



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.  
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.

# Meeting of the Native Shelters Network of Quebec

Post-pandemic meeting  
April 14, 2022

SHERATON HOTEL,  
MONTREAL — TIOHTIA : KE



## Acknowledgments

Quebec Native Women would like to acknowledge the dedicated work of the shelter workers who play an important role in collective healing.

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Services aux Autochtones Canada

Indigenous Services Canada

## Our organization

Quebec Native Women Inc (QNW) is a bilingual non-profit organization founded in 1974 as a community-based initiative. We represent Indigenous women from First Nations communities as well as Indigenous women living in urban areas.

QNW's mission is to support Indigenous women's efforts to improve their living conditions and those of their families through the promotion of non-violence, justice, equality, rights and health. In this context, we play a role in education, awareness and research, and provide a structure for women to be active in their communities.

## Native Shelters Network of Quebec

In 2003, the workers of Quebec's Native shelters joined together in a structure coordinated by Quebec Native Women: the Native Shelters Network of Quebec. The meetings of the Network are a place of exchange that allow us to maintain a solidity between our communities, and an exchange of strategies between partners.

## Réseau des maisons d'hébergement autochtones du Québec

### Native Shelters Network of Quebec



**SOS violence conjugale / SOS domestic violence**

**Pour joindre les maisons d'hébergement autochtones  
To contact a Native Shelter >>> 1-800-363-9010**

# Overview of the conference

On April 14, 2022, some twenty women gathered at a meeting of the Native Shelters Network of Quebec held at the Sheraton Hotel in Montreal.

This was the Network's first in-person meeting since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the last one having been held virtually in August. Participants included directors, clinical coordinators and caregivers from 13 of the Network's 14 shelters. Also in attendance were members of the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence (NACAFV), members of the Iskweu Project, and a member of the Kanesatake Health Centre.

The meeting was an opportunity for representatives of the various shelters and organizations to share the changes observed since the beginning of the pandemic, to update the needs that they, their employees and their users are facing, and to share tools and recommendations. The event also allowed for the creation, consolidation and strengthening of the links within the Network.

After the speech and the presentation of **Marjolaine Étienne**, new QNW President as of December 2021, **Claudette Dumont-Smith**, QNW Executive Director, took the floor. Both took advantage of these moments to recall the mission of the organization and the importance of getting together. It was then the turn of the participants to introduce themselves and the house or organization they represented.

The day continued with a presentation by **Julia Dubé**, coordinator of the development of material on non violence. She presented some of the projects realized by the Native Shelters Network of Quebec since its creation in 2003. She then presented a current project, the development of a new toolkit on non-violence for shelter workers.

Next, **Jessica Quijano** and her colleague **Nicole Janis Qavavauq-Bibeau** presented the Iskweu project, an initiative of the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal. "This project aims to address the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2ELGBTQQIA+ persons by accompanying the families and loved ones of missing persons in reporting the disappearance, by putting pressure on the person to be located in Montreal or across the province either with the help of the police or not, and by supporting the families in the tragic event of a homicide. After their presentation, there was a question and answer period.

After the lunch break, **Mary Hannaburg** from the Kanesatake Health Center led a talking circle with the women present. The participants shared their personal challenges in working in intervention.

Finally, **Geneviève Jacques-Gingras**, from the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC) presented the different tools, services and resources put in place by the Commission and available for sharing. These include materials, kits and guides, as well as workshops and training.

The day was a beautiful space of exchange and sharing, an opportunity to re-establish the links between women, houses and communities, and to reaffirm the solidarity present within the Network.



A few participants of the Quebec Native Women's Shelters' Network meeting  
April 14, 2022

# Issues facing Native shelters :

Finally, here are the main issues and observations made by the representatives of the Network's shelters, as well as by the various stakeholders who were present:

- Limited or closed access to shelters and their services due to community closures and lockdowns related to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Limited virtual support for domestic violence and addiction, due to measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Lack of clear policy, procedure and protocol in terms of measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the spread of the virus
- Lack of resources and space to manage isolations, quarantines and lockdowns related to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Protocols inconsistent with community realities
- Increase in violence against women in overcrowded homes
- Likely or unavoidable contact with an abusive ex, spouse, or husband due to the isolation of some communities
- Lack of resources for seniors
- Lack of space in shelters
- Staffing shortages and burnout
- Lack of resources for a woman ending her stay in a shelter
- Lack of barrier-free shelters and access requirements related to substance use
- Lack of training for facilitation workers
- Lack of training for workers in geographically isolated communities
- High cost of bringing facilitators to remote areas
- Lack of tools and support for safety, including that of children
- Difficulty in finding English-speaking legal aid
- Lack of resources in education, housing, and employment
- Lack of funding
- Addiction to increasingly harder drugs
- Younger and younger users
- Need for resources to promote healthy parenting skills
- Change in drinking pattern
- Limitation of the role of workers who don't have the official title of "social worker", non-recognition of their skills and knowledge

In order to respond to these issues, here is a list of the needs and recommendations raised during this day:

- Maintaining and increasing connections and communications within the Network
- Maintaining and further developing safe spaces for communication and exchange for women
- Recognizing and valuing the role of the land as a means of healing
- Establishing therapies and healing centres in the territory
- Valuing and empowering the staff of shelters and services
- Healing services (access to culturally appropriate therapies) for shelter staff
- Building capacity of shelter workers to conduct trainings, workshops
- Developing and disseminating safety planning trainings, resources and tools that include women and children
- Developing and disseminating training to shelter staff, including facilitation
- Facilitating the dissemination of training to shelter staff, especially in remote communities (training costs and travel)
- Developing and disseminating training tools on mediation and communication in couples
- Developing and disseminating training tools on the new specialized courts
- Developing and disseminating training tools on navigating the justice system, particularly in terms of divorce applications, shared custody, parental alienation, youth protection law (C-92), etc.
- Developing and disseminating training tools on protective factors in communities
- Developing tools adapted to men
- Adapting the tools used by non-Native shelters on the risks of danger in domestic violence
- Raising awareness among CLSCs or the CIUSSS or designated domestic violence workers
- Diversification of resources and shelters in terms of barriers and access requirements, in terms of alcohol and drug use
- Developing education and employment resources
- Adopting a harm reduction and care approach within the various existing resources, instead of a repression-based approach
- Developing resources and services for seniors
- Collaborating and creating protocols between police forces and Indigenous individuals, communities and organizations in order to secure and improve the treatment of disappearances
- Distinguishing situations of sex work, exploitation and human trafficking in order to limit the presence of police and ensuring better security for individuals
- Raising awareness on the realities of women sex workers, in order to destigmatize and reduce judgments

# Participants

**Marjolaine Étienne**  
QNW President

**Claudette Dumont-Smith**  
QNW Executive Director

**Julia Dubé**  
Coordinator for the development of material on non violence at QNW

**Laura Rock**  
QNW Assistant Director

**Maureen Hervieux**  
Coordinator of the First Nations Action Plan Against Sexual Assault at QNW

**Sarah Tagoona**  
Director of the Tungasuvvik Women's Shelter, Inuit community of Kuujuaq

**Lynn Buckshot**  
Mobilization Coordinator for the National Indigenous Circle Against Family Violence, also a crisis intervention counselor and former Waseya House worker

**Suzanne Thran**  
Coordinator of Waseya House, Algonquin community of Kitigan Zibi

**Kathy Jessica Chachai**  
Support worker at the Missinak Community House, Quebec City

**Catherine Hervieux**  
Support worker at the Missinak Community House, Quebec City

**Brenda Crane Martin**  
Director of the Initsiaq Women's Shelter, Inuit community of Salluit

**Martha Petiquay**  
Head of Services, Atikamekw Onikam Social Services and Acting Chief of Services, Asperimowin Centre Atikamekw Nation Council in La Tuque

**Patricia Pittikwi-Larouche**  
Head of Services at the Centre Asperimowin and worker at the Foyer Mamo, Atikamekw Nation Council in La Tuque

**Lise Dominique**  
Director of the Ashpukun Mitshuap Centre, Innu community of Matimekush

**Cheyenne Vachon**  
Director of Kathleen Tooma's Beautiful Dawn Center, Naskapi community of Kawawachikamach

**Sheila Swasson**  
Director of Haven House, Listuguj Mi'gmaq Community and President of the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence

**Laura Vasquez**  
Planning, Programming and Research Officer for the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

**Émilie Legault**  
Director of the Tipinuaikan shelter, Innu community of Uashat Mak Mani-utenam

**Lorraine Chachai**  
Worker at the Nanikew shelter, Atikamekw community of Opitciwan

**Marie-Andrée Awashish**  
Interim director of the Nanikew shelter, Atikamekw community of Opitciwan

# Speakers

**Mary Jane Hannaburg**  
Mental Health Worker at the Kanien'kehá: ka Community Health Centre in Kanesatake

**Jessica Quijano**  
Iskweu Project, Native Women's Shelter of Montreal

**Nicole Janis Qavavauq-Bibeau**  
Iskweu Project, Native Women's Shelter of Montreal

**Geneviève Jacques-Gingras**  
Addiction and Violence Prevention Advisor, First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission

# Participant's comments

It was wonderful to come together as a network, to support each other, to share resources. Felt great to have an in-person meeting, I don't feel so isolated.

Un projet très intéressant (projet Iskweu), je suis soulagée de savoir que nous avons maintenant des ressources à ce sujet.

We should gather more often.

L'accessibilité aux services, quand on est pas à Montréal, c'est très apprécié, mais ça serait un rêve d'avoir ces services même en région.