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## Magnitude of the Problem: Key Facts in the NWT

- Mental illness is a major cost driver in the NWT. Approximately 8,800 people are estimated to have mental disorders that effect their daily functioning (emotions, work, family, health and safety). (Hylton, 1998).
- The NWT suicide rate is 2 times the national average. In small communities, one suicide or traumatic death has serious impact on almost all members (Department of Health and Social Services, 2002).
- The number of clients and complexity of cases is predicted to increase significantly. Hylton (1998) estimated an increase in services demand in the NWT by 50% over the next 10 years.
- Heavy alcohol use (consuming 5 or more drinks more than once a week) is 3 times the Canadian national average. (1995 NWT Alcohol and Drug Abuse Survey, NWT Bureau of Statistics)
- Solvent abuse is 6 times the Canadian National average. (1995 NWT Alcohol and Drug Abuse Survey, NWT Bureau of Statistics)
- Between 1996 and 2002 the rates of alcohol, marijuana and gambling increased (2002 NWT Alcohol and Drug Survey, NWT Bureau of Statistics)
- 82% of people in the NWT gambled in the last 12 months (2002 NWT Alcohol and Drug Survey, NWT Bureau of Statistics)
- 15% of women report drinking alcohol while pregnant. (2002 NWT Alcohol and Drug Survey, NWT Bureau of Statistics)
- Many of these women report traumatic events in their life for which they continue to search for appropriate help. (NWT Status of Women Council, 1995)
- 79% of aboriginal children in care in the first 6 months of 2003, were from homes where their parent(s) or caregiver(s) had addiction issues.(DHSS CFIS, 2003).
- Family Violence safe shelter admissions are 5 times the national average. Of those people needing safe shelters, over 50% are children.
- 23% of aboriginal children in care in the first 6 months of 2003, had experienced violence in the family
- 22 residential schools operated in the NWT from 1867 to 1997. Social, family, legal and treatment costs for those who experienced abuse are significant.
- The cost of NOT addressing trauma, substance abuse, and mental illness in the NWT can be measured by years of life lost, the inability to protect and nurture healthy children, take advantage of economic opportunities, and build social capital.