

Table of Contents

- A. Introduction2
- B. The Overall Picture2
- C. Inuit Women Described What They Want in the Shelter.....4
- D. The Details8
- E. When Inuit Women Need Additional Supports11
- F. Key Activities and Functions 13
- G. In Their Voices: Inuit Women's Messages to the Government 18
- H. Final Message – In Our Voices: What Woman Want to see in the Shelter . 21
- Appendix – Attendance23



A. Introduction

On February 13-14, 2024 the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition (OAC) brought together 18 Inuit women community members with OAC member organization staff and helpers to imagine what the Inuit VAW Shelter will look and feel like when it is built.

The Inuit population is the fastest growing Indigenous population in Ottawa, and yet there is no VAW (violence against women) shelter in Canada specifically for Inuit women and their children. The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition, with Inuuqatigiit Centre for Inuit Children, Youth and Families, Inuit Non-Profit Housing and Minwaashin Lodge has submitted an application to CMHC and Indigenous Services Centre to support a 30-bed shelter for Inuit women in Ottawa.

B. The Overall Picture

Throughout the two days, Jessica Plummer highlighted the discussion visually. On the second day, she presented what she had heard.

The vision for the shelter is restoring the strength of Inuit women. We are making history – this is the first shelter to be built with Inuit women and for Inuit women. Nothing will be done in creating and designing this shelter without the voices and the input of Inuit women. As a community, we have a clear vision, and we have the ability to make it happen.

She acknowledged that people showed up for this discussion in the best sense of the word – they brought their ideas,

Inuit women in Ottawa who have experienced violence and being in a shelter were invited to a two-day workshop to discuss their experiences with the shelter system and what they would like to see in the new shelter. The discussions extended in different formats over two days.

This is a summary report of those two days.

Inuit Elder Aigah Attagutsiak began opening the workshop with the lighting of the Qulliq. The OAC Co-Chairs, Mikki Adams (Executive Director of Inuuqatigiit) and Mary Daoust (Executive Director of Minwaashin Lodge) welcomed everyone.

Graphic designer Jessica Plummer listened to all the discussions and created a series of drawings that captured key parts of the vision that evolved over the two days.

their beliefs, and their culture through this process they have a voice and a purpose.

The shape and visual image of the building is important and the qulliq has been used as a symbol of that. The qulliq represents caring for one another, and it also represents light and warmth. It is such a small object and yet it can sustain life in the harshness of winter. The shape of the qulliq has been carefully crafted for optimal light and longevity, to serve many purposes during the dark winter months. Darkness can come in many forms, and the light and warmth of the qulliq stands for the support and caring women will receive when they come to the shelter. Sometimes, people can be hot-headed, like a fire out of control, but

on their skills, their abilities, to resurface happy memories and find strength.

All women are unique and all needs are different, so the shelter will offer many different ways to restore, to heal, to rebuild – quiet places to be calm, spaces to let it out and rage, places where we can unlearn some of the ways that have harmed us, places to just breathe. Processing these energies takes understanding and we must allow imperfection along the journey.

There will be many types of activities and spaces to support the uniqueness of each

person: computer training, artistic work to explore individual expression, communal space and individual space, and storage for the things that we brought with us.

Helpers are needed, and all the different staff and service providers who will be part of the supports surrounding the women and children can be the ones to help. Inuit sensitivity training will be needed for many non-Inuit services if they are to understand the people they are working with.

C. Inuit Women Described What They Want in the Shelter

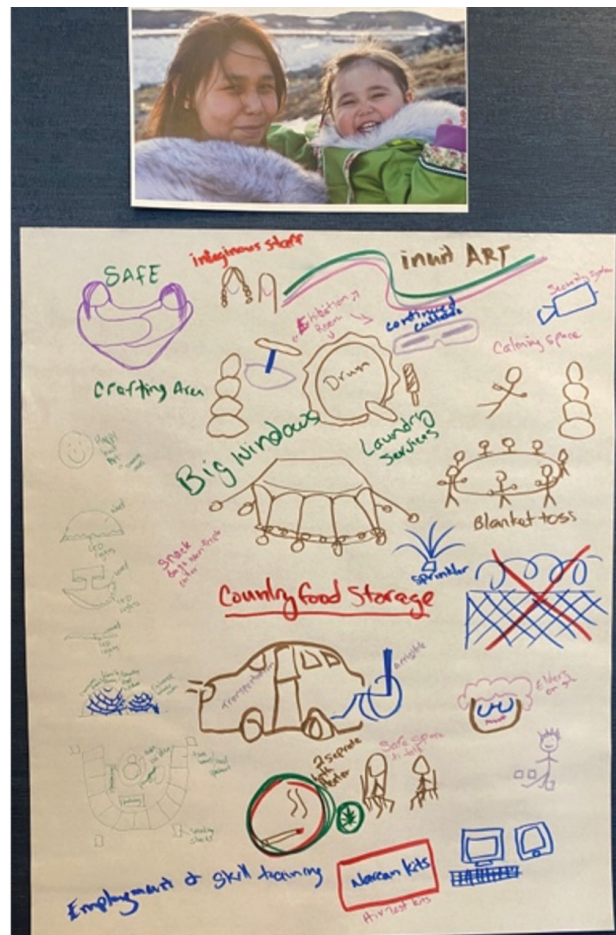
Community members worked in small groups to create a vision of the Inuit VAW Shelter as they would like to see it. Each group's picture and a summary explanation is shown below.

Group 1

The shelter will be a comfortable space where we can breathe and relax, with a backyard and garden.

There needs to be a community kitchen, small freezers in each room and a large communal freezer. Floor space for eating needs to be appropriate: large enough for sharing meals (e.g. 15' X 20'), with a floor surface that does not soak up oils from country food (e.g. bathroom tiles) and also remember that hammers are used to break up frozen meat. The eating area would be in a circle, with comfortable, soft benches around it. Ulu and knives need to be available to use.

There will be art in the shelter, including three-dimensional art. The location would



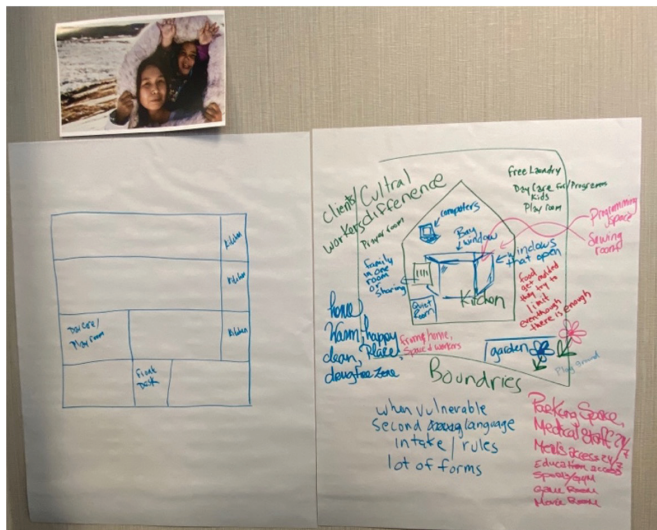
be central, close to services such as TI and Inuuqatigiit.

The building will give the feeling that you are entering the igloo.

Elders and language will be an integral part of the shelter. There will be children's programming, including outdoor programs and a playground, so they are not stuck in the shelter all day.

Have laundry facilities available for free. The bedrooms will have good quality beds, and the rooms need to be very clean (no bugs) with no carpeting, and there would be air conditioning and de/humidifying. Women need to be able to open their windows, and windows would be tinted.

Group 2



Intake would be separate from the main entrance. Reception area would lead into a mudroom. The intake area would have no desks (use tablets to do intake), and children would be in another room, but where the mother can see them. The intake room would not be used all the time, so it

or other rooms designed for confidential conversations could be used by police, social workers and other services.

There need to be lots of windows to be able to see outside and non-fluorescent lighting. Comfortable space is needed, with rugs, stress balls and fidget toys. Overall, it needs to be an inclusive space.

The policies need to reinforce Inuit identity, address zero-tolerance vs harm reduction, and clarify who can access the shelter. The women need to be seen, heard and safe. They need space to grieve and breathe through their situation, knowing that their children come first.

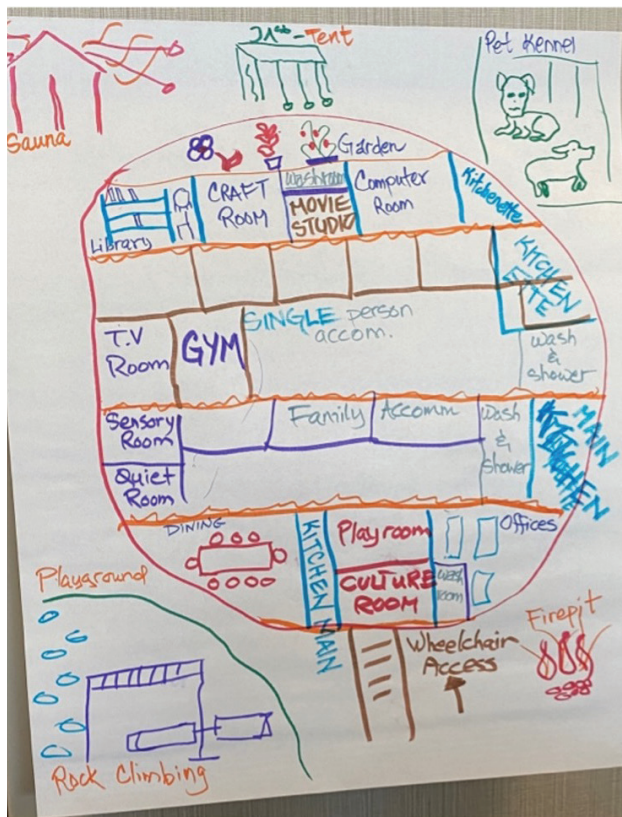
Group 3

The building and the area around it needs to be as natural as possible, to encourage land-based healing. There could be a sunroof, a wrap-around garden, outdoor space for pets and big windows to provide natural light inside. There would be a fire pit for sacred fires. The building could be shaped like an igloo. The building would be wheelchair accessible. There would be no chain link fence or hard fencing.

There will be four floors. Every floor would have kitchenettes, bathrooms and a TV room. The third floor could be for single occupancies, and the fourth floor could be set aside for families with older children. The top floor would have a rooftop garden, computer room and sauna.

There will be a cultural room set up for sewing, beading and working with sealskin, where we could ground ourselves. There would be drums and ulus available.

The main floor would have the main kitchen, a sensory room, a quiet room and



a playroom for when the parent in meeting with a worker. The main room, which could be shaped like an igloo, would have space for eating country food on the floor, with benches around the walls. There would be a community freezer for country food storage, and snack bags available.

A room would be set aside for cannabis users.

Employment and skills training would be offered. HIV test kits would be made available. There would be laundry facilities in the building.

Overall, it would be a safe space, where Inuit art and culture would be supported, such as space for the blanket toss. The light fixtures could be shaped like ulus, and the colours of the Northern Lights could be used in the building.

Group 4

There would be a courtyard in the middle of the building, with natural outdoor space, a children's play space, a community garden, picnic tables, a sitting area and a smoking area. Fencing would be greenery and tall wooden fences.

The principle is that everything is for everybody and that everyone feels that "This is my home and I am safe and comfortable here."

This would be a two-storey building with windows all around. The intake, office space and kitchen would be in one area. The first floor would be wheelchair accessible. There would be an exercise room, laundry facilities, storage rooms for everyone, a quiet room, washrooms throughout, and a breastfeeding room. There would be a large dining area for cooking, teaching and eating country food.

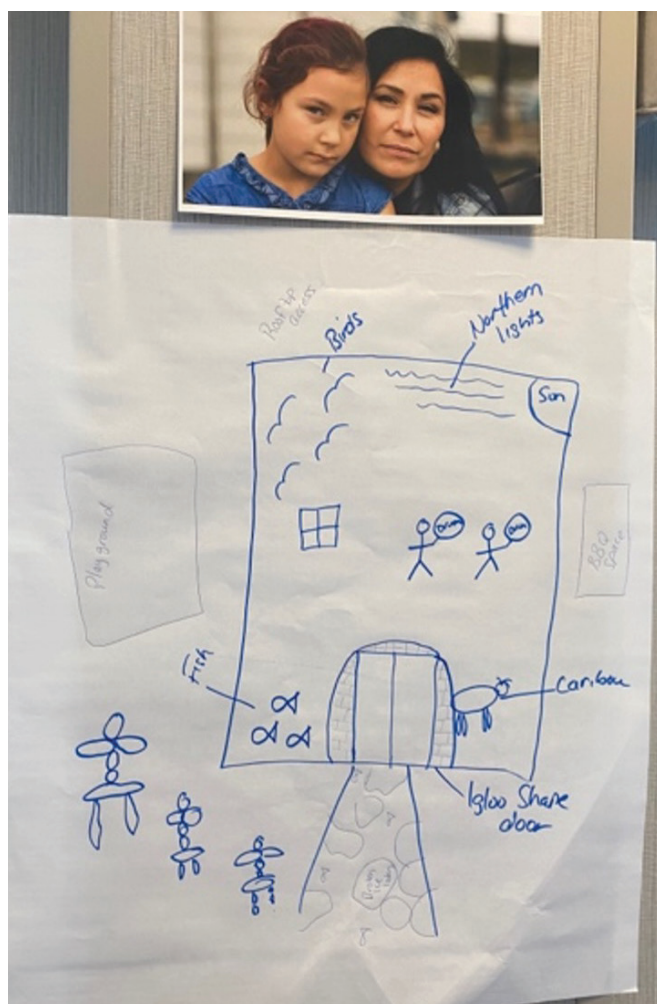
Programming would include basic life skills, computer lab and programs to support women to have the success they want in their lives. Workers would be in the building 24 hours a day.



Group 5

The shelter could be like the Service Canada building in Iqaluit. The building would be visibly Inuit from the outside – there would be vivid 3D Inuit art, vivid and 3D as you enter the building, e.g. drum dancers, the sun and Northern Lights, an entrance like an igloo, and a walkway that is like small pieces of broken ice.

There would be rooftop access, where there would be greenery and a BBQ. The dining room and kitchen would provide for both individual and family dining, at tables and sitting in the middle together.



When we go through our lives, we are vulnerable and using our second language – the shelter needs to take account of this. There should be no forms to fill out, and few rules. It is important to create a feeling of home. It is a difficult transition from having our own home to sharing with other families.

Inuit identity and culture would be brought into the building in many ways.

Ensure the food is plentiful – do not limit the food. Have a program room, a quiet room, a prayer room, and a garden with vegetables and flowers. Ensure there are boundaries around the space. It is important to have access to our meals in our own room. Do not have carpets – they make it look like a hotel. The basement would have storage space. Do not have barbed wire fences or bars on the windows.

This would be a drug-free zone. If women are using drugs or alcohol, have a separate space for them.

Provide a way for women to go back to school. Residents would be able to sign out iPads and Wifi would be made available. Medical staff need to be available so women do not have to go to the hospital. Service providers should be free. Transportation services would be needed (e.g. a van and driver), and the shelter needs to provide parking.

Safety and privacy are important. There needs to be a room set aside for visitors, so they do not have access to the entire building, and this needs to be a safe space, with attention paid to who is allowed into the visitors' room and under what conditions.

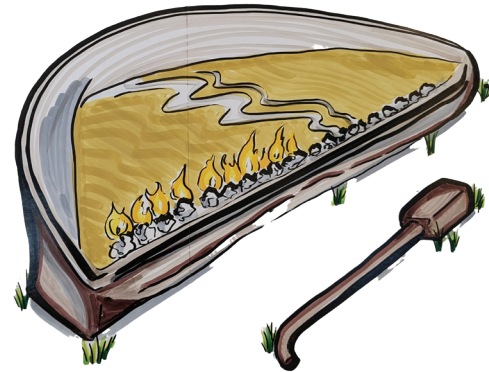
D. The Details

Outside of the Building

- For safety and to respect the privacy of the women, it should be discrete that the building is being used as a VAW shelter.
- The building can be Inuit-specific on the outside, showing that it is for Inuit and that we are proud to be Inuk, but nothing can say that it's a women's shelter.
- Intake separate from the main entrance.
- Transportation amenities and extra parking spaces for guests

Intake

- First impressions are very important!
- Staff create the environment these women live in, from the onset onwards. Staff should be welcoming, kind, patient, and understanding.
- Have a translator or someone who can communicate well with the clients, especially for intake.
- Casual, comfortable environment
- Be greeted with a meal. Offer country food right away. Many women have just fled a bad situation and didn't have time to eat. They should be fed and cared for as well as their children.
- Explain rules, regulations, and restrictions at intake and continually throughout the stay. This is a deciding factor on whether they come/stay or if too strict and not the right fit.
- Have an area for children to play or rest where their mother can see them, but they cannot hear details of the intake.



Culture at the Core

- Cultural programming for adults and children, throat singing, exhibition room for important artifacts/items, drumming space
- Inuit-led with Inuktitut-specific supports
- Language classes

Staff

- Staff need to understand IQ, Inuit culture and language, the cycle of violence, substance-use disorders, and addiction, trauma-informed, and healing-informed.
- Staff who can speak the language, or have a translator available.

Kitchen and Dining Areas

- Access to country food (community freezer), and healthy food
- Communal kitchen and dining so that children can socialize
- Benches lining the walls
- Entrance facing north
- Space for tea, bannock, snacks and healthy food at all times
- Space to eat alone when needed



Bedrooms

- Clients need their own space/room, not shared rooms or bunk beds, to ensure there is no overcrowding.
- Quality beds, nice bedding
- Bug-free, bug covers on the mattress, and no carpets
- Separate bedroom areas for families and individuals

Backyard and Outdoor Space

- Sacred fire
- Space for Inuit games
- Space for children/youth activities
- Playground or park nearby
- Area for pets
- BBQ, cooking
- Gardening, community garden
- Trees, flowers, and plants

Quiet Room/Relaxing Spaces

- Inuit art
- Calming, child-friendly
- Surface and texture that are not too hard

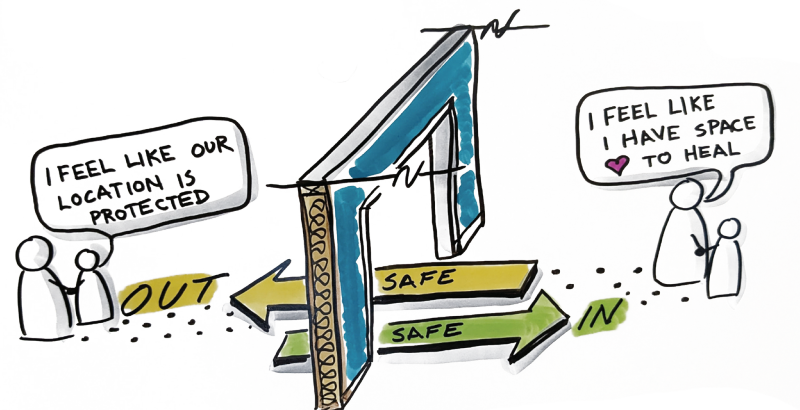
- Reminiscence of igloos, ulus and other traditional shapes
- Lots of light, windows
- Sauna (Sweat Lodge)
- Creative space: beading, sewing, drawing, crafting, and sealskin work
- Movie room
- Computers with secure networks

Children's Space

- Playroom (indoor/outdoor)
- Outdoor play space
- Computer room
- Sensory room
- Weighted blankets

Safety and Security

- Strong security system: doorbells with cameras, strong doors, heavy bolts, security guard, services that can be called that respond right away.
- Safety and security for children
- No jail bars on windows, no barbed wire or chain-linked fence. Windows that can open. Cannot have resemblance to day schools, jails, hotels, and sanitariums.



- Freedom for women to move with few restrictions, should not have to ask to enter and exit the shelter. Need rules around getting to leave for family emergencies or even just spending a weekend with your friends.
- Computer room with secure networks, personal phone with plan.
- Locker or storage area to keep the things they were able to move from their past home. Many things are left behind, items can be sacred. It's hard to start from scratch.
- Address to remain unknown to public

Healthy Living

- Flowers and plants inside
- Country food
- Staff to have supports to keep them safe from addictions and triggers (healing retreats, staff group retreats, culture, and land activities).
- Have an Inuit Elder come in regularly
- Covered smoking areas (tobacco and marijuana separate areas)
- Laundry service
- Animals are kin.



Programs for Women

- Access to trauma-informed wrap-around supports safety, culture, kindness—dignity, understanding, heard, respected, compassion, being here together in a good way
- Land-based healing (snow berry picking, snowshoeing, medicine walks)
- Counseling services, addiction services, CBT, rehabilitation, help to get to and from detox, HIV Testing, NARCAN, Smoke Sensation, AA
- Have daily/weekly activities (day pass for the YMCA, monthly trips to a Sweat Lodge, salon day)
- Introduction to the area, cultural norms in Ottawa, how to take public transit, where to go in a crisis
- Classes: budgeting/financing, cooking, gardening, and self-defense
- ID documentation assistance
- Legal Help
- Access to dental, optical, allergen, nutritionist, etc.
- Prepare written document for future intakes (Intake is difficult when having to tell your story over and over).

Programs for Children

- Tradition/Culture: traditional tool making, beading, throat singing, traditional food making, seal skin work, and land-based healing
- Take children to and from school that is near the shelter, provide tutoring
- Access to family doctor, dental, optical, allergen, nutritionist, etc.

- Introduction to the area, cultural norms in Ottawa, how to take public transit, where to go in a crisis
- Counseling, play therapy, pet therapy
- Support from Elders
- Cooking classes
- Interactive toys and games
- Redirecting anger, punching bags/smash rooms, sound-proof safe place to let out emotions/yell without judgment
- Programming on breaking the cycle of abuse
- Indigenous ways of knowing are essential.
- Staff with lived experiences are valued over staff with education.
- Follow IQ principles
- Dignity, no shame, and respected

Belonging/Comfortability

- Inuit culture at the core.
- Women need to be “seen” and “heard” by the people there.
- Staff to have Inuit-specific training, Inuktitut speaking preferred.



E. When Inuit Women Need Additional Supports

Who do we welcome to the shelter?

The shelter will be an Inuit shelter. Does it include other Indigenous women leaving violence if there is space?

- If there is enough space, other Indigenous women should be allowed to use the shelter as long as the priority is Inuit and that there is space for situations where there are Inuit women fleeing from the North.
- Some felt it would be important to wait a few months or even years to understand the patterns of capacity and whether it is viable to make the decision to allow other Indigenous women in the shelter so early on.
- People are all on different walks of life and if they are practicing Indigenous values and looking to heal, we are happy to learn.
- Self-identification is important, we cannot require status as many have left their ID and other important items at the home they fled.
- The shelter must be grounded in Inuit values, practices and culture and we will share that with other Indigenous if there is space.

IT TAKES SPACE TO HEAL



How do we want women to be treated/supported when their behaviour is scaring other people in the shelter?

- Rooms such as a soundproof room where one can safely get out their emotions without harming others or themselves would be important. Having a space to regulate your emotions can be very preventative for outbursts.
- De-escalation techniques are important for staff and clients to know.
- If the individual must be removed from the shelter, they should be given the resources to understand where to go and not be left to fend for themselves.
- Instead of individuals getting 3 strikes before getting kicked out, they would be given the opportunity to heal. Outbursts can be a cry for help. To stay in the shelter, individuals who break house rules must go to certain counseling and programming such as AA or CBT. With each warning they get, the intensity of programming increases. For example: If an individual breaks a rule, they must go to counseling once a week. If they break another rule, they must attend

counseling three times a week and so on. There are a lot of different options to apply before kicking women out.

How would the shelter be connected to the neighborhood?

- The shelter will have a visible Inuit identity but will not be identified as a shelter.
- Although there will be nothing on the outside to say that this is a VAW shelter, there's only so much you can keep secret from your neighbors as they see the outside activity and who is going in and out.
- We want to have a positive relationship with our neighbors. This would be beneficial to the clients of the shelter for many different reasons. Neighbours may even want to develop a neighborhood watch that is an extra pair of eyes for suspicious activity (human trafficking, ex-partners and other dangerous individuals trying to enter, etc.).

How do you want women to be supported that are using drugs and alcohol at the shelter? Or do you want no drugs or alcohol?

- There needs to be a harm-reduction approach and ensure that women get treatment rather than kicking them out for using. There will not be a no-tolerance rule but, you cannot be noticeably intoxicated on site. It would be beneficial to have a space where the individual could "sleep it off" so they don't have to turn to the streets or other unsafe situations. There should be an accessible detox site where you can

safely and discretely detox while your children are being cared for and your bed/space is waiting for you.

- Some felt it would be useful to have a safe use zone.
- Staff should be well trained around use of Naloxone.

What supports do we want in the shelter for women who are struggling with parenting?

- People in the shelter should not be told how to parent but instead, given the supports and information they need to parent as best as they can. We should have caregivers, aunts/grandmas, Elders for the children. Caregivers can help watch the children while aunts, grandmothers and Elders can provide teachings and positive modeling of Inuit identity.
- Many groups believed that having programming such as Mamisarvik, or Mommy and Me Cooking would be very helpful in rebuilding of a safe and supportive relationship between the mother and child.

- Counseling and programs that teach children how to break the cycle of abuse and how to heal should also be provided.
- Some individuals may need specific support in reconnecting with their abuser. With a broken judicial system for Inuit, courts may force these women to be in contact with their abuser for the purpose of making decisions around their children. If this happens, what supports will these women need?



F. Key Activities and Functions

Sonderbloom provided a comprehensive framework to help us identify what we need to see happen in the shelter. We started with 9 key activities and functions and expanded to 11.

Some of the activities fell under all of the categories:

- a. Translation and Interpretation
- b. Inuit Culture
- c. Food
- d. Trustworthy People in the Shelter and in the Systems we are Navigating

1. Introduction and Intake (New)

- This is important because it is the first thing that happens.
- Access to food right away – speaks about welcome
- Security is paramount
- Protocols of welcome
- The staffing is important, how they respond in the first minutes... non-judgemental and supportive, speak the language, offer comfort and food before the questions begin.
- Intake Staff should:
 - Understand Inuk trauma, mentality, way of being
 - Know about the cycle of violence
 - Need to be able to trust this person/ trust-building time
 - No shaming
 - Address language barriers, translator services
 - Practice IQ principals
- Rules, regulations, restrictions. A person may not come/stay if too strict.
 - These should be explained, not once, but continually as normal.
 - How long can we stay?
 - Can we stay, leave, then come back again? Understanding that many women will go back to their home, more for the home than the spouse... and may end up back at the shelter. If I have to do this 5 times before I am good to go on my own, can I?
 - What happens if a person goes missing?

- Doesn't come back for the night? Do we get kicked out?
- What happens if they leave their children and "go out"?
- Are there custodial staff? Do we do our own cleaning?
- Being homeless or being a victim of violence doesn't mean we shouldn't have the choice or freedom to choose if we come to the shelter or not.
- Photo IDs should be kept in a safe place at the shelter. Ask if we have all our identification, help us get it.

2. Immediate Needs and Safety

- Emergency Shelter and Security Systems
- Safety Planning and Protocols
- Access to food right away; women and children may not have eaten in a while.
- Relocation assistance/safe escort. Get women and children in safely.
- Children's education and need to be away from their normal environments (home and school)
- Transportation assistance – children to school and back. Communal car or transportation services that are safe. Bus passes. Note that some women will not take a taxi or Uber by themselves.
- Provide food and personal supplies
- Provide emergency use phone with a plan
- ID assistance can't do anything without it
- Legal Help, changing information, and address changes
- Access to dental, optical, allergen, and nutritionist
- HIV testing/NARCAN

3. Emotional and Psychological Support

- Not just for the community members being served but for the workers
 - a) Staffing is BIG and needs to be considered at the onset and always.
 - i) Hire Inuk with lived life experience and ensure that they have supports to keep them safe from addictions and triggers.
 - b) Need support for support workers with trauma, this can look like “time off”, individual healing retreats, staff group retreats, cultural and on-the-land activities such as going dog-sledding.
 - c) They need to know how to navigate systems = child welfare, police, housing, medical, dental, optical, CHEO
- Staff to be Inuit informed, have cultural training, and intentions to learn about Inuit. To be a good human being.
- Harm reduction approach
- Trauma-informed approach
- Need consistent staff
- Information on the cycle of abuse
- Counselling services:
 - Family doctor
 - Addiction support/counselling
 - Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
 - Elder as emotional support – calms the nervous system
 - Rehab center resources from staff
 - Access to psychiatric services
- Therapeutic activities:
 - Sauna/detox
 - Snowshoeing

- Throat singing
- Drumming
- Gym/punching bag
- Fidgets
- Beauty/self-care/confidence building
- Therapy pet
- Hot water bottles
- Weighted blankets
- Interactive toys
- Support Groups:
 - Single parent group
 - AA
 - Quilliq lighting group – lighting the quilliq, the whole practice must be taught to the younger people
 - Have the weighted blankets and interactive toys available
 - Healthy relationship building

4. Legal Advocacy Services

- Support workers
- Translators
- Case management with CAS and young offenders
- Help with taxes
- Identification and birth certificates
- Gladue reports
- Help with the housing registry

5. Education and Skill Building

- IQ Principals
- Employment and Training
- Resume Building and assistance with applications, mock interviews, assistance with clothing for job interviews

- GED
- Funding information for colleges, universities
- Inuit activities and traditional skills
 - Parka making, seamstress
 - Skinning, tanning (different process here than in the North)
- Translator (make sure everyone understands what is happening, some may not say)
- Self-defense class
- Language learning
- Exercise, i.e., day passes to the YMCA for gym, swimming, and sauna

6. Children's Needs

- Traditional counselling for children with Elders
- Drug and alcohol-free zones
 - If women are allowed to use (have a few drinks or smoke cannabis), the children should not have to see this. There should be places where that can happen (if allowed) for the women to be free yet safe.
 - Most of the space should be child-safe zones.
- Empathy building/space
- Daycare
- Help navigating the school system
- First aid
- Babysitting classes
- Education on substance abuse, healthy relationships
- Opportunities to have positive experiences with parents (planned outings and family fun activities)

- Transportation to school and back
- Elders

7. Community and Awareness

- Community skills
 - Getting around the city
 - Dealing with racism
 - Safety skills (not getting into strange cars when offered a ride)
- Community integration (how to use OC transpo, public transit, using city mapping)
- Opening bank accounts
- Drivers tests

8. Aftercare and Reintegration

- Rent Supplements
- Proper information about living in the City
- Safe Spaces in the City
- Assistance with applications and referrals
- When you move out – how can we stay connected?
- Where are the unsafe spaces in the city
- Taxes – how to do them?

9. Basic Needs and Supplies

- Backpacks, lunch bags, boxes
- Tampons/pads, condoms, birth control
- Personal storage
- Laundry room
- Food/food bank program
- Nutrients/vitamins
- Safety devices
- Rent supplements

- Where to get Quilliq? Country food?
- Where to get taxes done?
- How to stay away from “booby traps”/scams
- How to fill in forms
- Cleaning supplies/laundry supplies
- Transportation, how to get a bus pass?

10. Specialized Support Services

- Need an Inuit-specific culturally safe program that is guided by the IQ Principals.
- Need trauma-informed and trauma-specific
- Need assessment tools with Elders’ guidance
- Bridge programs
- Harm reduction – can’t turn away women who are actively using. Medicinal withdrawal management.
- Holistic approaches, hire Inuk with lived experience
- Access to mainstream approaches that are made Inuk-friendly
- Detox programs and services
- Safe place to use and safe place to dispose
- Understanding “my cycle” and how it helps me to service
- Language classes

- Youth and Elders program – together so youth can learn directly from the Elders.
- How to develop a safety plan and plan to continue forward
- Learning needs/balance/wants
- Learn taxes/budgeting
- Change the word “abuse” to use when talking about substance use.
- Freezers to store meat

11. Inuit Culture and Spiritual Support (New)

“How are we to heal if there are not the words or language and wisdom that remind us of who we are and how we heal. We need to hear and be supported in Inuktitut as much as possible.”

- For women and children, for staff
- IQ principals
- Reconnecting to traditional ways
- Land-based activities such as hunting and camping
- Inuit practices
- Quilliq teachings and places to teach
- Language classes

we all have to work together

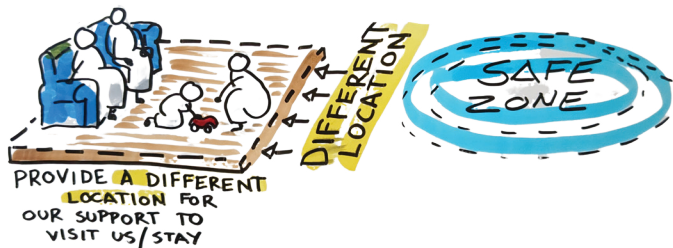
G. In Our Voices: Inuit Women's Messages to the Government

Women were given the opportunity to write a message to the government, and these are the responses that were received:

- Inuit/First Nation culture is important. Our kids, grandkids. It's important not to lose their values, culture, their first sense growing up, it's their survival mechanism
- Access to child psychologist.
- Inuit matter. You used Inuit as flagpoles to gain land. Please be part of Inuit healing. This is one more step in accountability. Be a government of accountability that we know you can be.
- As Inuk, how can you know what it takes when you never gave us a chance like how you give talk to the new governors. We must and shall put one foot down and start taking what's ours, not just what's needed. It's not just a shelter, but a home where safety, humanity also unites us traditionally. New environment to adapt by, let us heal within sisters to lead a stronger better future as Inuit.
- Honey, you are someone. You matter, I love you! Beautiful Inuk! Wherever you are and whatever you are facing, never give up because you are a leader to our future! The government does not own you, but can only prove how far you can go not just if necessary!
- Inuit women and children a shelter to go that is need safe, supported and healing. A safe community/services that nurtures and respects every aspect of their life and culture.
- With lots of love we ask you to hear our hearts. Be open to understand. We are grateful for this opportunity to work with you. This shelter is very much needed along with the supports to help us grow and move forward to a prosperous life for us women and our children. Love all, Inuit women and sisters.
- I think this project would be a good idea for us Inuk women to have a safe place and heal from the trauma we went through. No matter what the situation was, and to have a positive outlook in life and break generational trauma. This shelter would help us survive and thrive in this ever changing world.
- Please Listen!!! Activate change (fund Indigenous resources/Inuit-specific) Dear government, shame dies and healing begins when stories are told in safe places. Inuit women deserve a safe place to call home – no questions asked. The effects of colonialism/intergenerational trauma has lasting effects. You need to step up. I work with extremely strong and brave women and I will continue amplifying these voices.
- Dear government, since we've started, we will not be stopped.



- Passionate, grateful, angered, honoured, path to healing, emotional, intergenerational trauma.
- There will be laughter, love, anger, sadness, growth and community. There will be connection, stability, safety and generational success. There will be good food, creativity, passion and opportunity.
- We need this shelter for our future generation. About time we get this! It would really benefit e.g. this was build. Woman power is so powerful when women get together.
- You tried to erase our culture, existence, our transportation. It's time to get back on our feet and thrive.
- It's up to us to keep our culture alone. Now, more than ever, we need our voices to be heard.
- Dear government, I am an Inuk woman living in Ottawa. First, Inuit violence against women shelter will benefit Inuit all across Inuit Nunangat and Canada. The shelter will help from basic needs to advocacy in conversations of power. To Navigate the colonial system in the urban areas. Ottawa has one of the highest Inuit population outside Inuit Nunangat so the shelter would fill up quick, with proper services and programs the women and families will gain life skills and learn how to navigate life outside Inuit Nunangat. Inuit women specific shelter would give them a sense of belonging and to finally be seen and heard. Keeping our traditions will be a big part of each individuals healing.
- Dear government, as one of the first peoples of this land, we are often the last to be considered. That there is no Inuit shelter for women – an important and vital need for the people. We need the shelter and safety that speaks to us in ways we understand; we Inuit reflections, teachings and ways of being. There is no such place now and it is needed. Our lives are as valued as others; do not place us last. F/N Inuit VAW shelter is required. Needed. So be it.
- Indigenous expertise – leaders comes Indigenous services, led by Indigenous people. To whom it concerns, it's time. VAW Inuit shelter is built on the expertise of Inuit women with lived experience. Time to walk the talk. Time for action, the time is now.
- *"I just want to live with my children free from fear. We only want to belong and be loved too."* - Joanne Nakoolak-Ushuak (1991-2021)
- *"Help me, help us."*
- *"Every person matters."*
- *"Remember the meaning of truth and Reconciliation"* accountability and recognition to make things right. Hear our voices, we will not be silenced.
- We need and deserve to be safe.
- Providing and choice.
- Honour the commitment to meaningful reconciliation with Inuit and fund this important project fully. Listen to what community is saying it needs.
- In order to restore or begin to restore peace and harmony, we need help to get there. Ottawa is one of the biggest Inuit homes in Canada. The lack of support for Inuit leave many homeless and continued trauma gets us nowhere.



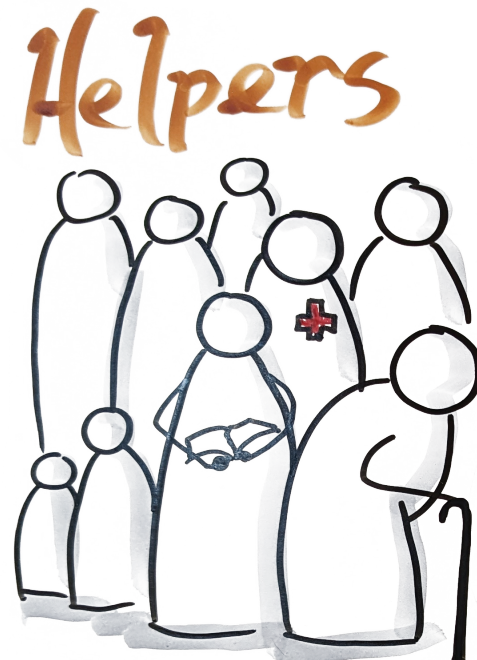
With this shelter it will help us adapt, heal and learn or continue to live just as happy as anybody has the right on our mother Earth. Generational trauma can heal. We can heal, but not without one another or a safe place to start. This is our new beginning our new start. Everyone deserves to feel safe and loved, why do we even need to ask or beg for normality? We matter.

- To whom it may concern, it is so important to have an Inuit specific abused women's shelter because there is none for Inuit women only. There have been Inuit women staying at the Oshki Kizis Lodge for many years now, but because the programming is aimed mainly towards FN cultures and practices, Inuit women feel left out and treated secondary to FN (Métis) women's values. The shelter would need to ensure the safety of Inuit women in all aspects of their lives, starting out in an abuse-free and self-empowering attitude.
- A women's shelter is so very important to open for abused women in Nunanut who flee to Ottawa. There are no places for them to go. Domestic violence is still happening today and sadly always will be. Abused women need a place to go where they feel safe and very important is they go to a place that is culturally suited to their needs.
- Ottawa needs Inuit women's shelter. Women and children need to be safe. Inuit would be great to be hired, also non-Inuit would be good to be hired too. Would begin at to have one here in Ottawa ON. Hoping to open one soon.
- We need an Inuit VAW shelter! Used to be scared to ask to stay somewhere, we shouldn't be ashamed or scared. There should be a place to go. Open, safe, empowered and hope.
- To whom it may concern, I have worked in a few VAW shelters in my time and also have been in a VAW shelter myself. I never thought in my life that I would need these services after being a front-line worker myself. I never thought I would be on the other side, and I was lucky enough to get the support I needed during my dark times. The VAW shelter would support and save countless lives of women and children who may not have the support I did when I was in a DV relationship. There has been a big need in our small communities for a safe space especially for Inuit women and children. I often think of a client of mine from Iqaluit who sadly was in a murder-suicide and I feel guilt for not supporting the client, even though I knew I fought for her and her kids, but as many shelters, we were at capacity. I hope that never happens again because a family of 4 were gone because there was no space in our shelter when the women needed help, support, and a safe space to run to.
- Our tax dollars and support save lives, culture, community and is crucial for the women and children who have no safe space. Reconciliation = safety, support and spaces for Inuit women to survive and heal.

H. Final Message – In Our Voices: What Women Want to see in the Shelter

Women were given the opportunity to write an individual message about what they wanted to see in the shelter, and these are the responses that were received:

- Feeling safe, heard, sense of belonging, knowledgeable staff, Inuktitut speaking.
- For Inuit women to feel safe, loved and valued and they can maintain their dignity, regardless of how they 'show up'.
- Inuit women receive information regarding support to know what services are available to them when they leave the shelter.
- Safe and security
- Inuit-led with Inuktitut-specific supports
- Access to trauma-informed wrap-around supports
- Safety, culture, kindness – dignity, understanding, heard, respected, compassion, being here together in a good way.
- Belonging and safety, compassion
- Ongoing continuing support (non-judgemental) and continuing case
- Entering the shelter, welcoming, knowing
- *"I am seen. I am heard. I am supported."*
- One thing I need to help heal 1 child with me.
- Caring and understanding Inuit culture
- Know the needs of every client
- A loving environment
- Have a few in-house Inuit Elders
- Inuit staff or staff that are trained in Inuit ways, customs and are interested in learning more about Inuit culture.
- Community – it's important to foster respect within the collective community and that means being able to listen to someone who's sharing and not interrupting when the person is sharing.
- Reflect on the day
- Trauma-informed, IQ principals, safety, country food, cultural components
- Most importantly for an Inuit shelter would have an Inuit worker and have an elder to go speak with clients. Also with children to have private talks with workers.



- Inuit women-specific and families
- Culturally sensitive
- Community feeling
- Safe in all aspects
- Access to country food and elder and cooking /kitchen
- Expansion could include other Indigenous people (after a year)
- Inuit workers who graduate from the shelter
- Support in going back to working or school (post-secondary)
- Safety and Security
- Clear rules and regulations
- Childcare and optional programming
- Smoking area
- My own room with a private washroom.
- To be treated as human; respected. To not be treated like it's my fault and I should be happy with what I get.



- Safety, acceptance, understanding, empathy, not to feel incarcerated not keeping in mind my trafficker, assaulter, abuser, many come looking for me. Safety protocols.
- Professional, experts in trauma, with work experience
- To know that me and my kids are going to be safe, helped and looked after in and out of the shelter.
- Nutrition, environment, scenery
- 1 or 2 words to reflect today – humbled, emotional, honoured, welcoming, respectful, treat people equally.
- Feeling welcome, and accepted. Safe, love, protected. Loved, warmth, unity, strength.
- Welcoming, respect, treat equal
- Staff is warm, welcoming and loving.
- Communication – not just written put images to help clients understand
- Safety, privacy, compassion, kindness, knowledge
- Safety – community peace
- Human kindness – culture, freedom
- Expressive, assurance
- *"Not just a number.", "I am not my trauma."*
- Safety, boundaries, respect. Mental health workers/Elders present for anything anytime. Most important communication.
- Respect, culturally appropriate supports.

Appendix – Attendance

The workshop participants included **18 Inuit women community members** and the following organizational representatives and helpers.

Aigah Attagutsiak, Elder

Marc Maracle, Executive Director, Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation

Jenny Kluke, Program Coordinator, Housing Initiatives, Strategic Initiatives Branch, City of Ottawa

Jessica Bradley, Ottawa City Council, Gloucester - Southgate Ward

Meaghan Bannerman, Violence Against Women, Counsellor and Advocate, Tungasuvvingat Inuit

Kristel Ghobril, Director, Healing and Wellness, Mamisarvik Healing Centre, Tungasuvvingat Inuit

Amanda Kilabuk, Director, MMIWG2S+ Urban Indigenous Action Group

Hannah Tuer, Sonderbloom

Mary Daoust, OAC Co-Chair and Executive Director, Minwaashin Lodge

Sal Marrello, Sonderbloom

Sheila Ruttan, Executive Director, Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corporation

Jessica Plummer, Artist, Bridge Building Group

Stephanie Mikki Adams, OAC Co-Chair and Executive Director, Inuuqatigiit Centre for Inuit Children, Youth and Families

Frances Daly, Director, Oshki Kizis Lodge

Jennifer Ramnarine, Legislative Assistant, Office of Councillor Jessica Bradley, City of Ottawa

Cecilia Perez, Manager, Alluriarniq Program, Tungasuvvingat Inuit

Rhonda Taylor, Senior Designer and Project Coordinator, Two Row Architect

Jacqueline Daniel, Intern Architect, Two Row Architect

Barb Wolfe, IHR Relational Facilitator, Tewegan Housing for Aboriginal Youth

Marianna Rankin, Counsellor, Alluriarniq, Tungasuvvingat Inuit

Angeline Lvalu, Outreach Worker, Alluriarniq, Tungasuvvingat Inuit

Nathalia Hernandez, Case Manager Alluriarniq, Tungasuvvingat Inuit

Janice Messam, Family Well-Being Program, Inuuqatigiit Centre for Inuit Children, Youth and Families

Carolle Boivin, Manager of Community Initiatives and Mental Health, Inuuqatigiit Centre for Inuit Children, Youth and Families

Kendra Tagoona, Director of Programs, Inuuqatigiit Centre for Inuit Children, Youth and Families

Norma Ventruea, Prenatal/Postnatal Program Worker, Tungasuvvingat Inuit

Karina Skov, Executive Director, Tewegan Housing for Aboriginal Youth

Paul Lavigne, Director of Housing Services, City of Ottawa

