

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

**REPORT TO THE COMMISSION D'ENQUETTE SUR LES RELATIONS
ENTRE LES AUTOCHTONES ET CERTAINS SERVICES PUBLICS**

**From: Martin Scott /Expert Witness
Administrator of the Tumiapiit Justice Committee of Aupaluk**

I am adding the following comments on important issues that I overlooked in my first report.

EVENT (Lack of resources, including assessment for youth and accused that may suffer from FASD):

More of our younger Justice Committee clients, especially Young Offenders, seem to have issues with the inability to control impulsive behaviours, as well as having some mental health issues including deficiencies with cognitive abilities.

There is a sense that these clients have histories of such behaviours, possibly due to FASD, yet the hospital and school systems lack the resources to even have assessments done for these individuals in their youth. Quebec, as a province, does not seem to recognize the importance of FASD, especially in our northern communities, such that access to assessment or any resources specifically for individuals with FASD, are so inaccessible that they simply do not exist for our population.

Once these individuals are in the criminal court system, Lawyers are now recognizing that these clients may have special needs that they as defense lawyers, or the court, do not have any way to assess. These lawyers now know that they are sending people suffering from FASD to jail, usually with reduced sentences, without any real solution to their condition, and that they are most likely to reoffend due to the general inability to control impulsive behaviours.

It is my understanding that courts in the Western Canadian provinces do recognize FASD and that the court system requires and provides assessment for clients suspected as such. There are even special streams of the court for those confirmed to have FASD that consider the fact and provide special housing or assisted living for such individuals instead of jail time.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Youth suspected of being on the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder spectrum must be evaluated and assessed while they are young, either by the health centers or the schools.

For adults in the court system, professional assessment for FASD must be readily available and the courts must consider alternatives to incarceration, including assisted living arrangements.

This will require the province of Quebec to recognize the seriousness of FASD in the entire population and especially in indigenous communities, as well as providing resources including prevention counseling, assessment, family support for youth, adult support, and for the courts to consider alternatives to incarceration.

EVENT (Lack of specific court hearings for conjugal violence with programs and follow-up as part of sentencing):

The number of cases of repeat conjugal violence by one or both partners is high in our region. It is our understanding that other regions of Quebec offer specific court hearings and programs for repeat conjugal violence offenders to help them acquire tools to deal their unhealthy relationships to reduce their chances of re-offending.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Nunavik courts must provide specific hearings for conjugal violence with mandatory programs and follow-up as part of the sentencing.

Prevention of re-offending through programs dealing with Multi-Generational Trauma and specifically Healthy Relationships would be possible once such programs, which have are being developed by the Makivik Justice Department, are part of sentencing for conjugal violence, with regular follow-ups as part of specific conjugal violence court hearings.

CONCLUSION:

I will conclude by stating that the lack of professional resources of every kind available in Nunavik and especially being available in the Inuktitut language must be addressed. Many more mental health professionals are needed to provide counseling for all the issues associated with multi-generational trauma. However, even when these services will be available in a second language, they will not be as effective as in the mother tongue. There is an urgent need for translation to ensure understanding of unfamiliar terms and concepts during any interaction with health practitioners, social services, police, and the court system.

I can only suggest that much more funding and resources must be made available to promote on-the-job training of Inuit to become consistent interpreters and trainees for all levels of services and ultimately to take on these positions as soon as possible. Indeed, the JBNQA seemed to be geared to allow for Inuit being trained by southern professionals by providing full housing and travel benefits to southerners until Inuit would be ready to provide the services themselves. Instead the southern professionals seem to keep coming and going over the decades, while the effort to involve or train Inuit is minimal.

Thank you once again for this opportunity to provide some comments to the Commission.

Sincerely,

Martin Scott

Administrator, Tumiapiit Justice Committee of Aupaluk