

ASSOCIATION
PRÉVENTION SUICIDE
PREMIÈRES NATIONS
ET INUITS
DU QUÉBEC ET DU
LABRADOR



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SUICIDE PREVENTION
ASSOCIATION
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RELEASE

The [FNISPAQL](#) became aware of the article by Alexandre Cantin, entitled " *Coupable d'attentat à la pudeur sur une mineure, il est invité à un colloque*" (Guilty of indecent assault on a minor, he is invited to a conference), broadcast on *TVA Nouvelles* on November 29, 2019, and wishes to issue a response.

Since its creation in 2001, the Association's mission has been to partake in a concerted effort aimed at contributing to the wellbeing and balance in the lives of Aboriginal people of Quebec. In this capacity, it works for the benefit of the 11 nations of Quebec and of the Inuits of Labrador. The Association deplors any unfortunate and delicate situation that a member of our community could find themselves in.

We are conscious that sexual abuse is an important issue contributing to the suffering of our members and we devote our efforts to raise awareness, prevent and educate our members whether they are witnesses, victims or perpetrators of abuse. We are there for our women, our men and our families.

Unfortunately, our organization is not immune to situations beyond its control.

Regarding the situation reported by *TVA Nouvelles*, which occurred during a conference "DIALOGUE FOR LIFE 2019 – HOPE FOR THE FUTURE", we would like to re-establish certain facts.

When issuing a call for conference presenters posted on our website, we have paid particular attention to candidates and have conducted criminal background checks. The relevant page can be found at the following address: <http://www.dialogue-pour-la-vie.com/images/2019/CallForPresenters-DialogueForLife2019.pdf>

Thus, the Board of Directors of the [FNISPAQL](#) wishes to inform you that the necessary verifications have been made with regard to all the presenters and their assistants, as well as with regard to the musicians participating in the event.

As such, Mr. Léo St-Onge has undergone criminal background checks, which have come back negative in regards to any charges of a sexual nature.

In November of 2019, upon receiving the reports from the members of our community regarding Mr. St-Onge and his criminal record, we have taken the necessary steps to ascertain why the background checks have not established his previous conviction for a sexual offence.

We were thus informed that on December 15, 2016, Mr. St-Onge was granted conditional discharge as to the offence of a sexual nature which he was charged with.

Therefore, the verifications carried out in the public criminal registers did not identify this charge since, according to section 730(3) of the Criminal Code "Where a court directs under subsection (1) that an offender be discharged of an offence, the offender shall be deemed not to have been convicted of the offence".

Consequently, this accusation could not have been considered as part of one's criminal record and it is precisely why, our research, which was carried out according to the standard procedure, has yielded nothing in that respect.

The [FNISPAQL](#) Board of Directors wishes to reassure the public, the users and the presenters of our conferences and workshops, that we carry out all the necessary checks with regards to the criminal history and, more particularly, in matters of sexual offences. In addition, we take all measures available to us to ensure the smooth running of our conferences and workshops. We also practice ZERO tolerance regarding the consumption of alcohol and drugs during our pre-conferences and conferences.

It is important for us that the population feels reassured and confident, which is why we ensure that our mandate to help victims and helpers is fulfilled in all transparency, objectivity and honesty, in order to avoid unfortunate situations such as this one.

Our mandate is important to us and we work to prevent suicide among aboriginal people, whose suicide rate is, unfortunately, high and significant. In this context, we take all forms of violence seriously and provide the necessary tools to the community members, to enable them to get through difficult situations.

We understand and share the desire of all members of our great community that justice be done for the victims, and we also want the perpetrators to be able to heal.

Abuse situations generate deep scars, pain and a strong feeling of helplessness, first among the victims, but also among their loved ones, the relatives of the abusers and the community at large. Looking to the future, nothing should be overlooked to stop such abuses and to prevent them from being perpetuated and concealed. The pain of the victims and their families is also our pain. We would like to reaffirm our commitment to guarantee the protection of vulnerable people in our communities.