



Suvaguuq

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PAUKTUTIT INUIT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

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Elder Informs Youth on the History of Tobacco



Alicee Joamie, Iqaluit Elder, addressing participants at the National Inuit Youth Council workshop.

Alicee Joamie, an Inuk Elder from Iqaluit, Nunavut, spoke about her experiences and memories of the tobacco trade in the North. She was addressing the National Inuit Youth Council (NIYC) in Ottawa at their Tobacco Strategy Workshop in September of 2002. Here are some of the points she made through interpretation.

I will not tell anyone to quit right now and I don't say smokers are not good people. We were told tobacco was very good when it first came.

We had a misunderstanding—we thought that tobacco was important and that it was needed.

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Elder Informs cont'd

My father told me that tobacco was first introduced in 1918. The tobacco (in the form of black rolled up leaves) came on a ship and it was left outside of the dwelling. I am part Cree. They said it was to be smoked in rolling papers. First it was cut up and then some plants (like wick material) from the land were mixed with it because the tobacco was too strong. Tobacco also came in a block that had to be crushed before rolling. When the whalers and traders came, the most prized trading commodity was tobacco and there wasn't enough to go around. It could take between six months and a year before the next trading time.

In the olden days, Inuit did not consume as much. More days were spent not smoking and it would be shared. Even when I was young we were not to smoke until the age of 20 and we had to listen to our parents. Today it's different—young people do whatever they want. We were all told that we should smoke as adults. Even the sexual favours of some men's wives were traded for tobacco.



Looee Arreak presenting on her work with Iqaluit youth and reducing tobacco use to the NIYC workshop.



NIYC workshop presenters, organizers and participants: (from back left) Onalee Randell, Blair Stevenson, Looee Arreak, Naomi Pudluk, Janina Gruben, Heather Angnath, Tanya Butt, (from middle left) Bernadette Dean, Alice Joamie, Jackson Lindell, Adamie Padlayat, Roz Levy, (front) Catherine Carry.



Dr. Selby giving a presentation on nicotine addiction and other medical information.

We used wooden, ivory or bone pipes to smoke. We also used tea leaves as they were the same colour as tobacco. Anything that looked like tobacco would be used to satisfy the cravings. In the 1940s, Americans brought real cigarettes. These were more popular than Canadian formats.

I quit in 1982 and it was very hard for me. The doctors and nurses recommended that I quit, but I was in denial—I was hiding behind my smoking. I continued to receive advice from the doctors. I have realized that smoking has damaged my body. Since I quit, I can see and smell better and my breathing, my hair and my nails are also better now. There is proof out there that tobacco is not healthy. Even though there are costs, we can use radio, health committees and partnering, etc. to raise awareness.

I am glad that chewing tobacco was mentioned in the presentations today, as I saw someone die because of it. A doctor told me that turning to chewing tobacco wouldn't help. It is difficult to get away from something popular. We need to promote the benefits of working together and we must keep moving forward even though the work will not be easy. The health effects all need to

be talked about. In pregnant women, smoking affects the fetus.

We also need to do something about the cigarette butts left around. Special containers could help keep the butts away from children. We have to care for ourselves and become informed, but we can't just receive advice—we need to act. Time is of the essence.



Sharing a delicious array of country foods at the NIYC workshop lunch.

Youth Video

Pauktuutit received funding to purchase one copy of a video for every Inuit community. *Smoking: Truth or Dare?* from the Teen Files Series. All communities have requested and received their copy. The video contains graphic and convincing material on the immediate and long-term effects of smoking. Inuit youth, adults and Elders commented that it would be an excellent resource for Inuit communities even though it is only in English and filmed in the United States. Additional copies of this video can be ordered directly from the distributor at approximately \$300 each: Canadian Learning Company – toll-free **1(800) 267-2977**.



Share Your News

Community stories are welcome additions to the newsletter. Please fax to (613) 238-1787, E-mail to ccarry@pauktuutit.on.ca or phone Catherine Carry at 1(800) 667-0749.

Grise Fiord

Pat – Health Centre: The *Smoking: Truth or Dare* video was shown to the school kids during National Non-Smoking Week. It had enough impact that three of the girls have quit and two boys have been in for patches. We will be showing it at the AIDS Fair in March as well.

Puvirnituk

Aline Roy – Community Health Nurse: We had a successful National Addictions Awareness Week. We focused mainly on drugs, sniffing and alcohol abuse, but since the majority of the population smokes, we also decided to choose activities on the health effects of smoking:

- A drawing contest was held for the students of Iguarsivik School and the public about the good and bad effects of addictions in their lives – most of the participants did drawings on the negative effects of



Puvirnituk drawing contest winner, Tamika Crosbie, and Larry Putuguq, Alternative Measures Program Coordinator.

cigarettes in their environment and how happy they would feel without these. (I was surprised to discover that young children are aware of the bad effects of smoking.)

- We held radio shows on different topics, mainly on the negative effects of smoking. Qumaluk Iqiquq, an elderly ex-smoker, talked about his own experiences. I talked about the health effects.
- Our last event was held in the school gymnasium for the community. More than 400 people attended—mostly young. We were very proud. Sarah Sivuraapik, who stopped smoking 17 years ago, did a puppet show

In Memoriam

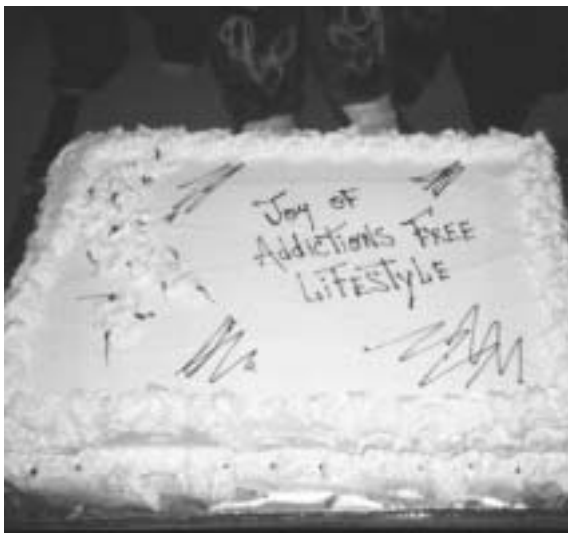
This edition is dedicated to two health workers who passed away in the last year – Janet Pilgrim and Simon Iyyiraq. Janet was a Community Health Worker in Postville, Labrador. Simon was a Community Health Representative in Igloodik, Nunavut. Both of these special people made many efforts to improve the health of their communities including reducing tobacco use. We will miss them.



Puvirnitug games for National Addictions Awareness Week in the school gym.

to talk about her experiences. She captivated everyone's attention as not a sound could be heard during her show!

Some members of the organizing committee for these events had never organized such an event in their lives before. They realized all the potential they had and the



Puvirnitug Addictions Awareness Week theme cake.

activities went really well. Next, I plan to organize sessions for people who want to stop smoking and I'll focus on the students at school.

Inuvik

Alfred Moses – Community Health Representative: During National Non-Smoking Week, I usually go into the schools and do presentations to the students and staff. I also hold a tobacco exchange where anyone in the community can exchange their cigarettes for some gum, suckers or a piece of candy. The focus is on putting something else in your mouth other than a cigarette. At the end of the week, I destroy the cigarettes.

I use a lot of visuals to get the point across. The more pictures and presentable material that I have of tobacco reality, the better—real people with real diseases and problems caused by tobacco.

I have also focused on the sale of cigarettes to youth and minors and the consequences of being caught.



I discuss Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) with youth and pregnant women. I use a tool from the N.W.T. Public Health Association. It's a can of air spray with a list of how many carcinogenic chemicals are found in one cigarette. I ask the public if I could spray it around the room. The normal reaction is "NO". It demonstrates that we don't care when people smoke around us because we don't know what's in a cigarette. When we say that we are spraying carcinogens in the air, then people get concerned.

Lately, I'm taking a more positive approach and letting the public know what happens to them the minute they decide to quit. There's a great program from B.C. that I use that focuses on youth: *Kick the Nic*. At the end of presentations, I leave the kids with a slogan or messages to tell their parents or family members who smoke. These are quite effective as I have been approached by parents telling me how it has helped them to change a bit.

Lessons Learned

An independent evaluation of the *Aniqsaattiarniq—Breathing Easy* training activities held between 1999 and 2002 was recently completed. The evaluators contacted 47 of the 114 health, education and community workers who received training on how to use Pauktuutit's materials effectively to reduce tobacco use among Inuit. Here's a summary of their findings:

Almost all participants were highly satisfied with the training immediately following the workshops and about 90 per cent (nine out of every ten) were still satisfied long afterward. Sixty per cent (six out of every ten) of those who received training applied their new knowledge and skills and/or used the training materials a number of times afterwards. Pauktuutit provided the training program at far less cost than most other northern training programs.

One of the reasons we do evaluation is to find out what are the important lessons that were learned in a

project so we can build on the things that worked and improve on other areas. Here are some of those lessons:

- Training regional facilitators to act as resource persons following their training is an effective strategy.
- Scheduling workshops immediately following training of co-facilitators enables them to immediately apply what they have learned.
- Having a qualified evaluator as a member of the implementation team is an effective way to get constructive feedback in order to improve the training design and delivery as the program is implemented.
- Strong partnerships between Pauktuutit and the regional health authorities and regional Inuit organizations makes for good results, particularly in relation to follow-up after training.

Copies of the complete report "*Evaluation of Training Aniqsaattiarniq—Breathing Easy* Project November 1999 to March 31, 2002" are available from Pauktuutit.



Free Posters

Some children are dying for a breath of fresh air. Local translations of the message can be written on the back of this poster.

Welcome to our smoke-free home sign. Six Inuktitut versions with English on the back will be available soon.

These and Pauktuutit's older tobacco posters are now available for free. Call **1(800) 667-0749** to order.



