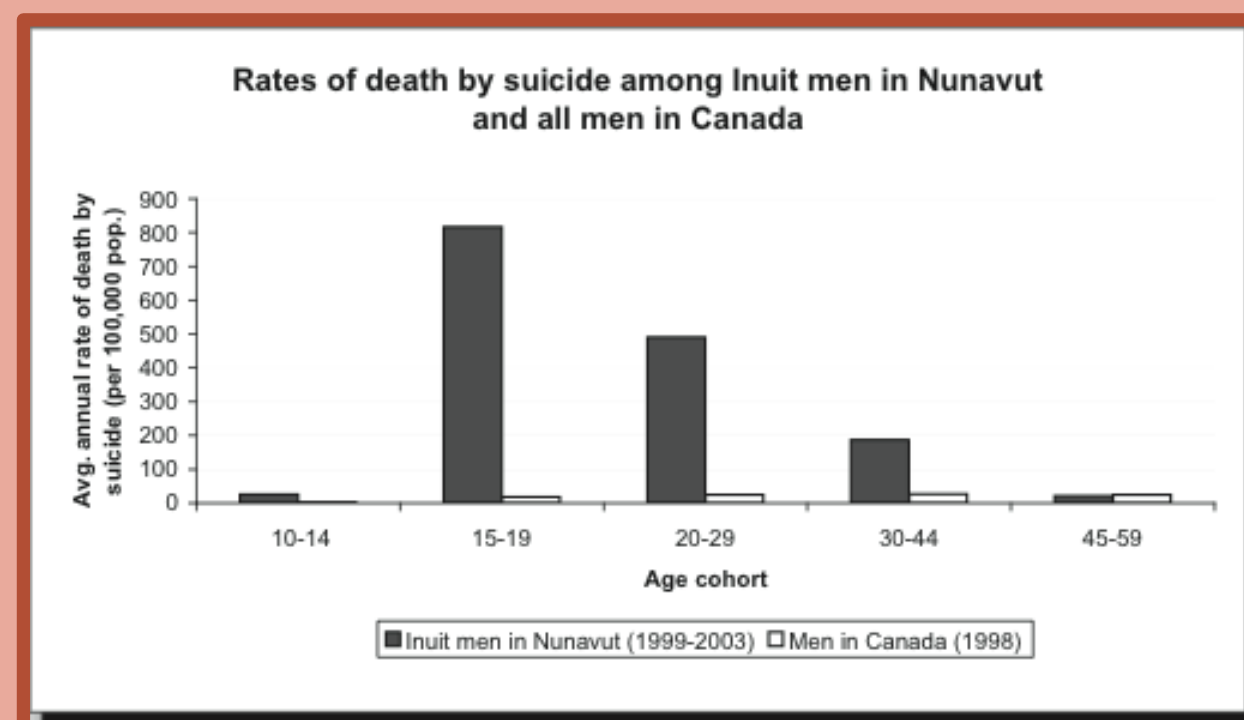


Suicide Problem in Nunavut

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AP/SOSC 3370 Social Justice and Law

Introduction

Nunavut, Canada's newest territory, has the highest rate of youth suicide in the entire country. From 1993 to 1997, suicide rate in Nunavut was 88 people per 100,000 whereas it was 13 for the rest of Canada as a whole.



Source: Hicks, Jack, The social determinants of elevated rates of suicide among Inuit youth.

Inuit communities in the 1960s:

Suicide was a concern for the middle age men due to illness or old age and often times suicide was approved by the family members.



Inuit communities today:

Suicide is more of a youth problem than an adult one and suicide is neither approved by family members nor encouraged.

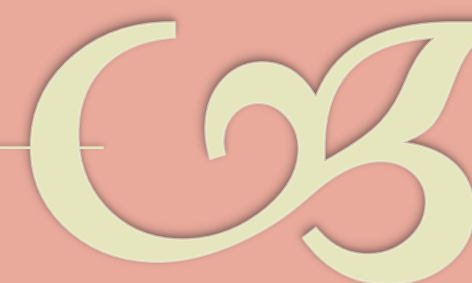
Past Initiatives

The Government of Nunavut has partnered with Embrace Life Council, RCMP, and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. to create a suicide prevention strategy in 2010. However, the strategy has not helped with the reduction of the suicide rates in Nunavut. In fact, 45 people committed suicide in 2013: the highest it has ever been. Other initiatives include:

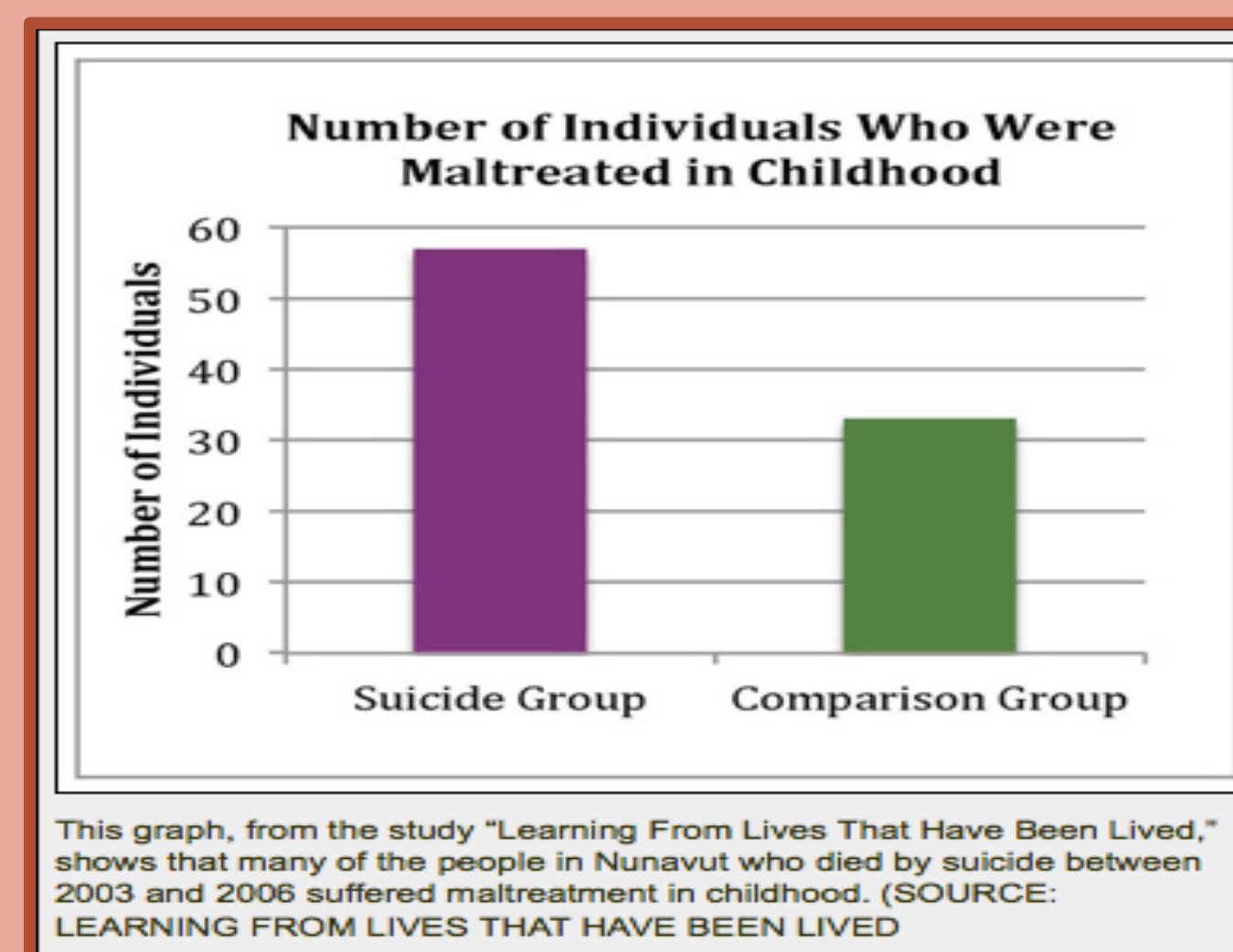
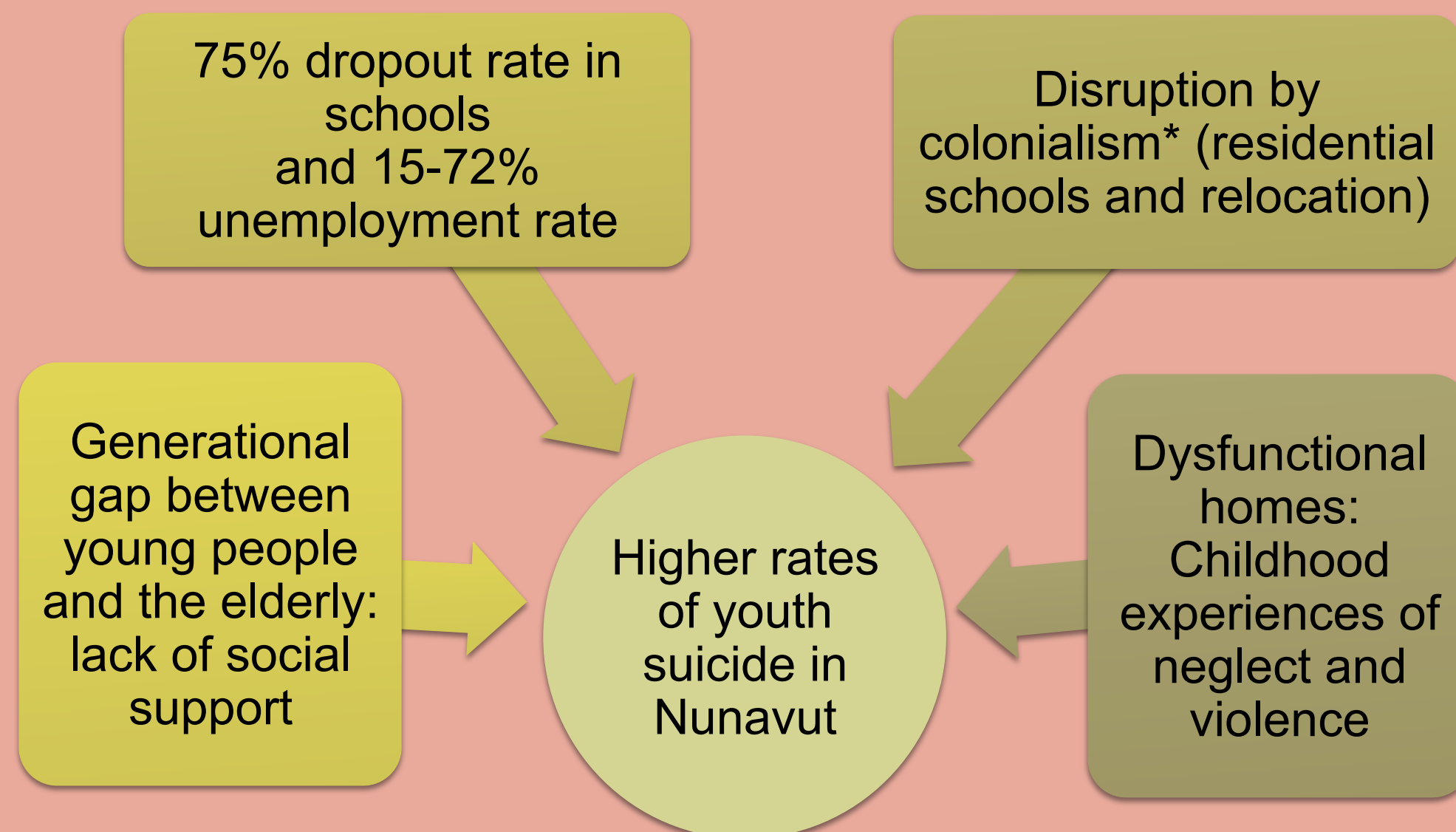
- SafeTalk presentations at schools
- Take Back the Night walk
- Presentation to elders on grief support
- Bullying education in schools
- Helplines such as Kamatsiaqtut Help line

Methods

This research was inspired by an educational trip to the Assembly of First Nations in Ottawa, Ontario. It is founded in scholarly research on the topic as well as reports on recent statistics.



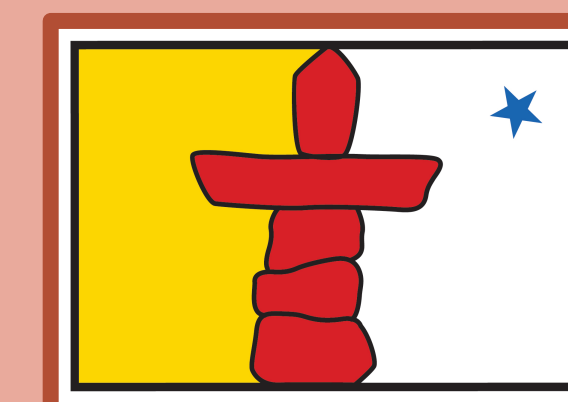
Causes



Policy Recommendations

- Education and awareness
- Community involvement
- Familial support
- Restricting means of suicide (UK model)
- More suicide hotlines
- Health care systems: professionally trained counselors
- Reach for higher rates of school success
- More jobs to stabilize economy
- Religious involvement
- Media publicity restriction
- Training of police officers

*Inuit lifestyle has been highly disrupted by the colonial agenda. Families were relocated in the 1950s and 1960s. Even though the Inuit youth today may not have been sent to residential schools themselves, the trauma gets passed down to generations. Having parents who do not know how to cope with stress and anxiety, the youth grow up lacking this skill. The residential school system took away the Inuit's ability to parent and this poor parenting lead to dysfunctional homes where the children are not properly cared for.



Building Nunavut Together