

# Paths to Life: Protective Factors in Suicidal Behavior

A qualitative study on coping resources among individuals who have survived suicide attempts, yet are thriving today. Mapped below are strategies and resources that have helped people move from crisis to recovery. The project was carried out as part of the Research Advancement Programme under the Greenland Research Council, and is based on extensive interviews with six Greenlandic Inuit participants living in Greenland. This Paths to Life framework is based on the project's findings and can be applied at all levels of suicide prevention to share knowledge on protective factors against suicidal behavior.



## Culture, Roots and Identity

- Inuit mythology (e.g. Sila)
- Find meaning in ancestral knowledge and traditions
- Greenlandic literature as a source of strength and recognition (e.g. Qooqa and Angakkoq Papik)
- Culture as something living that provides identity and coherence



## Relationships and Human Presence

- A person who listens without judgement
- Safe and stable adults
- Honest and direct conversations about suicide
- Be seen and met with respect



## Knowledge of Trauma and Emotions

- Understand how trauma can affect thoughts, emotions and the body
- Sense and regulate the body's reactions to stress
- Be able to hold difficult emotions without shame
- Conversations with a psychologist, e.g. at the Family Centre, with mindfulness support



## The Healing Power of Nature

- Calm and silence in the mountains, by the sea and in the landscape
- Hunting, sailing, and other meaningful activities in nature
- Nature as a source of balance for body and mind



## Language, Spirituality and Culturally Relevant Treatment

- Be able to speak one's own language e.g. at Allorfik addiction treatment Center
- Culturally relevant treatment that takes origin and life experience into account
- Be met as a human being; not as a diagnosis
- Grounding in ancestral spiritual healing, including shamanism



## Community, Belonging and Participation

- Friends and supportive relationships
- Communal activities such as choir, dog sledding and hunting
- Be able to contribute and be valued in the community
- Be included and have a place in the local community



## Personal Turning Points

- Find meaning, hope and strength
- Acknowledge problems and dare to seek help
- Make choices that point forward
- Create a new understanding of oneself after crises



## Family, Love and Stability

- A supportive partner and a safe family life
- Finding meaning in the parental role
- Processing difficult experiences together
- Safety, acceptance and patience



## An Important Message

Life courage grows in relationships, in culture, in nature, and in community; when people are seen, find meaning, and are given the opportunity to belong and make a difference.

