of accomplishing tasks.

How do you think research will contribute to the wellness or well being of men?

It is my hope that programs for men that teach these traditional hunting and survival skills will become a reality based on the results of this research. I have noticed that even grandfathers today are having difficulties participating in traditional hunting practices because they don't have the means or the financial backing to go out regularly and practice and perfect their skills therefore, due to the lack of opportunity to engage in these skills and practices it is being lost and not being passed down to the next generation. Even the older male generations are having a hard time and are confused about the navigation of the land, weather patterns, dangers and cautions to be aware of, stars as navigational tools and traditional knowledge. These skills I think are very important for men to learn. There are some male Elders still around today that have a lot of knowledge to share about traditional skills but it is up to us to approach them and ask them questions to learn from them. This is the reason why I wanted the men's research project to take place. It is going to be very helpful to work on this research project because I'm hoping in the end it will help those men who are not very knowledgeable or capable in hunting or give an opportunity to those that do not have the chance to go out hunting on their own. It will be helpful and useful because men need to learn these things and be guided through the process and because it is directly related and connected to the well-being of men.

What positive results or impacts do you hope will come out of this research?

I want to see men who are very well supported in whatever it is they decide to do in life. I hope that the men get the opportunity to learn and practice traditional knowledge and skills while getting guidance and full support to complete tasks and follow through with projects until they are done correctly and well. I hope men reach their full potential and achieve a mastery level of skills taught to them. It is important that we try to understand the traditional knowledge and skills while the Elders are still around to teach us. Whatever skills it is that men decide to learn and master will bring joy to my heart and make me happy. I want to see this happening in the future as a result of this research. I really hope based on the results of the research that a program will be developed that has a healthy and supportive staff to encourage and support our men. I hope that the program will be so well developed that men will learn skills and practice them to a point where they feel confident in their own skills and abilities. I hope that men can become independent and pass on their skills to others. The development of a program where men can come to learn traditional hunting skills and build their confidence is the type of result I am picturing from this research project.

What is your hope for young men going into the future?

I am hoping that after the research has been analyzed and programs have been established based on the research results, men will be more prepared for the future. I am hoping that men will become strong, confident, independent contributors to their communities. I'm also hoping that men will prepare themselves to become resourceful so that if things don't work out they realize that they are capable to find another way to accomplish the task at hand. By acquiring traditional knowledge the men will be able to pass on this knowledge like a gift to the next generation. We have to hurry and not waste time because we are very rapidly losing the Elders who are knowledgeable in these areas. These Elders experienced and lived traditional life first hand. There are still people out there in our communities who have experience and could help us to pass on the traditional skills and knowledge in order to help our men succeed. I am hoping that in the future young men will be able to take advice and put it into practice because I don't see that happening so much today. When men are accepting and open to taking advice from others and Elders they are better able to take in and learn from others experiences and learn the knowledge and skills that men are supposed to know. When men absorb the teachings and advice of Elders they will have an easier time working or accomplishing tasks.

It is very important that men are taught well in our communities and made aware of the traditional knowledge and skills. To me this is priceless.

Appendix B - Interview Protocol

A) Welcome and thanks

B) Consent form

- a. Go through consent form.
- b. Ask if they have any questions.
- c. Ask them to fill in blanks indicating pseudonym, address to contact them at, etc.
- d. Both of you sign.

C) Background information sheet (age, ethnicity, family status, employed/unemployed, first language(s), other languages)

D) Set the scene:

"There are no right or wrong answers."

"I'm interested in your experiences, your story, your opinions."

"I'm not in a hurry. You can take as much time as you want to."

"Anything you tell me is going to be really helpful."

"Please only share what you feel comfortable sharing."

"We're going to talk a bit about where you are now in your life, some of your background with regard to learning and work, and then a bit about what you hope for in the future."

"We can skip any question you prefer not to answer."

Prompts:

Silence. Wait.

Repeat back a single word from utterance.

Ask for examples.

Ask if they want to say anything else.

Paraphrase back to them what you're hearing.

If something seems implied in what they're saying, try to make it explicit.

[Some specific, optional prompts and follow-up questions are suggested in the interview below]

Note: Each interview will not necessarily include every one of these questions asked word-for-word. Interviewers will use their judgement and select the questions they feel most comfortable with using in a particular interview.

Part 1: "Here and Now"

"I'd like to start by getting to know you a bit."

1. **Could you tell me a bit about what you're doing right now?**
2. **Could you take me through a typical day in your life? Take yesterday for example...**
3. **What kinds of work do you do – paid or unpaid?**
4. **What kinds of work would you like to be doing, if anything were possible? Why?**
5. **(a) What needs to happen in order for you to move into that kind of work?**
(b) (i) What else would you like to learn to help you in your current work?
(b) (ii) What else would you like to learn to help you in your desired work?
(c) What kinds of programs would you want to take, if they were available?
 [prompt to get details, reasons; possibly prompt for barriers/success factors in accessing programs]
6. **Are you involved in any learning programs? (now or recently?)**
7. **What kinds of activities do you do with or for your family?**
8. **In what ways do you consider yourself involved in your son's learning? Does he have chores, work?**

Part 2: "Background"

9. **How about when you were a kid, what kinds of activities did you do as a family?**
10. **Can you tell me about your experiences learning in school?**
11. **Did your parents or other family members ever talk about their experiences going to school?**
12. **Do you think their experiences with schooling affected your experience with school in any way? If so, how?**
13. **Could you tell me about people that you learned from other than teachers? or places where you learned, other than in school?**
14. **What were some of your first chores? (at what age? Did you do these chores with or without pay?)**

15. (a) Can you tell me about your first paying job?
 (b) Since then, have you ever had a time when you weren't working?
 (c) If so, what helped you get back into work?
16. (a) Thinking back to your childhood, who in your extended family (community, people you feel closest to) was most inspirational? Why? (Someone you admired? Wanted to have their skills?)
17. (b) Who in your family was supportive?
18. (c) How did they support you? (what did they say or do?)
19. Who was someone that you did *not* want to be like?
20. In what ways do you support your sons' learning or work now (if you have children)?
21. If you have a son (or nephew, or grandson...), what is the best future you can imagine for him?
22. How do work and learning fit into that, if they do?

Part 3 "Value Statements"

23. How do you feel about working for money?
24. How important is work to you? (why?)
25. In what ways has the importance of work changed for you over your lifetime?
26. How important is education to you? (why?)
27. In what ways has the importance of education changed for you – over your lifetime?
 (Possible rewording: If education is important to you, when did it become important?)
28. [Optional] Would your feelings about education be typical of other men your age in your community? How about your feelings about work?

Part 4 "Opportunity"

"I want to talk now a bit about what's available in your community"

29. (a) What kinds of programs and resources are available to you, or other men in your community?
30. (b) How do you find out about these?
 (c) How acceptable is it to use these programs or resources?
31. What types of work are available to men in your community?

32. (a) What factors help you to get a job?
 (b) Are there factors that seem to block you?
33. What factors affect how long you stay in a job?
34. What factors affected how long you stayed in school?

Part 5 “Looking forward”

“I want to really thank you for your time and sharing all of this with me. We’re almost done.”

35. How would you define “success” for Inuit men today?
36. What resources or skills do you have now that will help you get there?
37. (a) Do you feel you need support?
 (b) What kind of support?
 (c) Where should that support come from?
38. That’s all I have for you, is there anything else you’d like to add?

Interview summary/conclusion

I really appreciate you sharing all of this with me. We’re doing this research because we want men across the North to be able to shape their lives/have the lives that they dream of, for themselves and for their sons and grandsons and great-grandsons. We’re really going to consider your answers carefully. We’re also getting answers from other men right across the North. We’re going to keep doing research. Together, with participants like you and researchers like us, we will get messages to people who develop policies and programs that are affecting men today.

Appendix C – Closed Questionnaire

Northern Men's Research Project

Supporting Learning, Work and Well-being across the North

You are invited to take part in a survey about men's experiences in different types of learning, work and well-being. We are trying to understand changes men are experiencing. Your participation can help influence policy and programming to better support men in your community. Ilitaqsiq – the Nunavut Literacy Council – is leading the Northern Men's Research Project in partnership with literacy councils in Labrador, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon. Over the past year, community members from each territory interviewed men in their hometowns and across the North. This survey is based on responses in those interviews and in community consultations. The survey has sixteen questions. Our questions will take five to ten minutes, although you may take longer if you choose to add comments as you go. For each question, select the answer(s) that best reflects your personal experience. You may choose more than one answer. If none of the answers fit, choose "other", or leave the question blank. You may also add comments on any answer. Skip any question that you don't feel comfortable answering. There are no right or wrong answers. Your personal experiences are most valuable in helping understand what can best support Northern men. We respect your privacy. Your name will never be associated with your answers. All answers are submitted completely anonymously. In our reports, all answers will be gathered together, without giving names of survey respondents or communities. Your participation is voluntary. You can stop at any time. If you have questions or concerns, you may contact Cayla Chenier, project manager, at 1-866-608-2678 (caylachenier@nunavutliteracy.ca). You may also contact a local community researcher/coordinator: Labrador: Caroline Vaughan, info@literacynl.com, 1-800-563-1111 Nunavut: Noel Kaludjak, mensupport@hotmail.com, 1-866-608-2678 NWT: Katie Randall, katie@nwtliteracy.ca, 1-866-599-6758 or Mike Nitsiza, mnitsiza@hotmail.com Yukon: Colleen Segriff, colleen.literacy@northwestel.net, 1-867-668-6535 or Bob Patles, robert.patles@lscfn.ca. The Nunavut Research Institute (867) 979-7280 can also give you more information about your rights as a research participant. Please take time now to think about your participation. If you agree, you may begin the questionnaire now.

1. Which of the following activities did you participate in over the past year? (Check all that apply)

- Subsistence or traditional activities (e.g. hunting, going on the land)
- Unpaid work (e.g. childcare, volunteer)
- Paid work (e.g. job or self-employment)
- Learning program (e.g. school, training, or other learning)
- Personal development (e.g. spiritual learning, healing)
- Other learning or work _____

Comments:

2. Thinking of your activities over the past year, which did you spend the most time doing? (check all that apply)

- Subsistence or traditional activities (e.g. hunting, going on the land)
- Unpaid work (e.g. childcare, volunteer)
- Paid work (e.g. job or self-employment)
- Learning program (e.g. school, training, or other learning)
- Personal development (e.g. spiritual learning, healing)
- Other learning or work _____

Comments:

3. Thinking of your activities over the past year, which did you enjoy the most? (check all that apply)

- Subsistence or traditional activities (e.g. hunting, going on the land)
- Unpaid work (e.g. childcare, volunteer)
- Paid work (e.g. job or self-employment)
- Learning program (e.g. school, training, or other learning)
- Personal development (e.g. spiritual learning, healing)
- Other learning or work _____

Comments:

4. Thinking of your activities over the past year, which did you feel were the most necessary? (check all that apply)

- Subsistence or traditional activities (e.g. hunting, going on the land)
- Unpaid work (e.g. childcare, volunteer)
- Paid work (e.g. job or self-employment)
- Learning program (e.g. school, training, or other learning)
- Personal development (e.g. spiritual learning, healing)
- Other learning or work _____

Comments:

5. Have you ever attended school?

If no, skip to question 8.

- Yes
- No

Comments:

6. Thinking of your overall time in school (as a child, teenager, or adult), what helped you most to stay in school? (check all that apply)

- Someone encouraged me to go to school
- I enjoyed being at school
- School was necessary
- I had skills to succeed at school
- I knew where to go for help
- Other _____

Comments:

7. Thinking of the last year you attended school, what were the most important reasons why you left? (check all that apply)

- I had completed my program
- I was going on to other things (e.g. job, family responsibilities, other school)
- Someone encouraged or forced me to leave school
- I found school boring or upsetting
- My skills didn't fit what we were doing in school
- Other _____

Comments:

8. Have you ever worked for pay?

If no, skip to question 12.

- Yes
- No

9. Thinking of your current or most recent work, where did you learn most of the skills that you need(ed) for that work? (check all that apply)

- Taught myself (e.g. reading, practicing)
- Observed people who were skilled in that area
- One-on-one mentoring (e.g. from friends or family)
- On-the-job training
- Community-based learning program
- Other _____

Comments:

**10. Thinking of your current or most recent work, what helps (helped) you to stay at it?
(check all that apply)**

- I enjoyed my work
- I have (had) good skills for my work
- I have (had) good relationships
- My work fit(s) in with my other activities and responsibilities
- I knew I had to keep working
- Other _____

Comments:

**11. Thinking of the last job you left, what were the most important reasons why you left?
(check all that apply)**

- The job was complete or there was no further work
- I needed time for something else (e.g. school, family, new job)
- Someone encouraged or forced me to stop working
- Work was upsetting or not enjoyable
- My skills didn't fit the work
- Other _____

Comments:

12. If all things were possible, what work (paid or unpaid) would you most like to do?

Comments:

13. Which characteristics are most important to being a successful man in your community?

- Healthy living
- Good relationships
- Strong land skills and/or traditional knowledge
- School diploma, degree or certificate

- Job
- Developing personal talents and abilities
- Finding opportunities
- Work ethic
- Other _____

14. Who do you admire as a successful man in your community?

We may contact this person for a collection of stories about men in the North. They will not know you suggested their name.

15. What would you like to learn more about? (check all that apply)

- Communication skills (e.g. reading, writing, speaking – in any language)
- Technical skills (specific to a job)
- Certification (e.g. license)
- Land skills or traditional knowledge
- Healthy living
- Building relationships (including parenting)
- Other _____

Comments:

16. Who would you most like to learn from? (check all that apply)

- Elders
- Trained teachers
- Family and friends
- Local experts
- Experts from outside the community
- Other _____

Comments:

17. How would you most like to learn? (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Reading or practicing on my own
<input type="checkbox"/>	Observing skilled people
<input type="checkbox"/>	One-on-one mentoring
<input type="checkbox"/>	On-the-job training
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organized class or program
<input type="checkbox"/>	Travelling outside my community
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____

Comments:

Thank you for answering our questions. Please share a bit of information about yourself to help us organize results.

1. I am:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	Female

2. My age is:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Under 18
<input type="checkbox"/>	18-25
<input type="checkbox"/>	26-35
<input type="checkbox"/>	36-45
<input type="checkbox"/>	46-55
<input type="checkbox"/>	56-65
<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 65

3. I am:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Under 18
--------------------------	----------

<input type="checkbox"/>	18-25
<input type="checkbox"/>	26-35
<input type="checkbox"/>	36-45
<input type="checkbox"/>	46-55
<input type="checkbox"/>	56-65
<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 65

4. My home is (specify community)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Labrador
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nunavut
<input type="checkbox"/>	Northwest Territories
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yukon
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to answer our questions. We recognize that you and other men in your community are learning, working, and being well in different ways. Some men have the support and opportunities they wish for and some do not. Your answers will help policy makers better understand Northern men's experiences and goals. We hope through this research that men in your community will have more opportunities to learn, work and be well in ways that work for them. Results from the research will be shared through radio and community presentations. If you would like a copy of results sent to you, please contact Cayla Chenier, project manager, at 1-866-608-2678 (caylachenier@nunavutliteracy.ca). If you would like to talk more about these answers, you may contact your regional researcher or coordinator: Labrador: Caroline Vaughan, info@literacynl.com, 1-800-563-1111 Nunavut: Noel Kaludjak, mensupport@hotmail.com, 1-866-608-2678 NWT: Katie Randall, katie@nwtliteracy.ca or Mike Nitsiza, mnitsiza@hotmail.com, 1-866-599-6758 Yukon: Colleen Segriff, colleen.literacy@northwestel.net, 1-867-668-6535 or Bob Patles, robert.patles@lscfn.ca. The researchers will also be able to tell you about programs and supports that are already in place in your community. If you have filled out this questionnaire in person, the researcher will now give you a form to fill out to enter your name in a prize draw for gasoline. If you have filled out this form online, you may contact the project director, Cayla Chenier, 1-866-608-2678 (caylachenier@nunavutliteracy.ca) to enter your name.

Appendix D – Consent Forms

Sample consent forms for interviews, group interviews, and workshop are included. Content was adapted for each region.

Individual Interview Sample Consent Form

Northern Men's Research Project

Iliqaqiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council
Head Office: Box 1049, Cambridge Bay, NU, X0B 0C0
Toll-free phone & fax: 1-866-608-2678 Email: kimcrokatt@nunavutliteracy.ca

Researcher: Noel Kaludjak	Email: mensupport@hotmail.com
Name of participant:	Interview Community:
Phone number and email:	Interview date:

My name is Noel Kaludjak. I am a community researcher with Iliqaqiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council.

I am inviting you to contribute to a study about northern men's learning and work experiences. We want to learn more about Inuit men's experiences of education and employment in Nunavut – both the barriers and the success factors. This study is part of a pan-Northern community-based project. We are talking to a wide range of men across Canada's North. Iliqaqiniq will use the results of this study to support Inuit men's success in education, training programs and in jobs in Nunavut.

You are being asked to participate in an interview. In the interview, I will ask about your personal experiences with learning and work. I will also ask about your learning and work goals. The interview will take about an hour. It will be face-to-face. You may use Inuktitut or English. The interviews will be tape recorded and later written out word-for-word.

We respect your privacy. We appreciate that you may share personal information with us and will treat that information with respect. Unless you ask to be identified by name, we will make every effort to keep your responses anonymous and confidential. We will use pseudonyms on transcripts and quotations. The recorded interviews and transcripts will be stored securely in Iliqaqiniq's offices and only Iliqaqiniq staff and associates will have access. Consent forms will be stored in a sealed envelope, separate from other research documents. Still, you should be aware that people who know you might recognize your story and your comments when results are published in our research report or discussed in community presentations.

Northern Men's Research Project - Resources for Participants

Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/services/indiresident/index-eng.php>

Available to individuals who attended an Indian Residential School listed in the 2006 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, as well as to their family members.

24-Hour National Crisis Line Toll-free: 1-866-925-4419; Nunavut Regional Line Toll-free: 1-800-464-8106

Nunavut Kamatsiaqtut Help Line

Toll-free: 1-800-265-3333

Government of Nunavut Employee/Family Assistance

Available to employees of the Government of Nunavut, their spouses and dependent children

Toll-free: 1-800-663-1142

Government of Canada Employee/Family Assistance

Available to employees of the Government of Canada, their spouses and dependent children

Toll-free: 1-800-268-7708

Kids Help Line

Available to young adults, as well as children and teenagers

Toll-free: 1-800-668-6868

Embrace Life Council

www.inuusiq.com

The following Resolution Health Support Workers can direct you to local cultural support providers in your community:

Baffin Region:

Jimmy Arlooktook Paton, j.paton@inuusiq.com

Beatrice Ikkidluak, b.ikkidluak@inuusiq.com

Toll-free: 1-866-804-2782

Kivalliq Region:

Kevin Sanguin

Regional Director, Kivalliq Counseling and Support Services

ksanguinrankin@gmail.com

(Collect call): 867-645-4878

Kitikmeot Region:

Marie Lucie Uviluq, uviluq@inuusiq.com

867-983-2225

[Community specific resources omitted to avoid identifying communities in research report.]

Group Interview Sample Consent Form

Northern Men's Research Project

Iliqaqiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council
 Head Office: Box 1049, Cambridge Bay, NU, X0B 0C0
 Toll-free phone & fax: 1-866-608-2678 Email: kimcrokatt@nunavutliteracy.ca

Researcher: Noel Kaludjak	Email: mensupport@hotmail.com
Name of participant:	Interview Community:
Phone number and email:	Interview date:

My name is Noel Kaludjak. I am a community researcher with Iliqaqiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council.

I am inviting you to contribute to a study about northern men's learning and work experiences. We want to learn more about Inuit men's experiences of education and employment in Nunavut – both the barriers and the success factors. This study is part of a pan-Northern community-based project. We are talking to a wide range of men across Canada's North. Iliqaqiniq will use the results of this study to support Inuit men's success in education, training programs and in jobs in Nunavut.

You are being asked to participate in a group interview. In the interview, I will ask about your perceptions of men's experiences with learning and work, and related supports in place in your community. The interview will take about an hour. It will be face-to-face. You may use Inuktitut or English. The interviews will be tape recorded and later written out word-for-word.

We respect your privacy. We appreciate that you may share personal information with us and will treat that information with respect. Unless you ask to be identified by name, we will make every effort to keep your responses anonymous and confidential. We will use pseudonyms on transcripts and quotations. The recorded interviews and transcripts will be stored securely in Iliqaqiniq's offices and only Iliqaqiniq staff and associates will have access. Consent forms will be stored in a sealed envelope, separate from other research documents. As personal stories may be shared in the group interview, we ask all participants to keep everything shared in the group interview strictly confidential.

During the interviews, you may skip any question you don't want to answer. You should only share what you feel comfortable sharing. We hope the opportunity to share your experiences will be a positive experience. Still, we realize that talking about learning and work experiences may be upsetting. If you do

feel uncomfortable or upset at any time, we can stop or pause. I am here to support you. A list of resources is also attached to this letter.

If you ever feel uncomfortable or have any concerns about being a research participant, please talk to me. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. You may contact me at mensupport@hotmail.com or Cayla Chenier, Project Manager, at 1-877-230-6833 (caylachenier@nunavutliteracy.ca). You may also contact the Nunavut Research Institute at (867) 979-7280 for more information about your rights as a research participant.

Please take time to think about your participation in this study, ask any questions that you have, and then sign below if you are willing to participate.

I have been fully informed of the objectives of the project being conducted. I understand these objectives and consent to being interviewed and recorded. I understand that steps will be undertaken to ensure that this information will remain confidential unless I consent to being identified. I also understand that I can withdraw from the study any time without any consequences.

I agree to participate in the research according to the conditions stated above.

Signature of Participant

Date

Please use this pseudonym to identify me in this research:

(initial) OR

I want you to use my real name in any research reports:

(initial)

- yes I would like to follow your research. Please send copies of research reports and other information to me at this email and/or mail address:
 no

I agree to conduct the research and use the information according to the terms outlined above.

Noel Kaludjak, Researcher

Date

Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

Role Models Workshop Consent Form

Northern Men's Role Models Meeting

Project Lead: Iliqaqiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council
 Head Office: Box 1049, Cambridge Bay, NU, X0B 0C0
 Toll-free phone & fax: 1-877-230-6833 Email: caylachenier@nunavutliteracy.ca

Participant Name:	Date:
Email address:	Phone number:

Why are we meeting?

This meeting is a part of the community-based Northern Men's Research Project, co-led by the Northern literacy councils. The purpose of the project is to support Northern Indigenous men in living out what they consider to be 'the good life'. Over the past two years, our team spoke with men in Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Labrador about experiences with learning, working, going on the land, and being a part of a family and community. Our study showed the importance of role models – people men can look to as examples – in helping Indigenous men find a positive future, whether through learning, work, family, culture, healthy living or other aspects of well-being. We are now collecting stories from men who are role models in their community.

Who is part of the meeting?

You have been identified as a role model because of you are open to sharing your story. You are respected and inspirational. We believe your story will help others. Community-based researchers are here to share their stories also, and to support you as you share yours. Members of the literacy council staff and the research advisor are here to help with logistics, take notes, and provide support.

What will I be asked to talk about?

Over three days of meetings, you will be invited to share your own story and hear the stories of other inspiring men. Discussions will include the following questions:

1. What is important to an indigenous man's life?
2. What got you to where you are?
3. What advice or support would you offer other Indigenous men?

You can share as much or as little as you choose. We hope you will feel free to share, and feed the dialogue.

How will the meetings be recorded?

The meetings will be videotaped and audio recorded. We will also take notes. You may ask us at any time to turn off the recorder/stop taking notes if what you are sharing feels too personal.

How will what I share be used?

What you share will be used to create materials that share your story and promote Northern indigenous male role models (e.g. video, poster, book). Your stories and wisdom will also be included in our final project report on Northern men's changing experiences of learning, work and well-being.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your story is inspirational to men across the North, so we are asking your permission to use your name along with video and audio recordings of you. Please only share parts of your story that you feel comfortable with. If you change your mind about anything you shared, you may ask us to delete it. You may choose to review our final materials before they are shared publically (indicate below). The spirit of any public communications will be to present you as a role model who has overcome challenges and is living (some aspects of) 'the good life'.

How will my participation help me, or my community?

We hope that coming together, as like-minded men, and sharing stories will be healing and inspiring for each person here. We also hope that as your stories are shared across the North, other men will be inspired. Documenting your stories, in your own words, will help us, as Northern Literacy Councils, to advocate to policy makers, funders, programmers for more and better programming to specifically address the needs of men in the North.

How might my participation hurt me or my community?

We realize that parts of the stories you'll tell, and hear, might be painful. We are here to support you. The community researchers are counselors you may speak with. 24 hour support is available through help lines:

Indian Residential Schools National Crisis Line: 1-866-925-4419
 Yukon 800: 1-800-661-0408
 NWT HelpLine (7pm-11pm nightly): 1-800-661-0844
 (Daytime: Behchoko Community Counselling: 1-867-392-3005; Whatì Community Counselling: 1-867-573-3042; Ulukhaktok Community Counselling: 1-867-396-3024)
 Nunavut Kamatsiaqtut Help Line: 1-800-265-3333
 Newfoundland and Labrador Helpline: 1-888-737-4668

The spirit of all public communications will be to highlight what is working and what helps. As above, you can ask us to delete any information you do not wish to share publically.

Who can I contact for more information?

For more information about this project, you may contact the Nunavut Literacy Council 1-877-230-6833 (caylachenier@nunavutliteracy.ca). You may also contact the Nunavut Research Institute at (867) 979-7280 for more information about your rights as a contributor to a research project.

Please take time to think about your participation in this study and ask any questions that you have. Once you are comfortable with what you are agreeing to, please sign below to indicate you agree to participate.

I have been fully informed of the objectives of the Role Models meeting and the Northern Men's Research Project. I understand these objectives and consent to participate according to the conditions stated above. I also understand that, if I wish to withdraw from the study, I may do so without any repercussions

 Name of participant (printed)

 Signature of participant

 Date

(initial) *I agree to have my name, voice and video image used in materials produced from the meeting.*

(initial) *I would like copies of reports and other materials coming out of the meeting sent to me at this email and/or mail address:*

Please return one copy to the meeting organizer and keep one copy for your records.

Appendix E - Selected Resources for Further Reading²⁴

Arvaluk, J. (2008). *That's my vision*. (N. McDermott, Ed.). Iqaluit: Nunavut Arctic College.

James Arvaluk is an Inuk leader and politician in Canada. He tells an abbreviated life story through interviews with Nunavut Arctic College students and an instructor. The focus of the story is on his upbringing and his subsequent involvement in Nunavut leadership. Arvaluk grew up on the land, with his parents, fully relying on and participating in the subsistence economy. He was raised with a strong work ethic. He learned from his father by following him and observing him; by experimenting and experiencing the real world; and through listening to stories.

He attended the Churchill residential school. He considered it a successful tool for preparing him and his peers for the wage economy, reporting a 5% unemployment rate among Churchill graduates. One thing he regrets about the schooling experience is the total separation from parents, which he feels left him and his cohort with no knowledge on how to parent, having never had the opportunity to observe parenting.

As a child, he was driven by curiosity and, as he got older, by an awareness of the injustices Inuit were facing – both those he observed and those he heard about. School at Churchill nourished a dream to be well-educated and to work for the government. He had opportunities to learn past grade 9 (which wasn't usual in his day), then to travel, meeting with other Inuit in Canada and then internationally, realizing that local Inuit struggles were part of a much bigger picture. Friends pushed Arvaluk into politics. Educated and motivated to see a more just society for Inuit, Arvaluk became involved with the politics of Inuit organizations and territorial governments, serving as an elected official in both, and playing important roles in the creation of Nunavut.

Reading his life story, one is struck by his seeming emotional and mental resilience, an unwavering awareness that Inuit are intelligent and capable, despite being told and treated otherwise, and a confidence in himself, for example to accept critique and even failure in politics and let it be, without taking it on as a personal defeat. Arvaluk's journey has included sacrifices and upheaval. He lost his marriage to his political involvement. He also spent time in jail. He feels that his involvement in politics has made employers wary to hire him.

Arvaluk now is very involved in taking his adopted boys out on the land and teaching them (which he reports is now credited as school time). He finds other father-son combinations miss out, though, when one or the other is employed. Working fathers often cannot take their sons on the

²⁴ The selected resources here give an idea of the range of publications that were consulted for this research. The inclusion of publications in this list is not intended to imply superior quality. Works included are a sampling of the sources that influenced or backed up the ideas communicated in this report.

land, resulting in a disruption in the traditional knowledge. Sons in school or working often cannot follow their fathers on the land, and sometimes appear useless to their land-capable fathers.

Brown, B. (2006). Shame resilience theory: A Grounded theory study on women and shame. *Families in Society*, 87(1), 43–52.

Although Brown's research focused exclusively on women, the behaviours, experiences and perceptions she reports from the women suffering shame mirror what we heard from northern Indigenous men. Brown describes shame as the feeling that you are inherently flawed, coming from oneself, relationships, and cultural expectations. People experiencing shame feel trapped, powerless, and helpless. Of particular relevance is the feeling of conflicting models of success (ideal self), none of which are fully accessible: "The participants described feeling like they had an unreasonable number of unrealistic expectations put upon them, but very few options in terms of meeting the expectations" (p. 46). If the symptoms Brown identifies in her research match what we saw in the Northern Men's Research Project, so too may her solution of "shame resilience strategies": empathy, connection, power and freedom. She writes, "shame resilience...is the sum of: (a) the ability to recognize and accept personal vulnerability; (b) the level of critical awareness regarding social/cultural expectations and the shame web; (c) the ability to form mutually empathic relationships that facilitate reaching out to others; and (d) the ability to "speak shame" or possess the language and emotional competence to discuss and deconstruct shame" (pp. 46-47). To some extent, shame resilience can be learned through opportunities to talk to others with similar experiences, understanding one's experiences in light of socio-cultural-economic contexts, and having words to identify and address what one is experiencing. However, insofar as the shame is socioculturally constructed, solutions also need to come at the macro-social level.

Dorais, L.-J. (2010). *Taitsumaninitaanit siarumut: Language, community, identity and the young Inuit in Quaqtaq*. Quebec City: CIERA.

Louis-Jacques Dorais is an anthropologist, fluent in Inuktitut, with decades of experience researching Inuit communities. This report documents a project on how Inuit youth are shaping their identities, understanding that identity is constructed and performed through relationship. Dorais warns against the reification of what it meant to be Inuit in the past (e.g., not all Inuit were hunters) and the over-generalization of gender roles (e.g., going on the land is equally practiced by men and women, even if they have different focus in activities).

Dorais found that young men and women are equally facing tensions between modern and traditional identity. He believes, based on his research, that insecurity between two worlds might be part of the suicide crisis. School is universally seen as important and more education is desired, but youth, men and women, are dropping out because of the disconnect with non-Inuit teachers and topics that are seen as irrelevant to their current lives and potential jobs. Work and going on the land are both very important, perhaps jobs more so because money is needed.

Barriers to engaging with learning and work, based on Dorais' research, are teachers from the South who do not respect Inuit or do not communicate clearly with Inuit; irrelevant and boring teaching styles and course content; losing housing if one moves to the South temporarily for school; school seen as detrimental to Inuit culture; and lack of confidence exacerbated by negative experiences. Success factors were having good teachers, strong encouragement, and having a family (children) of one's own.

Fienup-Riordan, A., Tyson, W., Meade, M., & Active, J. (2000). *Hunting tradition in a changing world: Yup'ik lives in Alaska today*. New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press.

Hunting Tradition in a Changing World presents Fienup-Riordan's ethnographic and auto-ethnographic accounts of changing Yup'ik communities, as recorded through decades of fieldwork. She addresses changes in the economy and subsistence practices, religious practices, naming, and self-representation. Although she does not call this a book about men per se, most of the stories she has collected are from men, and most of the stories she recounts are relevant to men's experiences in a changing world.

The overall message she brings forth from Yup'ik men is that changes embracing the old and the new are essential, but that the old and new systems are sometimes conflicting and thus difficult to have co-exist. She highlights the importance of understanding Yup'ik practices and worldviews if/when trying to balance old and new, including understanding that successful subsistence was (and is) seen as wealth (and now requires cash wealth also). Having children was also a form of wealth; without a child, one was poor. Fienup-Riordan suggests that conflicting and unintegrated values cause part of Indigenous men's difficulty in setting future goals. She also suggests that understanding and perhaps finding ways of walking in both worlds – and having opportunities to actually live out the future one can hope for, if one dares to hope – may be part of the key to overcoming suicide, which is particularly prevalent in the young men, including the most energetic and seemingly engaged men.

Flowers, J. (2012). *Pijunnanivunnut: Fulfilling our potential*. Ottawa, ON: Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation.

Flowers self-identifies as an Inuk-Anglo Canadian who was born and raised in Labrador, moved to Nunavik as a teenager, and ultimately to Montreal as a college student. In this research report, he critically assesses the strengths and the weaknesses of the Kativik School Board (KSB)'s support of post-secondary students from Nunavik. He concludes that the KSB is providing for students' financial needs, and that this should continue. However, he found that students' emotional needs are insufficiently met, and this causes a barrier to post-secondary engagement. He recommends more attention be paid to ensuring students' access to high quality, accountable and confidential counsellors.

Hensel, C. (1996). *Telling ourselves: Ethnicity and discourse in southwestern Alaska*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chase Hensel is an ethnographer, working in Alaska. In *Telling ourselves: Ethnicity and discourse in southwestern Alaska*, Hensel describes how gender and ethnic identities are marked and performed through doing and talking about subsistence practices. Hensel found that subsistence practices are important for men and women's identity, although for females subsistence seems to reinforce more who they are as Yup'ik, whereas for males it emphasizes more who they are as men. He suggests that manliness is increasingly likely to be called into question in a context where men's traditional gender identity is no longer fully available to them.

Hensel notes that Yup'ik males are far more likely than Yup'ik women to leave school early, to remain unmarried, to be unemployed, to be incarcerated, and to die from suicide or accidental death. In part, Hensel attributes this to a double-bind whereby Yup'ik men are faced with two competing ideas of what it means to be successful – being an effective and prolific hunter or pursuing an economically advantageous career – neither of which is fully available to them. Traditionally, he argues, Yup'ik men were judged by how successful they were in hunting. All boys aspired to become great hunters. A boy's first catch was a rite of passage.

Hensel feels that how men and women traditionally practiced subsistence and their traditional gender roles have made it easier for women to work in full-time jobs than men. Women's subsistence activities took place at home/in the camp, whereas men's subsistence was outside the camp. Women might have settled sooner in communities while men still went out to stay in seasonal camps. Women can come home at 5pm and work past midnight processing a catch, whereas men need to go out when the hunting or fishing is good, and stay until it is done.

Hensel argues that subsistence, while having an economic component, is much more broadly linked to overall well-being in the individual and community. Yup'ik have a spiritual link to the land/water and subsistence practices. Being out there makes a person feel good. Subsistence practices have also taken on important symbolic practices at a time of rapid changes and colonization because subsistence is (a) one thing that colonizers have not taken away from Yupiit and (b) subsistence is one thing that Yupiit are admired for in a context where they are too often denigrated or publicized for negative stereotypes in their communities.

In brief, according to Hensel's research, differences in how men and women traditionally practiced subsistence, differences in traditional gender roles, and differences in traditional norms for judging manliness partly explain male and female differential engagement in employment and school.

Hodgson-Smith, K. L. (2000). *Issues of pedagogy in Aboriginal education*. In M. B. Castellano, L. Davis, & L. Lahache (Eds.), *Aboriginal education: Fulfilling the promise* (pp. 156–169). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Hodgson-Smith is an Indigenous university-based scholar. Her chapter summarizes and critically contextualizes research to date on so-called Aboriginal pedagogy, with a focus on learning styles. Hodgson-Smith acknowledges past research that has documented differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners in North America: preference for right-brained learning; preference for learning through observation then practice, kinesthetic learning, and visual learning, coupled with non-preference for audio-verbal learning e.g. through listening to instructions then implementing. Hodgson-Smith calls this research into question, though. At an academic level, the results have not been supported by statistical differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners, and have also been contradicted in other research.

At a fundamental level, Hodgson-Smith calls into question the values underpinning research into Aboriginal learning styles, saying that the questions are hegemonic and thus the answers are unhelpful. Difference is too often interpreted as deficit. Well-meaning research to improve outcomes of learners in formal education is seen nonetheless as assimilationist. In other words, "How can we help Aboriginal students succeed in the western formal education system" might be a less important question than "What are Aboriginal students' and their communities' goals for learning?" Hodgson-Smith thus calls for broader research into pedagogies of Aboriginal education, which would begin at the epistemological level of what is education in Aboriginal worldviews? One answer, from a Cree grandmother, is "We teach what we know as an act of love" (p. 157).

Lomawaima, K. T., & McCarty, T. L. (2006). *To remain an Indian: Lessons in democracy from a century of Native American education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Lomawaima is an Indigenous scholar of education, and McCarty is a non-Indigenous scholar with a long record of working closely and collaboratively with Indigenous communities. In this book, they retrace and critically assess the development of Indigenous education in the United States. Their consideration includes forms of learning developed and implemented in and by Indigenous communities throughout their histories, as well as systems imposed from the outside.

As concerns specificities of Indigenous learners, Lomawaima and McCarty argue that Indigenous learners, like any other learner, employ a wide range of strategies and preferences depending on each context. While they acknowledge that Indigenous learners may favour active over passive learning and other so-called Indigenous learning preferences in certain contexts, they caution against analyses which present Indigenous learners as one-dimensional.

In describing Indigenous forms of education, Lomawaima and McCarty call into question the widely used dichotomy of formal (schooling) vs. informal (everyday life) education, arguing that schooling is in fact a place in which a great deal of informal learning takes place. They also argue that characterizing all traditional forms of learning in Indigenous societies as informal discounts the sophistication of some forms of traditional learning.

Moving into an analysis of externally imposed education, the authors reiterate what is widely known: school administrators from the earliest days imposed forms of education on indigenous communities. Community members had no (or very limited) input or choice, and were explicitly represented as being incapable or unworthy of input or choice. However, Lomawaima and McCarty also show waves of attempted respect and attempted incorporation of indigenous knowledge or practices into the schooling system. They interpret these waves of policy and practice as reflecting safe vs. unsafe arenas of indigenous knowledge and practice.

Their research alludes briefly to the fact that the “safe” indigenous practices which were brought into the schools were largely of the female domain – e.g., food and clothing. They acknowledge that these spaces must have been hugely comforting for Indigenous women. Without developing the idea further, they mention that the cultural knowledge and practices of indigenous men may well have been less “safe” for the administrators and governments to consider giving space to in the classroom (e.g., Indigenous hunting rights are in conflict with government economies, whereas sewing is not in conflict with any value or practice being taught by non-Indigenous schools). This insight provides another clue as to why Indigenous men in particular might feel even more alienated by schooling than Indigenous women. Not only were their cultural practices in practical conflict with sedentarization, they were also in moral or political conflict with western ideals and policies, making it less likely for men to find a welcoming reflection of themselves in the schools.

McComber, L., & Partridge, S. (Eds.). (2011). *Arnait nipingit: The voices of Inuit women in leadership and governance*. Iqaluit, Nunavut: Nunavut Arctic College.

Arnait nipingit: The voices of Inuit women in leadership and governance brings together stories and reflections from twelve Inuit women. The stories were collected as part of a broader Inuit leadership and governance project. These texts give some insights into northern men's engagement. The female Inuit leaders highlight factors which supported or hindered their own progress, many of which also apply to Northern men. They also specifically compare their experiences to those of Inuit men.

Most of the women attribute their accomplishments to family members who believed in them, were proud of them, said they would do what they set their minds to, and encouraged them to stay in school. Although these women blazed a new path, many also said they were following the role model of other women who showed initiative and leadership, even if in less public ways. The women also commented that their launch into careers or new endeavours was precipitated by someone recognizing certain aptitudes in them and encouraging them to pursue something the woman herself may never have thought of. While being believed in and having a role model were the strongest points of commonality, other common supportive factors were: opportunities to know English and Inuktitut well; being firmly grounded on the land, as well as experiencing western ways; travelling outside of their community; being open to criticism/improvement (and resilient to it, when needed); developing curiosity; caring for others; feeling freedom to be oneself; having a husband who took on the stay-at-home role; engaging as a volunteer; and being in the right place at the right time.

While some of the women have faced sexist barriers, particularly to elected and appointed top positions, they also care deeply about their grandsons, sons, brothers, spouses, and fathers. They assert that men are having a harder time in schools and the wage economy, and attribute this to an ongoing gender gap in the transition from nomadic subsistence to sedentary wage economy. Women mention the wealth of the subsistence lifestyle (e.g. Ann Hanson, Rhoda Innuksuk). On the one hand, then, men's lower participation in wage economy and formal education is not a deficit, just a different path (Okalik Eejeesiak). On the other hand, women present a strong sense that men have been dispossessed in the transition, going from being the strong providers to not feeling capable in communities (Ann Hanson). The education system does not suit them, and the jobs are conflict with their values. While many of these women have specifically advocated for women's issues, their stance is "If we are going to help women, we also need to help their boyfriends, husbands, and common-law partners" (Donna Adams, p. 22) and "our culture can only be whole and rich when both the man and the woman are working together in all aspects of life" (Leena Evic, p. 56-57).

One solution, suggested by Manitok Thompson, is rethinking women's organizations to focus on families rather than just women. Another solution, identified by Leena Evic, is to develop holistic programming men that would combine work skills with traditional values and practices, modeled on the "Reclaiming the Whole Women" courses.

McElroy, A. (1975). Canadian Arctic modernization and change in female Inuit role identification. *American Ethnologist*, 2(4), 662–686.

McElroy documented differences in men's and women's responses to modernization, based on ethnographic research among Canadian Inuit. She reports that men initially held more wage labour jobs than women and were more engaged than women in the wage economy. Women's traditional subsistence practices were congruent with sedentary life in the communities (they continued to prepare skins, etc.), whereas men's were not. Commitment to education or a job was in conflict with desires to be out on the land. McElroy reported divergent cultural values on men and women working, where girls were pushed to attend school and work, whereas boys were allowed to prioritize land-based activities. Her research showed the struggle Inuit men faced trying to balance conflicting cultural expectations of what it meant to be a real man.

Poonwassie, A., & Charter, A. (2001). Counselling Aboriginal students: Bridging of conflicting worldviews. In K. P. Binda & S. Calliou (Eds.), *Aboriginal education in Canada: A Study in decolonization* (pp. 121–136).

Poonwassie and Charter take as a given that balancing "retaining their cultures and preparing their youth for participation in the changing world" (p. 121) is at the core of challenges in, and potential success of, Indigenous education. They outline some differences and conflicts between traditional Indigenous learning and roles and what now happens in schools, as well as the specific challenges Indigenous students are facing that lead to the need for counsellors who can help students bridge worlds and overcome particular challenges in staying in school. They suggest several counselling

approaches, including the “empowerment approach” and Indigenous-specific approaches to counselling and mental health.

Quassa, P. (2008). *We need to know who we are*. Iqaluit: Nunavut Arctic College.

Paul Quassa is an Inuit leader and politician. Born near Igloolik, at a time when his parents were still living on the land, he was sent South for tuberculosis treatment, alone, perhaps around five years old, and then, shortly after his return, was sent to residential school at Chesterfield Inlet. He relates the separations from his family as helpful in some ways, and traumatic in others, perhaps best summed up when he says he felt homesick for residential school when back on the land with his family, and homesick for his family when at residential school. His story is characterized by upheaval, where he was never quite sure in which world he belonged, and perhaps felt like he did not belong in either.

Quassa had many of what he considered quality opportunities to learn, some of which he took, others of which he passed up. He felt Chesterfield Inlet offered an excellent education, even if some of the children suffered abuses of all kinds. Following school at Chesterfield Inlet (which ended at Grade 8), he attended Churchill vocational school for one year, then Frontier College, then Algonquin College in Ottawa. He enrolled in law school, but did not finish, as he was single parent to his son at the time. Quassa held a number of administrative positions, including Senior Administrative Officer for Rankin Inlet (early 80s) chief land claims negotiator and president of TFN (1989, 1999). He also worked as a journalist for CBC and IBC.

For Quassa, major success factors include curiosity, strong communication skills, and strong encouragement and mentoring from other Inuit leaders and friends. Quassa talks about learning to believe in himself and overcome challenges by facing issues like his alcohol addiction and receiving forgiveness. The multiple senior level positions he has held point to his success in the work world. However his story resonates a sad ambiguity. He speaks frequently about cultural disconnect, and conflict between Inuit and Qallunaat [non-Inuit] ways of doing and being, as a barrier in his life and those around him. He titled his biography, “We need to know who we are”, and the story reflects that this is a journey he is still on, struggling with feelings that he is not fully living to the standards of either world.

Tootoo, B. (2015). *Strengthening young Inuit male identity*. In F. Walton & D. O’Leary (Eds.), *Sivumut: Towards the future together: Inuit women educational leaders in Nunavut and Nunavik* (pp. 121–140). Toronto: Women’s Press.

Becky Tootoo, an Inuit educational leader, conducted original research into the factors that contribute to young men’s success in her hometown of Baker Lake, Nunavut. Successful young men were identified through consultation with local male Elders. The youth the Elders selected as ‘successful’ were diverse. Some held high school diplomas and had gone on to post-secondary. Others were recognized as successful for their traditional land skills and leadership contributing to other young people’s well-being. The three young men she interviewed were all raised by single

mothers, who had passed them over to male role models in the community to pass on traditional knowledge and skills. Major factors that the men considered as contributing to their success were relationships with others; sharing who they are; security in their cultural identity; and opportunities to travel. These factors help them overcome the confusion inherent in the lives of many struggling young men.

Appendix F - Northern Indigenous Men and Literacy

Situating Literacy in the Northern Men's Research Project

When the northern literacy councils and coalitions initiated this project, we expected to find literacy as an important factor in men's engagement in education and employment. This expectation was based on observations (confirmed in men's stories) that the jobs and learning programs in which men had the lowest levels of representation were also those that required the highest levels of literacy, for example office jobs in the self-government administration. We thus expected to find that innovative practices in teaching literacy might be part of the solution.

As literacy councils and coalitions we were motivated to find out how our specific areas of work, focusing on literacy and essential skills, could support removal of barriers to men's engagement in learning and work. In light of our commitment to research that empowers through its process and outcomes, we were also open to the communities and community-based researchers directing the process in ways that would make results meaningful to the communities. We were cognizant of Métis scholar Kathy Hodgson-Smith's (2000) critique of research into Indigenous education in Canada: "The hegemonic point of view continues to control the questions, and the answers seem to leave us with nowhere else to go" (p. 167). In other words, insisting on a literacy focus risked yielding results which were unhelpful to communities because they did not address core issues. For these reasons, when the community-based researchers suggested in the pre-research stage and early phases of stage 1 that the project would be most appropriately and usefully envisioned as an inquiry into men's broader experiences with learning and work, situated in a context of overall well-being, the literacy councils and coalitions and academic research guide endorsed this direction.

In our semi-directed methodology, we did not specifically ask about literacy. In our grounded-theory analysis of men's stories, literacy did not emerge as an organizing theme, although we saw reflections of literacy in the barriers and supportive factors. The phenomenological analysis constructed throughout the Northern Men's Research Project (NMRP) final report showed that at the times in men's lives when they were disconnecting from learning and work, they felt like they were operating in an inescapably oppressive context. The barriers they spoke about were dominantly linked to this context. It could be said that they described living in a diseased system as the overarching barrier, and spoke of literacy and essential skills-related barriers as symptoms of this diseased system. Following the men's own conceptualizations of success factors and barriers

to participation in learning and work, the link between northern Indigenous men's participation in learning and work and their literacy acquisition and practice is not addressed as a distinct section in the NMRP report. Nonetheless, due its importance to sponsoring organizations, and their specific capacity to act in that area, we went back through the data to see what literacy councils and coalitions can learn and apply from the results. These are summarized in this appendix.

Bridging Gaps through Embedded Literacy

One literacy-related finding was that some men felt that they were missing chunks of learning that were building blocks to further learning, which made it difficult to pursue new opportunities. Whether they had completed high school or not, some had difficulty reaching high enough levels of literacy and numeracy, for example, to complete the entrance tests that were required even for access years or upgrading programs. In the report, we interpreted these gaps as symptoms of systemic barriers in which the schooling system is, for some, unwelcoming and unresponsive to students' specific needs.

Part of the solution is advocating for systemic change within the K-12 system. However, literacy councils and coalitions also have a role to play in developing non-formal learning opportunities which help build bridges for those who are caught in this chasm of wanting to pursue further learning, but not having the existing knowledge foundation to build on. As Bernadette Dean, an advocate for Inuit rights and a leader in creating innovative, grassroots literacy programming said, "If the government concentrates strictly on higher levels of academic learning with its funding, they're going to leave behind a lot of Inuit men and women who aren't qualified to set foot in a management studies or law program (as cited in Greer 2001, p. 3).

Examples of such bridge programming include the Miqqut project (Nunavut Literacy Council, 2014) and Reclaiming our Sinew (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2005). These programs motivate learners by offering instruction in a highly valued traditional skill (fur preparation and sewing), then embedding literacy and essential skills within that teaching. These programs were developed for Inuit women, but could be adapted to Indigenous men.

The Northern Men's Research Project suggested that northern Indigenous girls and women may be receiving more support than boys and men to pursue higher levels of schooling and office work, and that schooling or office work might be stereotyped as women's domain. The gendered weighting in availability of non-formal literacy programs points to the need to develop literacy programs that are relevant and appealing to men specifically, and that anchor literacy within men's domains. Jessica Ball's (2009) research with Indigenous fathers in Canada reflected, "It is not so much that we have failed to reach Indigenous fathers, but that we have never tried" (p. 3). The Northern Men's Research Project points to the need for organizations developing literacy outreach programs, such as the northern literacy councils and coalitions, to deliberately try to reach men with meaningful learning programs.

Offering traditional skills programs with embedded literacy, modeled on Miqqut or Reclaiming our Sinew, would address the felt needs and desires of men in our research, such as learning from Elders, and learning traditional skills. They would also provide opportunities for learning where the men find congruence between what they are doing and their visions of themselves (see *Congruence*, Chapter 7, NMRP final report). Embedding literacy within existing land camps and land-based traditional skills programming, as the Yukon Literacy Council has done at Kluane

Muskrat camp and Ta'an Fish Camp²⁵ (for example supporting creation of individualized books documenting the camp) is a promising direction. Another possibility, following the men's stories of what they enjoy and what supports connectedness and healthy living would be the creation of outreach programs which combine sports and literacy. Such initiatives could help achieve identified success factors in men's learning and work such as congruence and connectedness (Chapter 7, NMRP final report), while simultaneously enhancing literacy.

Family Literacy

The Northern Men's Research Project identified support from key individuals, including parents and grandparents, as a key supportive factor favouring men's continued participation in learning and work. The research also suggested that people who are in support roles need effective support themselves, and benefit from programs that equip them as supporters. Programs in family literacy, such as those run by the Yukon Literacy Coalition and NWT Literacy Council²⁶, which support early literacy in the homes by encouraging and providing opportunities for children and parents to read together, are one example of a promising practice in equipping parents and grandparents as supporters of their children's literacy. Efforts to reach out specifically to fathers, and offer reading and literacy experiences specifically geared to Indigenous boys, including in Indigenous languages (for examples of topics and approaches that appeal to boys, see Blair & Sanford, 2004), could go even further in breaking down stereotypes of literacy as women's domain.

Another promising area of action is efforts to reach out to parents of school-aged children. Such efforts can demystify what is happening in school and build links between schools and parents. In so doing, these efforts help overcome the mistrust and fear some parents still have of school, in addition to motivating parents to support and encourage their children's attendance (e.g. Taylor, 2007).

Literacy for Specific Purposes (Proposal Writing, Job Applications, etc.)

Men also identified barriers relating to specific literacy practices with which they were less familiar and felt less competent acting on their own. For example, some men said they had difficulty in appropriately completing the paperwork that is required to enter learning programs, apply for jobs, and apply for funding. Men talked about difficulties in writing resumes and letters of application; filling out forms; and completing applications, including grant applications. The NMRP final report focused on the lack of resources and support, in line with the men's stated desire for supportive individuals and organizations to help with such paperwork, and the role models' observations of such support as a success factor. Nonetheless, an additional solution is to support development of

²⁵ <http://www.yukonliteracy.ca/culture-camps.html>

²⁶ See <http://www.yukonliteracy.ca/family-literacy-centre-programs.html> and <http://www.nwtliteracy.ca/family-community-literacy>

the types of literacy practices that would equip men to complete this kind of paperwork on their own.

Literacy councils could use this felt need as a basis for drop-in literacy programs, for example, having resume-writing workshops, or having someone available who can coach someone in literacy through the filling in of forms. Teaching literacy through a felt need, and in ways that lead to meaningful products for the participants, could be an effective support.

The NWT and Nunavut Literacy Councils (2008) have created a step-by-step proposal-writing guide written in clear language for community members. The Nunavut Literacy Council's *Unipkausivut* manual (2004) also includes plain language instructions on proposal writing, as well as sample documents of the kinds of forms required for community-based content. Community proposal-writing workshops have been held in the past, and the NMRP results suggest that offering such workshops on a regular basis, and profiling the sample applications in an accessible way, would be helpful.

Financial Literacy

Related to grant writing, men also identified numeracy and financial literacy as barriers. Those with the ideas for locally developed programs which would address felt needs in communities sometimes did not have the financial management skills needed to access and then account for funding. The financial literacy gap also affected men who were working independently as artists or entrepreneurs. Personal money management and a sense of empowerment in setting long-term financial goals was also an issue for some men. The Yukon Literacy Coalition has developed and offers financial literacy workshops²⁷ which address this need, which could be a model in other regions.

As another example of innovative programming supporting financial literacy, the Traditional Arts Workshop offered through the Matchbox Gallery in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut (documented in Tulloch et al., 2013) embeds numeracy and financial literacy within a program that trains Inuit men and women in various art forms. Participants learn, for example, how to price art work, how to sell it, and how to negotiate prices (for example calculating 10% off), etc. This arts-based, non-formal program has led to very positive outcomes for participants, including the confidence and healing that comes from artistic creation. Programs modeled on the Traditional Arts Workshop could be useful for addressing essential skill barriers alongside enhancing the core supportive factors identified in this research.

Bilingual Repertoires

The NMRP research pointed out that although bilingualism is a resource, some indigenous men are receiving shaming messages that box in their bilingualism as deficit. Some men who do not speak the Indigenous language feel ashamed that they are not living up to what it means to be a 'real'

²⁷ <http://www.yukonliteracy.ca/financial-literacy-workshops.html>

Inuk or First Nations man, for example. In the NMRP research, we advocated for opening the box of limiting definitions of what it means to be a northern Indigenous man in today's society, and for critical awareness of shaming messages of 'not enough' that are being sent.

Also, some of the men suggested that a barrier for them had been difficulty in communicating with non-Indigenous teachers, principals, co-workers, bosses, RCMP, health workers, and others. They felt at a practical disadvantage communicating in their second language, particularly when studying alongside and/or competing for jobs with those working in their first language. They also experienced communication breakdowns when non-verbal norms of communication differed from their home community to the national majority. In the NMRP report, we pointed out the colonizing assumptions that lead to Indigenous community members accommodating the non-Indigenous minority. We advocated for decolonizing messaging and practices which would break down the hegemony of English²⁸ and which would create greater understanding of Indigenous communicative practices across all individuals living and working in the North.

Even while advocating for greater freedom for northern Indigenous men to define and shape their identities in ways that are meaningful for them, we acknowledge that knowing the ancestral language is, for many, an important way of knowing themselves, connecting to each other, and to their traditions and culture. Opportunities to increase their knowledge and use of the Indigenous language are thus welcomed. Culture camps for language learning (e.g., First Peoples' Heritage, Language & Culture Council, 2011a; 2011b) are one example of a promising model for non-formal learning of everyday language practices. For some men, learning advanced traditional forms of the language, including the speech forms to be used in prayers and at potlatches, for example, was a priority. Additional programming supporting such advanced language practices could be developed.

Additionally, non-formal programs for adult learners that support learning English as an additional language, and include instruction in non-verbal cross-cultural communication. Such adult learning opportunities could include specific uses of English, such as lodging a complaint, and English for the workplace. While breaking down the hegemony of English will get to the root of the problem, increased opportunities to learn English at high levels would also help symptomatic communication barriers.

Schools are also playing an important role in teaching the Indigenous languages and English. Where the Indigenous language is no longer transmitted in the homes, schools are an important place of revitalization. In contexts where the Indigenous language is still strong (e.g., Nunavut), schools play a vital role in teaching the academic and professional uses of the language that are needed to carry its use into workplaces and other professional venues. Schools are also where children and young adults learn English. For some it is the first place where they start to speak

²⁸ In the NMRP research, only English came up as the colonizing language. We do not have data to explore the relative place of French, but acknowledge that in Nunavik this discussion would need to be expanded to include French.

English. For all, formal schooling is where they learn the advanced literacies and language practices needed for higher education and many workplaces.

The NMRP report suggested that although many northern school jurisdictions are attempting bilingual education to meet students' needs, the implementation has some gaps and students are not consistently acquiring the high levels of competence desired and required in either language. The research into promising practices in bilingual education is continuously evolving. One role for the literacy councils and coalitions could be to provide information to parents, community members, schools, and community-based educational leaders such as local school board members and local district education authorities about bilingual language development, advocating for understanding and practices that will support development in the Indigenous and national languages.

For example, much of the policy and practice in formal and non-formal language learning to date has emphasized monolingual learning (e.g., immersion programming, or strict delimitation of language use by grade, or classroom, or subject). New research is suggesting that learning programs do not have to be exclusive to one language or the other. Effective bilingual education can simultaneously draw on students' full bilingual repertoires, i.e., develop English and the Indigenous language at the same time. Examples of such practices in K-12 school systems are described by teachers and researchers Christina Celia and Kate Seltzer (2011) in *Translanguaging: A CUNY-NYSIEB guide for educators*. The Miqqut program (described in Nunavut Literacy Council, 2014) is an example of non-formal programming that effectively developed English and Inuktitut skills, supporting learners to develop in areas of language use where they needed and wanted improvement, and allowing for what they called 'language of choice'. Application and evaluation of these learning strategies in northern communities might help address language barriers to northern indigenous boys' learning, as well as creating schools and learning programs that are more welcoming to northern indigenous men.

An interesting pattern in the life stories of Inuit leaders whose biographies we considered (e.g. Paul Okalik in Canadian Council on Learning, 2007; Quassa, 2008), was how many started their careers as broadcasters on CBC radio. This trend contrasts with the reluctance to speak up and be heard that we heard in the stories of men who were disengaging from learning and work. A further area of productive programming would be that which encourages men to be more willing to speak up and have their voices heard. Again, the Miqqut program, in part through its language of choice approach, encouraged development of confidence and voice (Nunavut Literacy Council, 2014). The Nunavut Masters of Education program (which only women enrolled in) also effectively fostered willingness to communicate, in part through encouraging communication in students' language of choice, and in part through deliberate teaching of factors that have silenced Indigenous Canadians (Wheatley, 2015). Incorporating oral communication and willingness to communicate into programming that reaches northern Indigenous men could also help address communication barriers and enhance participation in a wider range of learning and work opportunities.

Literacy and Healing through Expressive Arts

Men's stories shared within the Northern Men's Research Project suggested that personal wellness, through healing and interpersonal connectedness, was a significant factor supporting engagement in learning and work. The types of programs the men advocated for specifically targeted healing. While counseling is outside the mandate of the literacy councils, research has shown that literacy-related activities, including creative and expressive arts such as story-telling, poetry, song-writing and drama, simultaneously contribute to healing.

Archibald and Dewar (2010), for example, documented that almost all Indigenous healing programs across Canada include an expressive arts component. Men in our research said they experienced healing through sharing their stories and hearing other men's stories. For some men it might be appropriate to offer storytelling workshops in which men are supported to craft stories, whether for publication or oral sharing. These could be longer life stories or shorter pieces of particular life events, and could be in various genres, including traditional song genres (e.g., Inuit ajaja songs, taught by Elders) or spoken word/hip hop genres that are popular with youth. The land-based healing program, *Somebody's Daughter*, developed and run in Nunavut for marginalized Inuit women, but adaptable to men, incorporates a creative writing-for-healing component, and is a positive model of the type of program which could simultaneously address men's felt need for land-based programming and healing, while also supporting literacy development.

Emotional Literacy

Given the emphasis on emotional wellness as a contributor to learning and work engagement, an area of potential future focus is emotional literacy. Emotional literacy refers to the ability to recognize, name, and communicate feelings, and to effectively interpret pathways between feelings and behaviours. Emotional literacy is increasingly being taught in K-12 school programs. The *Roots of Empathy*²⁹ curriculum is just one example of emotional literacy programs being offered in schools across Canada. It has reached hundreds of thousands of children across every province, including First Nations and Inuit students in Labrador, but has not yet been offered in any school in Yukon, Northwest Territories, or Nunavut (although other comparable programs may be in place). Research into the educational experiences of Indigenous Canadians in prison has also led to recommendations of incorporating emotional literacy as a core factor in transformational in-prison education (Gore, 2012). The principles and promising practices in such initiatives are promising avenues toward minimizing the barriers and maximizing the success factors of engagement in learning and work identified in the Northern Men's Research Project.

Summary

The recommendations above are consistent with the findings of the NMRP report in that they address literacy development in ways that support or undergird the broader issues that men

²⁹ www.rootsofempathy.org

brought up. While the NMRP report, as a whole, focused on men's expressions of oppression as the core barrier to engagement in learning and work, the suggestions above reflect that literacy efforts can be an important part of the solution. In this appendix, we have focused specifically on men's comments related to literacy, and have identified further directions for the literacy councils and coalitions to consider in developing and advocating for literacy-related programming which specifically addresses northern Indigenous men's needs and desires. The kinds of programs mentioned above would address healing, connectedness, congruence, and other core supportive factors, while also addressing a need for lifelong learning leading to enhanced literacy and essential skills.