

**Family and Cultural Renewal Centre  
Conceptual Outline – DRAFT 2  
February 5, 2001**

Innu culture thrives in the country, however experience has taught us that it suffers in a community setting, and a number of social ailments and a foreign value system have taken its place. The Mushuau Innu have been caught in a cycle of addictions, abuse and despair – country based treatment programs have successfully broken the cycle in the past, however a community based cultural program is needed in order to prevent the cycle from recurring. There is a need for a way to keep Innu culture strong in the new community of Natuashish.

The Family and Cultural Renewal Centre will be an adaptive, multi-purpose centre to serve this purpose, and is a central part of the Mushuau Innu Long Term Healing plan. After undergoing detox, clinical treatment, cultural re-attachment and family treatment, the Centre will be used to support, re-affirm and strengthen Innu cultural values and the healing process in the community of Natuashish.

This type of centre falls within Health Canada's mandate, as agreed in the December 12<sup>th</sup> agreement. Specifically, this agreement states that "Health Canada is prepared to support the Mushuau Innu...including both short and long term treatment and prevention." The third and fifth bullet points of the agreement are also relevant, and state that Health Canada will work with the Mushuau Innu on developing a culturally appropriate family-centred treatment plan, and to explore other necessary long term initiatives in the mandate of Health Canada to repair the social and cultural fabric of the communities of Davis Inlet and Natuashish." The Family and Cultural Renewal Centre falls within these commitments.

Once the Family and Cultural Renewal Centre has been built and is operational, it will take over some programs, such as the mobile treatment program, at a considerable cost savings.

The Family and Cultural Renewal Centre will work closely with the Health Commission, the Goose Bay Clinic and the Band Council, through strengthening the cultural component of these agencies' programs. Counsellors from the Health Commission will be able to use the Family and Cultural Renewal Centre for training and counselling, and will also work on the crisis team to support the crisis centre. The Goose Bay Clinic will be able to access the Family and Cultural Renewal Centre to strengthen the cultural component to its treatment plans. The Band Council will be able to use the Centre and the Family Healing Lodge for meetings, celebrations, the mobile treatment program and other community events.

The Family and Cultural Renewal Centre will have seven key elements to be incorporated into the design of the building.

#### **Elders Centre**

The Family and Cultural Renewal Centre will be a place for elders to meet to visit, practice their skills and pass on Innu culture in a community setting. There will be space for making traditional tools and crafts, such as snowshoes, moccasins and other clothes, tents, smoked caribou hide and tools such as crooked knives. This will help enable the elders to act as mentors to youth and young adults in the community. There will be a place for elders to tell stories and pass on the Innu legends to their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

This will also be a place where elders can care for the spiritual needs of the community and animals. There will be a place to store the sacred parts of the caribou, to prepare the mukushan, to hold the mukushan feast and to hold a drum dance. There will be a place to build sweat lodges outside. There will be a communal freezer, where elders and hunters can store the animals they kill (especially useful in the summer) and distribute them in the community.

#### **After Care and Follow-up Programs**

Some after care and follow-up programs will be run in the Family and Cultural Renewal Centre. Counsellors from other agencies will work with the Centre staff to provide a strong cultural component to after care programs, such as support groups, mentoring, gatherings and other cultural activities. Some follow-up programs can be run by the Family and Cultural Renewal Centre, such as helping clients to review the cultural the cultural component of programs and evaluate if this is helping the clients to change their behaviour.

#### **Training**

Training programs will be periodically available for counsellors and community members on topics of interest and relevance, such as sexual abuse education, suicide intervention and counselling. Initially, outside trainers may be required to provide training, but eventually Innu staff will provide all training.

#### **Stabilisation Unit and Crisis Centre**

The Family and Cultural Renewal Centre will have a family stabilisation unit and crisis centre in case families or individuals find themselves in a crisis situation. This will be a safe place where families or individuals can stay for a short period (a few nights) while their crisis is addressed, or they can be moved to a longer term treatment facility, such as the Family Healing Lodge. The stabilisation unit should have three units and laundry, shower and kitchen facilities.

The crisis centre will support the stabilisation unit through human resources, intervention and care, resources (publications, videos, posters, etc...) and training.

### **Cultural Programs**

The Family and Cultural Renewal Centre will be a centre for running a variety of cultural programs for the community. Some of these activities have already been described, such as the mukushan and drum dance. Other activities include youth camps and gatherings at the Family Healing Lodge and elsewhere in the country, adult gatherings that are run as part of follow up programs, and a hunter subsidy program, which is run as part of the outpost program. Activities will also be run within the Family and Cultural Renewal Centre.

### **Library and Research Centre**

There will be a library of historical and contemporary documents and videos. The goal of the library will be to document the living culture of the Innu, both past and present, rather than to serve as a museum to preserve old documents and artefacts. The library will continuously research historical materials, i.e. tracking down old journals and collecting early photographs and films, as well as conduct current research on Innu culture, such as documenting Innu legends and place names. The library will have the capacity to archive materials and distribute these materials to community members, such as digital video equipment, photocopier and a scanner and colour printer. The information gathered at this library will also serve as a valuable resource to anthropologists and other researchers.

- **Storage**

The programs run out of the Family and Cultural Renewal Centre will involve a lot of equipment such as axes, chainsaws, tents, ice augers and other items. There will be a secure place to store this equipment.

### **Staff and Responsibilities**

Elder – to oversee and guide the operation of the Family and Cultural Renewal Centre.

Receptionist – to receive visitors and be responsible for the day to day office co-ordination of the Centre.

Cultural worker – to assist the elders and help run the cultural programs.

Crisis worker and crisis team – the crisis worker will co-ordinate the crisis team (addictions counsellor, other counsellors social services, home care worker), which will be called in whenever there is a family in crisis.

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Program officer – responsible for planning, resourcing and implementing programs run by the Family and Cultural Renewal Centre.  
Researcher (periodic) – will conduct various research projects when funding is available.

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**Family Healing Lodge  
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The Family Healing Lodge is a multi-purpose facility that will support the Family and Cultural Renewal Centre. It will be used for mobile treatment programs, longer-term family stabilisation, country based training programs, cultural programs and youth programs. It will make it easier for families engaged in the healing process to access the country by removing barriers associated with travelling to the country.

The Lodge will consist of a main building for meeting, training and group counselling, two offices for staff and programming, and kitchen. Amenities will be basic but allow for clean and comfortable living – for example, a small amount of electricity will be available through solar panels, composting toilets may be used, a hand pump will deliver water from a well under the lodge and garbage will be incinerated or taken back to Natuashish for proper disposal.

Five family units will be built around the Lodge for families to live in during mobile treatment programs, if they are facing a crisis situation and have to be removed from the community for a short period of time. These units will also be basic but comfortable. They will also be available for youth camps, gatherings, mobile treatment and other activities. For larger gatherings, tents may be set up as well to accommodate more people.