



## Summary of the Day of Reflection on Anti-Bullying (April 24, 2015)

### Aboriginal consultation process

The Day of Reflection on Anti-Bullying was held on April 24, 2015 and co-chaired by Geoffrey Kelley, Minister responsible for Native Affairs, and Francine Charbonneau, Minister of Families, Minister responsible for Seniors and Minister responsible for Anti-Bullying. Representatives from fifteen Aboriginal organizations, listed in Appendix I, discussed the phenomenon of bullying. They illustrated the forms that bullying can take, identified its causes, recommended approaches for the future action plan, suggested courses of action<sup>1</sup> for prevention, intervention and support, and presented current actions being taken in this regard. This document summarizes the observations noted over the course of the day.

### Definition of bullying and general considerations

Everyone agrees it is important to define bullying and encourage the First Nations and Inuit to talk about it openly. It is also essential to learn about and understand the various concepts that may be involved, including racism and discrimination, without limiting bullying to those phenomena. It is likewise necessary to identify the consequences of bullying. Since bullying is sometimes linked to other issues, possible courses of action that do not pertain specifically to bullying are presented in Appendix II.

Several participants translated the term “bullying” into their language. This helped clarify the concept of bullying by taking Aboriginal perspectives into account.

Language	Term	Meaning
Innu	<i>Ka natu-piuenumakanit</i>	Person that someone is trying to put down
	<i>Ka ui shetshiakanit</i>	Person who wants to frighten someone
	<i>Pieunimeu</i>	He scares people
	<i>Kuetshishetsheu/ Kuetishetsheu</i>	Person who constantly frightens others
Inuktitut	<i>Sunaunngititsiniq</i>	Act in such a way that the person feels unimportant, as if he or she didn't deserve any consideration or attention. In such a way that the person is reduced to nothing
	<i>Pilukattaunig</i>	Person who is abused

Examples of intimidation were provided throughout the day. Participants noted that bullying can sometimes be silent, without witnesses, but that there is always a victim and a perpetrator. It was also pointed out that bullying is related to power dynamics.

1. Some suggestions presented during the Day of Reflection appear in the briefs submitted in parallel to the Anti-Bullying Forum and briefs filed in conjunction with the drafting process of the Governmental Action Plan against Racism and Discrimination towards Aboriginal People.

Representatives of Aboriginal organizations reported that the consequences of bullying include absenteeism and even dropping out of school, as well as a loss of self-esteem that can sometimes lead to suicide.

Finally, some participants asserted that Aboriginal people witness bullying or are victims of it from early childhood.

### **Causes of bullying**

The accounts presented demonstrate that bullying against Aboriginal people is both individual and systemic. Its foundations lie particularly in the colonial past and policies of forced assimilation. For many people, the consequences on the social and family fabric as well as on the vitality of Aboriginal cultures and languages have been devastating. The Aboriginal people are still feeling the after-effects today.

It also appears that bullying experienced by individuals is expressed differently depending on whether it occurs in communities or outside of communities. For example, representatives of organizations working in Nunavik presented certain peculiarities of northern communities, including the fact that older adults are especially at risk when it comes to bullying. Indeed, the critical shortage of housing and facilities for older adults in Nunavik communities make them more vulnerable to bullying.

In urban areas, the phenomenon of bullying takes specific forms because of the sometimes difficult cohabitation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and the interrelations between bullying, racism and discrimination that are diffusely present in Québec society. Regarding relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, prejudice appears to be the result of ignorance and a lack of awareness.

Similarly, situations where government stakeholders, who have very little awareness of Aboriginal realities, spread prejudice or maintain a paternalistic attitude can also be perceived as a form of bullying against Aboriginal people. Moreover, the fact that bullying against Aboriginal people can be tolerated by the police was deplored.

It was likewise mentioned that bullying and particularly cyberbullying are not solely fueled by citizens, but also by the journalistic treatment of Aboriginal issues.

## **Recommended approach**

According to those who participated in the Day of Reflection, the following considerations should be taken into account:

- Recognize that bullying against Aboriginal people is especially linked to their identity and that racism and discrimination can lead to bullying situations.
- Deal with the phenomenon of bullying in a specific way, with different means, even though it is closely related to discrimination and racism.
- Adopt a systemic approach: improving living conditions could help in the fight against bullying.
- Foster mobilization and commitment at all levels (family, community and national).
- Advocate culturally appropriate approaches and adopt a perspective that is at once holistic, multi-level (involving all decision-making levels), multigenerational (focusing on means of action adapted to the realities experienced by young people, families and older adults) and that is differentiated according to gender.
- Ensure that all communities benefit from the interventions implemented.
- Include concrete, sustainable measures that recognize the characteristics of each nation, and even each community.
- Support the development and implementation of initiatives by First Nations and Inuit in the fight against bullying.
- Involve the Aboriginal organizations in the collaborative action plan, in both its development and implementation.
- Promote the expertise available in the communities.
- Regularly inform Aboriginal communities and organizations.

## **Possible approaches for prevention, intervention and support**

A wide variety of possible approaches for prevention, intervention and support were proposed by the participants during this Day of Reflection. Moreover, many actions are underway in the communities. Examples are provided in Appendix III.

- Prevent discrimination by promoting an inclusive society that values and recognizes the diversity of cultures, especially Aboriginal cultures. Creating an inclusive society is a collective responsibility (government, communities, leaders, schools, all players, etc.).
- Prevent bullying by focusing on self-esteem:
  - Highlight positive Aboriginal role models;
  - Promote the cultures and languages of the First Nations and Inuit;
  - Equip parents and grandparents, who could contribute to the prevention of bullying by helping build the self-esteem of Aboriginal youth.

- Integrate the values of the First Nations and Inuit (for example: mutual assistance, respect, listening, courage, wisdom, truth, kindness and love) into prevention, intervention and support initiatives, while at the same time respecting Aboriginal cultural diversity.
- Educate and inform the general public about Aboriginal realities:
  - Conduct awareness-raising campaigns against racism and discrimination against Aboriginal people;
  - Promote First Nations Wellness Day, organized by the First Nations of Québec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (February 1).
- Educate and inform Aboriginal people:
  - Conduct awareness campaigns adapted to the cultural contexts of First Nations and Inuit;
  - Use social networks, media and multimedia to ensure reaching young people;
  - Train students and parents.
- Educate and inform government employees:
  - Educate police and judicial authorities as well as civil servants in order to counter their own prejudices and ensure that aggressions are acknowledged and punished;
  - Educate civil servants about Aboriginal realities;
  - Stop comparing the First Nations and Inuit to other population groups using data or statistics that are generally disadvantageous to them without clarifying the historical and social contexts that could explain the disparities.
- Educate and inform Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders (volunteers, teachers, stakeholders working in the communities, social workers, school and healthcare facility staff, friendship centre staff, etc.). For example:
  - Train and educate stakeholders working in Aboriginal environments about Aboriginal realities;
  - Train stakeholders who provide guidance to young people, particularly in their approach to reporting and rehabilitation;
  - Educate stakeholders about Aboriginal culture, history and realities;
  - Develop initial online training for stakeholders who will be working in Aboriginal environments;
  - Develop continuing professional education on bullying that includes aspects adapted to the contexts of First Nations and Inuit;
  - Also make training accessible to the communities whose telecommunications do not allow for online training;
  - Support the cultural adaptation of tools and training.

- Promote civic education, the prevention of bullying and the inclusion of Aboriginal realities in the Québec school curriculum:
  - Revise the history curriculum to include the contemporary history of Aboriginal people, including the residential schools period;
  - Teach children behaviour that is characterized by civic spirit, courtesy, kindness;
  - Develop civic education in all environments including cyberspace;
  - Foster self-esteem, cultural pride and leadership skills among Aboriginal students in order to counter the feeling of powerlessness experienced by victims;
  - Draw inspiration from the traditional Aboriginal teaching approach to include experimentation in teaching strategies;
  - Build on educational tools based on past successes and that promote a positive approach;
  - Work on developing healthy relations between men and women;
  - Continue the initiatives undertaken over the past two years as part of a partnership with the Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche (MEESR) (for example: schools in Aboriginal communities are asked to develop projects to prevent or counter bullying and the MEESR awards \$2,500 per school to encourage the school team to complete the project).
  
- Prioritize action involving certain key groups, such as:
  - 0-to-5-year-olds enrolled in daycare centres;
  - Pupils from 6 to 12 years of age (period when individuals acquire their social skills);
  - Young people in general;
  - Aboriginal women and girls, insofar as they are subject to double discrimination (being Aboriginal and a woman);
  - Adults, since they have a responsibility to be role models and must be able to help their children or grandchildren develop social skills;
  - The family, which must be included during psychosocial interventions rather than favouring strategies that focus primarily on individuals.
  
- Help people targeted by bullying, perpetrators and witnesses:
  - Encourage the reporting of bullying, while respecting victims who do not wish to report the perpetrators for fear of being ostracized or destroying the family fabric;
  - Provide for support networks;
  - Protect people who are doing well so they can help others;
  - Work on healing families, individuals, communities;
  - Do not forget to give victims a say;
  - Foster reconciliation;
  - Build on a holistic type of healing aimed especially at the perpetrator (healing process through awareness and rehabilitation, work on the four dimensions of humankind and belief in the possibility to change the perpetrator who committed the acts of violence);
  - Provide for differentiated intervention based on gender, since girls and boys do not bully in the same way;

- Give individuals the power to choose, to lead a healthy life, to recognize and appreciate others as they are;
  - Raise awareness among witnesses to bullying so that they can recognize problematic situations and report them to the competent authorities;
  - Broaden the scope of services provided in shelters to adapt them to Aboriginal culture (for example: curative sites in natural environments, sharing and healing circles);
  - Take the specificity of Aboriginal contexts into account (remoteness of communities<sup>2</sup>, staff turnover, needs for translating and adapting material to Aboriginal realities).
- Take a stand against bullying in public policies:
    - Include the actions in the guidelines of action plans to ensure continuity;
    - In the coordinated action plan on bullying, provide for a specificity that is unique to First Nations and Inuit;
    - Include bullying in the governance policies of institutions: schools and centres for older adults, in particular, should be equipped with rules of governance that identify bullying as a reality to be eradicated;
    - Support educational institutions in developing an anti-violence and anti-bullying policy that takes Aboriginal realities into account.
- Foster collaboration and dialogue:
    - Provide for an ongoing forum on bullying;
    - Challenge the government departments concerned and ensure that they work collaboratively: issues pertaining to education, justice, health, family, public safety, social services, etc.;
    - Continue and enhance relations and partnerships between First Nations schools, the Cree School Board and Kativik School Board schools, and the MEESR;
    - Structure the network of Aboriginal communities by establishing official consultation and mobilization mechanisms (tables, groups, forums): First Nations and Inuit should work together, find ways to engage in discussions;
    - Form an anti-bullying committee by and for Aboriginal people;
    - Implement a multi-level strategy: local (social workers, police services, etc.), regional (tools, sharing, etc.), etc.;
    - Get all members of the community to participate, focus on community involvement, promote dialogue within communities (politicians, schools, social services, public safety, older adults, etc.);
    - Make university resources more accessible to communities (for example: the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite at Université du Québec à Chicoutimi) for training, developing materials and support for students;

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2. As an example, the Kativik School Board's 17 schools are located in 14 Inuit villages spread over a vast territory.

- Ensure the consistency and efficiency of actions in urban areas by establishing a partnership between the Québec government and Aboriginal Friendship Centres. Friendship Centres are effective intervention locations and living environments that operate within a culturally relevant and reassuring framework. They can:
  - reach Aboriginal people in urban areas since they are present in ten cities in Québec (Val-d’Or, La Tuque, Sept-Îles, Joliette, Québec City, Chibougamau, Senneterre, Saguenay, Trois-Rivières and Montréal),
  - reach different age groups through the various services they provide,
  - participate in drafting an action plan to prevent and counter bullying,
  - contribute to the development, implementation and assessment of actions,
  - devise training and campaigns to reach Aboriginal people.
  
- Share knowledge, experiences, successes and failures:
  - Have a venue for dissemination, frames of reference;
  - Build and disseminate an inventory of best practices, success stories, and actions underway for prevention, intervention and support;
  - Establish an information-sharing network among communities and between Aboriginal people and other civil society organizations in Québec;
  - Share the MEESR’s knowledge and expertise with First Nations schools, Cree School Board and Kativik School Board schools, and Aboriginal organizations that provide services;
  - Ensure the sustainability of projects and initiatives that work.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED DURING THE DAY OF REFLECTION**

- Assembly of First Nations of Québec and Labrador
- First Nations and Inuit Suicide Prevention Association of Québec and Labrador
- Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite
- Naskapi CLSC
- First Nations of Québec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission
- First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Québec
- Kativik School Board
- Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay
- First Nations Education Council
- Québec Native Women Inc.
- Tshakapesh Institute
- Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services
- Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec
- First Nations of Québec and Labrador Youth Network
- Makivik Corporation

## **APPENDIX II**

### **PROBLEMS OTHER THAN BULLYING**

Issues that went beyond bullying were addressed on April 24. We felt it important to include, in this appendix, the possible actions that were suggested.

#### **Background**

On the one hand, the weakening of family ties resulting from residential schools and the current high rate of placement of Aboriginal children in non-Aboriginal families have been recognized as part of the portrait of systemic discrimination.

On the other hand, lack of housing, poverty, difficult living conditions and the under-funding of educational services, health services and social services play a major role in the social problems experienced by Aboriginal people. Indeed, some speakers stressed that social and economic precariousness and poor quality of infrastructure are risk factors that make community members more vulnerable.

#### **Possible solutions**

- Provide services for men with violent behaviours or who are subjected to violence.
- Continue to support the Aboriginal component of the Action Plan on Domestic Violence.
- Continue work on drafting the Governmental Action Plan against Racism and Discrimination towards Aboriginal People, taking into account the many briefs that were submitted.
- Devise Aboriginal-specific intervention standards and protocols for police services.
- Culturally adapt legal services to ensure compliance with rights and equality.
- Inform Aboriginal people, particularly women, of their rights and existing forms of redress, and foster access to legal aid.
- Establish a defence league for the rights of Aboriginal peoples.
- Initiate a meeting table for Aboriginal groups from each university in Québec.
- Ensure accessibility to quality services in remote areas, giving special consideration to women.
- Provide families with financial assistance equivalent to what is available to foster families.
- Invest financially in programs that are currently available and ensure their accessibility.

## APPENDIX III

### EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY TO PREVENT AND COUNTER BULLYING

- Aboriginal cultural awareness days (Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite).
- The Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples Conference (partnership between the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite and the MEESR).
- “Sous le Shaputuan” (under the shaputuan) awareness-building program aimed at changing the perception that young Quebecers have of Aboriginal people. To date, about 70,000 young people have been met (Tshakapesh Institute).
- Annual anti-racism and anti-bullying week organized with schools and the school board (Val-d’Or).
- Aboriginal awareness course offered as one of the elective courses in secondary 4 and 5 (Val-d’Or).
- Conferences, programs in all schools, research on best international practices (Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay).
- Initiatives to counter the mistreatment of older adults (Nunavik):
  - Development of the Nunavik Action Plan to counter the mistreatment of older adults (in progress);
  - Six awareness-building campaigns;
  - Construction of intergenerational dwellings;
  - Community initiatives to establish family dwellings.
- Saqijjuq project aimed at understanding and fighting drug addiction in Nunavik and the problems stemming from it.
- Collaboration between the school board and police force for a student awareness-building tour (Kativik School Board).
- MEESR grant totalling \$2,500 per school, which made it possible to mobilize schools and come up with extremely diverse ideas: purchasing the WITS Program, plays, conferences and training, drafting a life code, etc.
- First Nations Wellness Day (February 1 – First Nations of Québec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission).
- Development of guides and tools for communities, families and school staff, development of a program to foster social skills and positive attitudes (Tshakapesh Institute).
- Forthcoming: teaching material for the personal and social training course in Nunavik (Kativik School Board).
- Awareness building for the École nationale de police training academy and for unions, course given by Aboriginal people (Aboriginal women of Québec) at Université du Québec à Montréal.
- Youth development program: Leadership Camp (Tim Horton Children’s Foundation).
- Establishment of a memorandum of understanding to ensure a smooth transition between the children, schools and community of Manawan and make teachers, education counselors and the administration aware of the social, cultural, historical and political reality of Aboriginal people (Centre d’amitié autochtone de Joliette).

Actions undertaken outside Québec can also be sources of inspiration:

- An approach introduced in the Indian Schools proved successful and was subsequently adapted for all schools in Oklahoma. It entails pairing high school students with grade two pupils to use theatre to define role models for non-violence. The grade two children then become messengers of non-violence in their families.