



## Yukon Coroner's Service

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May 24, 2024

Chris Kinch  
VP Service Delivery, Connective Support Society  
5131 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1L7  
(chris.kinch@connective.ca)

Re: Inquest into the deaths of **Cassandra Warville, Myranda Aleisha Dawn Tizya-Charlie, Josephine Elizabeth Vanessa Hager and Darla Skookum**

Dear Mr. Kinch:

Please find attached the Inquest Report into the deaths of Cassandra Warville, Myranda Aleisha Dawn Tizya-Charlie, Josephine Elizabeth Vanessa Hager and Darla Skookum, which includes the comments from the Presiding Coroner, Michael Egilson.

Please be advised that this report and its recommendations has been posted on the Yukon Coroners' Service public website.

I would like to draw your attention to the Jury's Recommendations directed to Connective Support Society:

### **Policy Review**

A policy review for the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter will be undertaken by Connective Support Society within six months that:

- Includes interested Yukon First Nations, shelter guests, shelter staff and people with lived experience in the review, development and implementation of policy, procedures and guidelines
- Ensures the development of policies, procedures and guidelines are evidence based, best practice and data driven (measurable)
- Ensures that policies, procedures and guidelines provide clear direction to staff in carrying out their responsibilities
- Reduces the gaps between current policies and current shelter practices
- Provides clarity to shelter guests around expectations of guests and the level of services provided by the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter
  - Clearly display rights and responsibilities of guests
- Gives priority to reviewing policies, procedures and guidelines related to:
  - Identifying when guests are beyond the level of care manageable by staff
  - Safety planning for shelter guests

- When to involve EMS
- Lifting procedures
- Dealing with intoxicated/medically vulnerable guests
- Overdose events and medical emergencies
- Monitoring vulnerable guests
- Monitoring high risk spaces e.g., washrooms, showers
  - Making naloxone easily and readily available in these spaces
- Culturally appropriate services and cultural safety
- Trauma informed practice
- Harm reduction
- Critical incident review, reporting and sharing of information
  - All employees involved in a critical incident complete a report
- Video review and retention for critical incidents
- Performance development and management

### **Training Review**

Within six months, Connective Support Society in conjunction with interested Yukon First Nations, shelter guests, staff and other support services, will research and adopt a training plan assessing current training needs, based on best practices, that addresses both onboarding, orientation and ongoing professional development giving initial priority to:

- Shelter policies, procedures and guidelines will be accessible (simplified) and reviewed frequently
- Overdose response training
- Identifying alcohol intoxication and managing related safety risks
- Identifying when shelter user needs exceed the level of service provided by the shelter and actions to be taken
- Providing regular drills and performance feedback concerning emergency response within the shelter e.g. overdose response, 911, medical distress, naloxone administration
- Reviewing staff first aid and naloxone requirements and frequency, including basic life support and airway management (use of oxygen and oximeter), with a first aid training provider (in consultation with Whitehorse EMS) to ensure first aid skills match the needs of shelter guests within the level of service provided by the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter
- Culturally appropriate services and cultural safety
- Trauma informed practice
- Harm reduction
- Ensuring program managers have the skills and training necessary to:
  - enforce the consistent application of policy among all staff.
  - conduct effective post critical incident debriefing to maximize lessons learned and staff performance.
- Make Naloxone training and Standard First Aid – CPR available to service users

### **Staffing Priorities**

Immediately, Connective Support Society will give priority to hiring Indigenous employees and persons with lived experience when posting positions for the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter. Additionally, Connective Support Society will work with interested Yukon First Nations to identify ways to attract, support and retain Indigenous employees.

### **Grief and Loss**

In recognition of the grief and loss in the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter community, within two months, leadership from the Government of Yukon and Connective Support Society will meet with the community affected by the deaths of Myranda Tizya-Charlie, Cassandra Warville, Josephine Hager and Darla Skookum to hear their concerns arising from the inquest.

Within six months, Connective Support Society, will provide access to in-person counselling for all staff as needed.

### **Communication**

- Immediately, Connective Support Society in consultation with interested First Nations will begin a monthly talking circle and a structured complaint process (e.g. complaint box) to nurture trusting relationships and contribute to a welcoming environment.
- Connective Support Society will improve communication among staff by formalizing the pre and post briefing of all shift exchanges.

### **Safe Spaces**

In recognition of the safety concerns of LGBTQ2S+ and female identifying services users Connective Support Society will, within the next 6 months, identify and create a safe space for their use.

And for your information, I further draw your attention to the remaining Recommendations that reference Connective Support Society:

### **Evaluation**

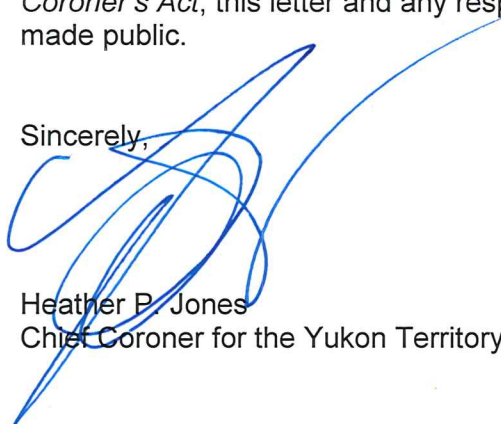
In six months, the Yukon Government, through its Transfer Payment Agreement provisions, will evaluate Connective Support Society for compliance with recommendations 1, 2 and 3.

### **Independent Review**

If future deaths should occur at the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter, the Yukon Government will work with the Connective Support Society to ensure an independent review.

I ask that a response setting out intentions with respect to the Recommendation specific to the Connective Support Society be received by **July 5, 2024**. Pursuant to Section 5(1)(o) of the *Coroner's Act*, this letter and any response or lack of response to the Recommendations will be made public.

Sincerely,



Heather P. Jones  
Chief Coroner for the Yukon Territory

Encl.

cc: Tracy-Anne McPhee, Minister of Justice

