



**INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN
CANADA**



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Land Acknowledgement

Treaty 1 Territory

I want to acknowledge we are located on Treaty 1 Territory and that Manitoba is located on the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples land who has occupied these lands since time immemorial. I also acknowledge Manitoba is located on the homeland of the Red River Métis Nation and that Winnipeg’s water source comes from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation.



What is the importance of a Land Acknowledgement?

“It is important to understand the longstanding history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation.” – Northwestern University

Source: <https://nativegov.org/news/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>



Indigenous History

The creation of Canada (or Turtle Island as some Indigenous people call it), did not happen without Indigenous people. According to oral history Indigenous people have occupied Turtle Island since time immemorial. Prior to the arrival of European settlers starting in 1492, Indigenous people were already living sophisticated lives and their numbers were in the millions.

“There were many First Nation groups across Turtle Island (Canada) with a variety of social, economic, political, spiritual, and cultural systems and practices.” - Assembly of First Nations



Source: <https://www.indigenouwatchdog.org/first-nations/>

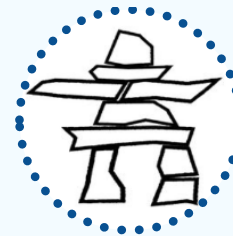
Indigenous People in Canada

First Nation



First Nations are 1 of the 3 Indigenous People recognized in Canada. First Nations people include those who are “status” and “non-status”. Today there are over 630 First Nation communities across Canada which represent over 50 different nations and 50 different languages.

Inuit



Inuit are another recognized Indigenous group in Canada. Inuit people traditionally occupied Arctic land, and some still remain there today while others have spread all around Canada. The term “Inuit” refers to 2 or more people while “Inuk” refers to a singular person according to the Inuit language of Inuktitut.

Métis



The last recognized Indigenous group are the Métis. The Métis people are a blend of cultures and ethnic identities resulting from Indigenous and European unions that took place during the Fur Trade Era. Métis people today trace their roots back to the Red River Settlement but have spread throughout Canada.

[Web address]



Pre-colonization

Relationship to the Land

Prior to the arrival of European settlers, First Nations across Turtle Island had a strong relationship with the land. The concept of “ownership” of the land was not in existence prior to colonization, Indigenous People believe that the land, the water, the animals, the sky, and every other aspect of nature has a spirit which needs to be **respected** and taken care of. The land and its animals provided people with shelter, water, food, clothing, etc. Indigenous People never took more than what was needed and always gave thanks or made prayers to the Creator to thank the spirit of the animal for giving up its body so humans could survive. Indigenous People are commonly referred to as “the first caretakers and inhabitants of the land”.

“First Nations have always seen themselves as part of the natural world, in a symbiotic relationship with the natural world.” – Assembly of First Nations

Traditional Healthcare

Based on a holistic model of health, healing looked a lot different before colonization. Indigenous People focus on the four aspects of human which is the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual.

Some traditional healing methods incorporate use of sacred medicines which include sage, cedar, sweetgrass, and tobacco among hundreds of other plants (400 species of medicinal plants were identified by Indigenous People).

In many of the communities there was an appointed Medicine Man/Women who were trained specialists that could heal community members. They make sure that the individual not only heals physically but spiritually as well.



Education

Traditionally Indigenous people received their education by members in the family or community instead of institutions. Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and sharing circles were three ways that First Nations learned and taught.

- **Elders** are highly respected individuals because of their wisdom and knowledge. One way they pass down their knowledge is through oral storytelling.
- **Knowledge Keeper** is someone that holds traditional knowledge and teachings taught to them by an Elder or senior Knowledge Keeper.
- **Sharing circles** are another way people passed around knowledge or talked about their feelings and opinions. Often the person talking would hold onto an object such as a feather which let others know that they need to listen and not interrupt. When someone was done speaking, they would hand the object to someone else so they could have a turn.



Social Organization

All First Nations belonged to organized societies in which all individuals observed their own social, political, and economic values/practices. Social units varied slightly based on factors such as geography, for example, the Plains Cree developed a communal hunting culture.

Source: <https://education.afn.ca/afntoolkit/web-modules/plain-talk-1-pre-contact/histories-cultures-and-languages/>



Pre-colonization

Ceremony Practices/Traditions

Ceremonies and sacred practices vary across Nations and are an integral part of Indigenous life. What one Indigenous Nation or Tribe did in terms of ceremonial practices might have looked different than the next. Ceremony strengthens the connection of people and the spiritual world, and each ceremony has a different purpose. Some ceremonial traditions include:

- Pipe Ceremony
- Wedding Ceremony
- Naming Ceremony
- Sweat-Lodge
- Sundance
- Powwows
- Full Moon Ceremony
- Potlach
- Birthing Ceremony
- Green Corn Ceremony
- Rain Dances

Beginning in 1884-1951 the Government of Canada banned all forms of Indigenous Ceremony. If found participating in ceremony people were arrested, and all ceremonial materials were taken.

The criminal justice system looked different pre-colonization as well. While the legal traditions varied, traditionally people were not harshly criminalized if they did not act accordingly to societal values but rather settled upon a system of atonement and reparation by the offender.



Sweat-Lodge Ceremony

Sweat-Lodge ceremony is a practice that many First Nation communities engage in. Every aspect of the ceremony is chosen with great care and has significant meaning. For example, the location in which the ceremony will take place is specifically picked and even the rocks chosen for the fire pit are believed to be a vessel for the spirits to come through. Rocks in this ceremony are commonly referred to as “Grandfathers” or “Grandmothers” in many Nations.

To prepare for a sweat-lodge ceremony a pit is dug in the center of where the lodge will be built. The lodge is typically dome-shaped and is built with natural materials that are collected by the builders. The dome shape to many First Nations represents the “womb of Mother Earth”. After the structure is built it is covered with blankets or animal skins and the opening of the lodge usually faces east but can vary among the Conductors traditional teachings.

To create the heat in the lodge there are two different styles: one where only heated rocks are used and the other where water is poured over the rocks, either route will create the desired effect of sweat.

When entering the lodge, you are supposed to crawl in on your hands and knees and sit in a circle around the pit. The conductor usually sits at one side of the door and there are also Firekeepers who bring in more rocks when asked to.

The reasons for a sweat lodge are for purification as it is believed that fire can remove impurities and, to seek help from the Creator. Helping spirits are called into the lodge through the playing of a drum and songs and prayer are offered throughout the ceremony. At the end of the ceremony the spirits are thanked and sent home.

Source: <https://aht.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Lodge.pdf>



Storytelling

Storytelling and oral traditions are considered to be the backbone of transferring Indigenous knowledge. They are used to teach history, traditions, values, ways of life, rituals, spiritual beliefs, and sometimes just to provide advice. Storytelling aims to connect communities and individuals to their place and time and with each other. Oral traditions and storytelling are usually told by Elders or Knowledge Keepers.

Before the introduction of written historical accounts by settlers, oral history was the trusted method to keep and transfer historical information.

Creation Stories explain how the world and all of its parts began which in turn help people understand and accept things that are not tangible or can be seen by humans. Central to creation stories is the sense of connection between the human and spiritual realms. Creation stories explain that nothing has happened by chance and there is a reason for everything. They also explain the relationship of all things in world and how each aspect of the world has a role to play. Humans are not to be considered superior to any other living beings but are on an equal plane. In many creation stories human beings are actually the last thing to be created.

For example, in Sahtu Dene creation stories it explained that humans are the only creature that no other animals naturally need to depend on for its survival so the moral of their creations stories is to remind humans to be respectful and humble in their relationship with nature.

Source: https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/oral_tradition/documents/creation_stories_as_spiritual_foundation.pdf



Creation Stories – Turtle Island

“In some Ojibwe oral traditions, the story of Turtle Island begins with a flooded Earth. The Creator had cleansed the world of feuding peoples in order to begin life anew. Some animals survived the flood, such as the loon, the muskrat and the turtle. Nanabush (Nanabozo) (or Weesakayjack in some Cree tales) — a supernatural being who has the power to create life in others — was also present. Nanabush asked the animals to swim deep beneath the water and collect soil that would be used to recreate the world. One by one the animals tried, but one by one they failed. The last animal that tried — the muskrat — was underwater for a long time, and when it resurfaced, the little animal had wet soil in its paws. The journey took the muskrat’s life, but the creature did not die in vain. Nanabush took the soil and put it on a willing turtle’s back. This became known as Turtle Island, the centre of creation” (Robinson, 2018, para 5).

Reference: Robinson, A. 2018. *Turtle Island*. The Canadian Encyclopedia.

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/turtle-island>



Medicine Wheel

A foundation of teaching that shows the interconnectedness of different aspects of life.

Originally called “sacred circles” medicine wheels date back to 4000 BC. Medicine wheels are divided into four section (4 is considered to be a sacred number) and each section has a different color and represents a different attribute which varies among Nations. Most commonly the four sections are colored white, black, red, and yellow. The order of the colors/concepts can differ between Indigenous cultures and as well as the significance. But what remains in all Nations that use the medicine wheel is that the circle represents all creation. Some attributes that can be represented on the medicine wheel are (according to Ojibway teachings):

- The four directions (East, South, West, North)
- The four aspects of humans (Spirit, Heart, Body, Mind)
- The four elements (Water, Fire, Earth, Air)
- The four seasons (Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter)
- The four sacred animals (Eagle, Deer, Buffalo, White Bear)
- The four nations (Yellow, Red, Black, White)
- The four stages of life (Child, Youth, Adult, Elder)
- The sacred circle (The Universe, Mother Earth, Life Cycle, Sharing Circle)

The medicine wheel can act as a guide for many different aspects of life and it gives us a place in the universe while clarifying our relationship to Mother Earth.

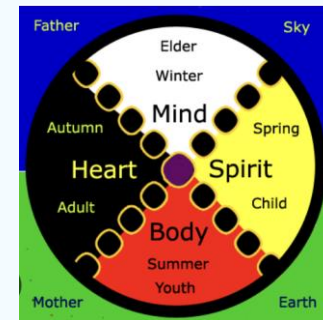


The Four Directions

According to Ojibway traditions the East direction represents where we come from; the South is where we grow, search, and dance; the West is where we ripen and prepare for harvest; and the North where we rest and remember.

Some lessons from each direction:

- East – we learn kindness, open-mindedness, innocence, and leadership
- South – we learn to work, help our families, and live off the land
- West – we learn to see everyone as equal through the Creator
- North – we learn strength, truth, and wisdom



Source: Perreault, J. (2017). *All Creation Represented: A Child's Guide to the Medicine Wheel*. Peppermint Toast Publishing.



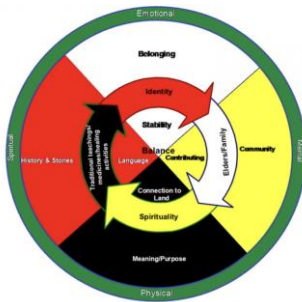
Medicine Wheel Cont.

How the medicine wheel can be used for mental health

The medicine wheel is a holistic framework that looks at all aspects of a human (mind, body, spirit, mental) where you treat the person as a whole. Elders have identified strategies for managing mental wellness such as contributing to the family, finding a sense of meaning and purpose, taking part in spiritual activities, gaining knowledge and strength from sharing stories, and connecting with the land.

Elders have assigned specific sections of the medicine wheel with these strategies. In the **Mental** section Elders have included community, elders/family, and contributing. In the **Physical** section: meaning/purpose, spirituality, and connection to land. In the **Spiritual** section: history/stories, traditional teachings/ medicines/healing activities and language. Lastly, in the **Emotional** section there is belonging, identity, and stability.

In order to achieve wellness, we need to have a balance in all four aspects and where we might be feeling a lack of balance (for example in emotional health) we can look at the medicine wheel so we know how we can fulfill that (strengthen identity and stability or find belonging).

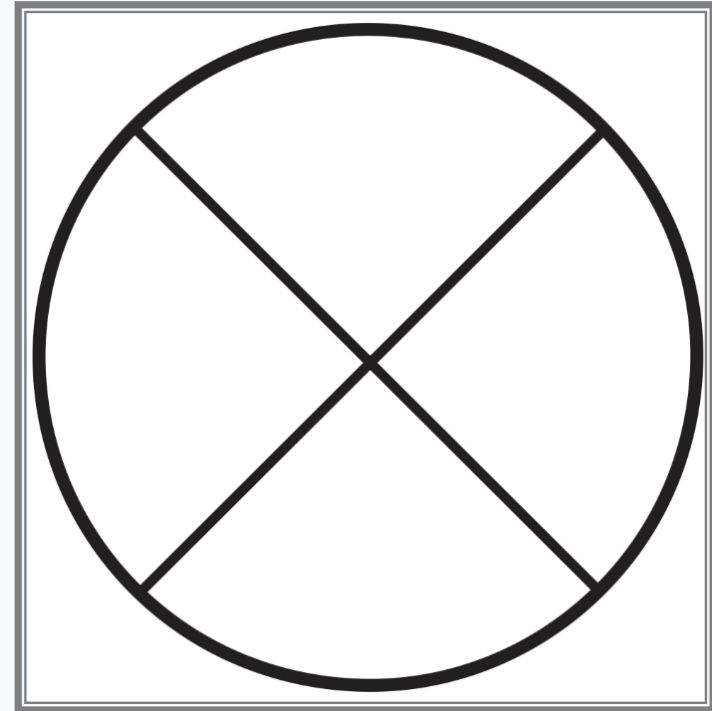


Source: <https://news.umanitoba.ca/look-to-the-medicine-wheel-for-mental-health-elders-advise-in-first-nations-study/>



Medicine Wheel Activity

- Grab a piece of paper and pencil/pen and draw the medicine wheel or use the one given below
- Label the four sections: spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional
- Next, write in each section ways you take care of that part of you (at least two for each section)
- Over the week if you think of more you can write more ideas down and notice which of these four sections you need to spend more time tending to





Seven Sacred Teachings

The seven sacred teachings are moral steppingstones and a cultural foundation which guides people on how to live and treat one another. Each of the seven teachings are represented by a different animal based on the animal's observed qualities. Like many teachings in Indigenous culture, the seven sacred focuses on the **relationship** we have with all of creation. Each community has adapted the teachings to suit their community needs.

According to some Ojibway teachings the seven sacred are as followed:

1. **Humility** (Dbaadendiziwin) – represented by the wolf. The wolf teaches humility as the wolf lives its life for his pack and if outcasted it creates the ultimate shame. Humility is to know that you are a sacred part of creation and to live selflessly. Remember you are not above anyone or any aspect of creation and to respect your place in the world and the people in it.
2. **Bravery** (Aakwa'ode'ewin) – represented by the bear. The mother bear shows courage and strength to face her fears against anything to protect her cubs. The bear also reminds us to have a balanced live with rest, survival, and play. It is important to find your inner strength and courage to face life's difficulties and to be authentically you.



3. **Honesty** (Gwekwaadziwin) – represented by the Sabe (or raven). Both understand and accept who they are. Sabe reminds us to be ourselves and not to conform to someone we are not and the raven accepts himself and uses his gifts wisely. We must use what we were gifted with to thrive and not seek the power, speed, or beauty of others.
4. **Wisdom** (Nbwaakaawin) – represent by the Beaver. Considered to be wise for using its natural gifts and for the ability to alter his environment in a sustainable way in order to survive. He reminds us to recognize our differences in a kind and respectful way and to continuously observe the life of all things around you.
5. **Truth** (Debwewin) – represented by the Turtle. Believed to of been here during the creation of Earth and to carry the teachings of life on his back. The turtle lives slow because he understands the importance of the journey and the destination. Truth is to know all of these things. He reminds us to apply faith and trust in our teachings and to show honor and sincerity in all that we say and do.
6. **Respect** (Mnaadendimowin) – represented by the Buffalo. He gives every part of his self for the sustainability of human life. This is not because he views himself as less value but rather because he respects the balance and needs of other. He reminds us to share and give away what we do not need.
7. **Love** (Zaagidwin) – represented by the Eagle. Believed to be able to carry the strength of all the teachings as well as the ability to fly closest to Creator. He reminds us to know love and love ourselves truly in order to be at peace.

Source: <https://unitingthreefiresagainstbullying.org/the-7-grandfathers-teachin/>



Colonization

Time of Contact

By the time the European settlers arrived in Turtle Island in the late 1400's to early 1500's, the Indigenous population was thriving. The estimated population was from 200-500 thousand, but some estimates suggest as high as 2.5 million First Nations along with 300-400 language spoken.

Jacques Cartier enters Turtle Island and hears the Iroquoian word for village, 'Kanata' and writes it down in his journal. The name then appears on the 1547 Harleian world map.

When Europeans came to Turtle Island, they viewed all First Nations as a homogeneous group referring to them as "Indians" despite the fact there were several hundred independent self-governing nations. Settlers also brought along with them many new diseases such as smallpox and measles which the people have never seen before. It is estimated that these diseases alone wiped out up to 90% of the First Nation population. Along with disease European settlers introduced many other things that had impacted their culture such as:

- Alcohol
- New animals such as horses
- Weapons such as guns
- Christianity
- New laws and policies

Source: <https://education.afn.ca/afntoolkit/web-modules/plain-talk-3-impacts-of-contact/contact/>



Doctrine of Discovery

Settlers believed that Indigenous people were uncivilized and that their way of life was outdated. The Doctrine of Discovery was one of the first driving forces that allowed for the assimilation of First Nations to European way of life. The Doctrine of Discovery stated that if there were no Christians on a discovered new land then it is to be considered an empty land. It also stated that if there were people on the land who were not Christians, they did not have a right of title to the land and they only have the right of occupancy. This religious law which the Europeans followed was the reason they felt justified to take the land of the Indigenous people with no remorse. The Doctrine of Discovery was the legal basis for Canada's existence and today it continues to oppress Indigenous People by not recognizing their right to self-sovereignty.

Short YouTube video explaining the Doctrine of Discovery:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3qF7ULVrI4>

Other pieces of policy that Settlers used and created to assimilate Indigenous people include:

- Unfulfilled treaties
- The Indian Lands Act (1860)
- The Constitution Act (1867)
- The Gradual Enfranchisement Act (1869)
- The Indian Act (1876)
- Child Welfare Agencies

A resource to read some of these policies: https://caid.ca/assimilation_policy.html



Colonization

Beginning Encounters

When Settlers first arrived, Indigenous people were willing to share the land and teach them the ways of it. In the beginning days Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples mostly cooperated with one another and still viewed each other as separate nations in charge of their own people. They exchanged goods such as in the fur trade; they made barter and trade deals; engaged in friendship and occasionally intermarriage which brought about the Métis Nation; they had military and trade alliances; and the First Nation people helped European's adapt to the new climate and to succeed in hunting, fishing, etc. But shortly after, Indigenous leaders and Elders began to recognize the negative impacts of European way of life on the Earth and the ill intentions of Settlers began to be exposed.

“...as early as that very first encounter, extraordinary events began to occur among us. That initial meeting touched off a shock wave that was felt by Indian people right across the continent. And is still felt to this day.” – Tomson Highway

Indigenous Nations encountered European settlers at different times and had different first experiences with them. In the end, it resulted in the same relationship throughout the Nations with the Settlers.



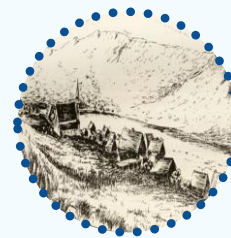
Mi'kmaq Peoples First Memory with Europeans

Told in a story that has been passed down throughout the generations, this is the Mi'kmaq Peoples recall of their first interaction with Europeans.

“Before the coming of the white man, a Mi'kmaq girl dreams that a small island floated in toward the land. On the island were bare trees and men – one dressed in garments of white rabbit skins. She told her dream to the wise men, but they could not explain the meaning. The next day at dawn, the Mi'kmaq saw a small island near the shore, just as the girl had dreamed. There were trees on the island and bears climbing among their bear branches. The people seized their bows and arrows to shoot the bears. To their amazement, the bears were men. Some of them lowered into the water in a strange canoe, into which they jumped and paddled ashore. Among the men was one dressed in a white robe who came toward them making signs of peace and goodwill. Raising his hand, he pointed toward the heavens” – Retold by Stephen Augustine, from an original Silas Rand in *Legends of the Micmacs*, 1894

Cupers Cove

Established by John Guy in 1610 Cupers Cove was the first English settlement in Canada located in what is now called Newfoundland.



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Colonization

Treaties

Treaties were not a new concept to First Nations as they already had created peace and friendship treaties among some Nations. The treaties were not about owning the land as there was a consensus among Indigenous Nations that the land could not be bought or sold.

We are all Treaty people.

When First Nations signed treaties with European settlers from their point of view, they were not giving away ownership to the land but rather allowing Europeans to use some of the land while respecting it according to Creator's laws. To First Nations treaties were a way to confirm and protect their rights to the land and their way of life. When engaging in treaty signing Indigenous people believed that the settlers agreed with these ideas as they sealed the Treaties through traditional protocols which invited Creator to witness the promises being made.

Europeans viewed treaties differently as they believed they were taking ownership of the land. Settlers viewed the treaties as easy and cheap ways to strip Indigenous title to land and they believed they could do as they pleased on the land which they did. Settlers constantly broke treaty promises and still do to this day.

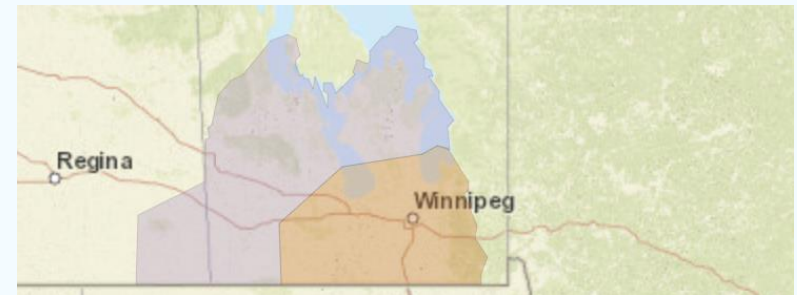
Source: <https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/first-nations-inuit-metis/canada-in-focus-a-promise-to-share/a-promise-to-share>



Numbered Treaties

There are 11 Numbered Treaties in Canada which cover huge chunks of land in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and portions of Yukon and the Northwest Territories. The treaties gave the Canadian government land in exchange for special rights and benefits for Indigenous people. Still to this day the Numbered Treaties have legal, social, and economic impacts.

Winnipeg is a part of Treaty 1 (Treaty 2 is just above it) which was signed in 1871 between Canada and the Anishinabek and Swampy Cree.



Source: <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/treaties-1-and-2>

Treaty Medals



"As long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and rivers flow". Treaties medals were given to Indigenous Chiefs during the signing of the Numbered Treaties



Colonization

Assimilation – The Indian Act

The impacts of colonization had affected every aspect of Indigenous way of life and culture which can still be seen and felt today. Europeans began to forcibly assimilate First Nations to their way of life and the federal government passed the first Indian Act in 1876 which gave them authority over Indigenous People and Land Reserves for Indians.

“...do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the inhabitants of the Dominion” – Sir John A. MacDonald (first prime minister of Canada)

The Indian Act

The Indian Act was a means to control every aspect of Indigenous Peoples life and it intended to dismantle the culture, social, economic, and political views of Indigenous People while assimilating them into the Canadian way of life.

Prior to the Indian Act women had equal rights to men in Indigenous Nations and were considered sacred and highly respected. In a lot of communities, Indigenous women were the leaders and chiefs. The Indian Act banned women from voting and running in chief and council elections. Indigenous women could also lose their Indian Status according to the Act if they were to marry a non-Indigenous man.



Residential Schools

In 1884 the Indian Act makes it mandatory for status Indians to attend residential school until they turn 16 (Some Métis and Inuit also attended residential school). Residential schools were specifically made to assimilate Indigenous children into Canadian society. These institutions were financed the federal government but run by Christian religious institutions such as the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, United and Methodist Churches.

Children who attended Residential Schools were taken away from their families, if their families did not willingly hand over their children or try to hide them, police officers or social workers would often get involved and forcibly remove children from their homes. Indigenous children would live at the schools for the majority of the year and sometimes for years straight without seeing their families.

At these institutions children were not allowed to speak their language, engage in their culture or beliefs, and even had their names changed to English ones or just numbers. Children were often punished if seen engaging in their traditional culture.

Source: <https://education.afn.ca/afntoolkit/web-modules/plain-talk-6-residential-schools/residential-schools/>



There was about 130 residential schools across Canada from the 1880s-1996. Over this entire period over 150,000 Indigenous children these schools.

Children were subjected to emotional, psychological, physical, spiritual, and sexual abuse at residential schools.



Colonization

Sixties Scoop

During the 1960's it was common practice for child welfare workers to "scoop" children from their homes without the consent of their parents/guardians or bands. Removing children from their home was common practice during this time already as kids were forced to attend residential schools but there was a massive influx of children being removed from their homes and in most cases placed into white families. Many social workers assessed Indigenous families based off the traditional European way of raising children. These workers had no experience with the culture of Indigenous people. For example, if they seen families who ate traditional foods of dried game, fish, and berries which was their traditional diet, but seen the cupboards bare, they would assume that the children were not being properly fed and it justified the right to remove them from their home. Like residential schools, children were subjected to different forms of abuse in their new homes and lost touch with their identity and culture.

The affects are still felt today, and Indigenous children are grossly overrepresented in the child welfare system. In Manitoba Indigenous children are 22% of the total population but represent 91% of the children in Care.

Source:

<https://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/Manitoba%20Information%20Sheet%20-%2024%20E%20-%202023.pdf>

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The Starlight Tours

First documented in 1976 – the early 2000's (and presumably still today) police officers in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta engaged in something which was coined "The Starlight Tours". They would pick up an Indigenous person, usually a man during the night and bring them outside the city during the winter season where they would then kick them out of the vehicle with no means of being able to reach out to anyone. Many men froze to death and their deaths were ruled as accidental while no police officer was ever charged with murder.

Darrell Night, a Saulteaux First Nation member and survivor of a Starlight Tour was taken by two police officers in Saskatchewan on January 28, 2000, during a night which was -25, he was in only a light demin jacket. When he voiced his concerns as officers were kicking him out of their cruiser, they told him it was his problem. Thankfully he found a nearby power plant and was let in by a worker there. Days after this happened to Night the news of 2 other Indigenous men Rodney Naistus (25) and Lawrence Wegner (30) were found close to where Night was left. Which then Night came forward about this incident and the RCMP did an internal investigation. The jury concluded that the other two men's deaths were accidental, but Night did receive some justice as the officers who took him were suspended without pay, found guilty of unlawful confinement and ordered to serve an 8-month jail sentence.

Source: <https://spheresofinfluence.ca/canadas-best-kept-secret-starlight-tours/>

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Colonization

Reserve System

“Under the Indian Act, the Canadian government defined a reserve as land that has been set aside (not apart) by the government for the use and benefit of an Indian band. Reserve land is still classified as federal land, and First Nations do not have title to reserve land. Reserves were often created on less valuable land and sometimes located outside the traditional territory of the particular First Nation. If the First Nation had lived traditionally by hunting and gathering in a particularly rich area, confinement to a small, uninhabitable place was a very difficult transition. Allotted reserves were always small compared to the First Nations’ traditional territory” (Wilson, K. & Hodgson C. n.d. para 3).

<https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfoundations/chapter/the-reserve-system/>

Environmental Destruction on Ancestral Land

- Pipeline on Wet’suwet’en Territory which the people opposed and protested
- Chemical Valley
- Land Back Movement



Every Child Matters/Orange Shirt Day

September 30th is recognized as Orange Shirt Day which is a day to honor the lives lost in residential schools. The name came from Phyllis Webstad, a former residential school survivor and her story. She was taken from her family at six years old and placed into residential school. On her first day she wore an orange shirt that was bought by her grandmother and was taken away from her upon arriving at the school. Phyllis remembers the shame and worthlessness she felt that day which affected the way she lived for much of her life.

Many of the children who died during their times at these schools died because of poor living conditions, malnutrition, sickness and diseases, suicide, and some were murdered. Many of the children were buried right at the school in a field nearby in unmarked graves.

In 2021 ground-penetrating radar was uncovered 215 child remains at a former B.C. residential school named Kamloops Indian Residential School. Since then, there have been a total of 1,700+ bodies have been found and it is estimated that over 5,000 children died at these schools.

Source: <https://www.bcbachivement.com/2020/09/29/every-child-matters-the-meaning-behind-orange-shirt-day/>



Colonization

MMIW2S+

MMIW2S+ is a movement that raises awareness on the lack of response for Indigenous women or girls when they go missing or are murdered. Indigenous women face murders rates that are 10x higher than the national average and homicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for Indigenous women aged 10-24.

In Canada, homicide rates for Indigenous women were 7x higher than the rates for non-Indigenous people in 2020.

This is considered a human rights and public health issue as women and their families who face this trauma have negative impacts on their physical and mental health which contributes to the intergenerational trauma felt by their communities and families.

Source: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00004-eng.htm>

4 out of 5 Indigenous women experience some form of violence in their lifetime.

Red Dress Day/ National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit People

May 5th is recognized as the awareness day for MMIW2S+ or Red Dress Day where you will see people hanging a red dress in honor of the lives lost. The color red is a sacred color to Indigenous people, and it also symbolizes the bloodshed and the ongoing struggle for justice and equality,

Source: <https://spph.ubc.ca/national-day-of-awareness-for-mmiwg2s/>



Search the Landfill

In 2022 Camp Morgan was set up at Brady Road Landfill in Winnipeg to bring awareness and to call on the police/province to search for the remains of Morgan Harris (39), Mercedes Myran (26), and an unidentified women called Buffalo Women (Mashkode Bizhiki'ikwe) given to her by Elders. These women are believed to be the victims of a serial killer in Winnipeg and their remains are still there to this day despite pleas from the families and the public to search for them and bring them home.

Recently, Camp Mercedes was set up behind the Canadian Human Rights Museum to protest to get the landfill searched. Both of these camps are peaceful with the aim to bring the women home and to raise awareness on MMIW2S+ in Canada. There is also a sacred fire that burns 24/7 at both locations.

- The former premier of Manitoba, Heather Stefanson refuse to allow funding for the search of the landfill despite recommendations and was strong in her position of not searching it.
- The present premier Wab Kinew has voiced that he is interesting and willing to search the landfill and met with families in October to apologize on behalf of the former premier.
- To this day, the search has not started
- Rebecca Contois (24), Linda Beardy (33), Tanya Nepinak (31), and Joey English (25) are also believed to be at the landfill.

Source: <https://searchthelandfill.com/>



Colonization

Impacts of Colonization

Colonialism in Canada caused Indigenous peoples to be forcibly disconnected from the land, their culture, traditions, language, and community. There are short-term and long-term impacts of colonialism on Indigenous people, and some are even passed down through the generations.

- Disconnection with the Land/ way of life (cultural alienation)
- Territorial dispossession
- Systemic discrimination
- Soul Wounds
- Disconnection from spiritual practices (coping mechanisms)
- Loss of language and traditional knowledge
- Poverty/ socio-economic marginalization
- Elevated rates of substance use, mortality, medical conditions, mental health issues, suicide, violence and all forms of abuse
- Family breakdown



Intergenerational Trauma

Defined as “The intergenerational and unconscious grief from the historical trauma experienced by Indigenous peoples is passed from generation to generation due to forced relocation, land dispossession, and loss of spiritual practices, language and culture. If not addressed and identified accurately, depression, anxiety, PTSD, and substance use can be outward manifestations of the intergenerational trauma and unresolved historical grief” (American Psychiatric Association, n.d., para 11) <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/diversity/education/stress-and-trauma/indigenous-people#:~:text=Intergenerational%20Trauma%3A%20The%20intergenerational%20and,spiritual%20practices%2C%20language%20and%20culture.>

- Indian Residential School (IRS) Survivors are more likely to suffer a variety of mental and physical health problems compared to Indigenous people who did not attend.
- Children of those who did not attend IRS but had a parent who did are also at risk for greater poor well-being
- 37.2 % of adults who had at least one parent who attended IRS thought about committing suicide in their lifetime compared to 25.7% of those with parents who did not attend
- 20.4% of adults who had at least one grandparent who attended IRS had attempted suicide compared to 13.1% who did not
- 31.4% of First Nation youth living on-reserve who had a parent that attended IRS had reported symptoms of depression compared to 20.4% of youth who did not

Source: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1363461513503380>



Reconciliation

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

Dedicated to bringing awareness to the importance of understanding Canada's colonial history and experiences of residential school to reconcile and rebuild relationships.

"We understood from the moment, very deeply, not only the significance of what we are doing but the sacredness of it" – Justice Murray Sinclair

The TRC did extensive research including listening to the stories of survivors and their families, former staff, and others and put together the 94 calls to action

- The commission heard from over 6,000 witnesses
- Going forward requires that we dismantle paternalistic and racist foundations of the residential school system for an ongoing relationship
- Requires mutual respect
- Reminds us that reconciliation is not just an **Indigenous** problem, it is a **Canadian** one

Source: https://irsi.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf



94 Calls to Action

- 76 fall under the sole or shared responsibility of the Government of Canada
- 80% have been completed or are under way.

Some of the actions include:

- 5. "We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families."
- 13. We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights
- 18. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.
- 93. "We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools."

Source: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524494530110/1557511412801>



Reconciliation

Relationship with Newcomers

“You may not have responsibility for the past, but you do have a responsibility for the future because you made a commitment to this country. And the responsibility for the future is reconciliation. So, that means that you still have to understand what this history is, you have to understand what it has done to this country, you have to understand what it is doing to this country, and you have to understand what it will continue to do, unless we change it. And the leadership from those newcomer communities that are occupying more and more leadership positions in government also need to figure out where they fit into that dialogue around change for the future, because they do fit. They are going to be influential leaders of this conversation.” – Senator Murray Sinclair

The goal is to foster dialogue between Indigenous and Newcomer communities.

This relationship is important because we are sharing this land together and when newcomers arrive in Canada, they automatically enter the Treaty Relationship.



Relationship with Newcomers

- Ensure newcomers are given accurate information on the history of Indigenous people and the Treaty Relationship.
- Share dialogue and learn from one another
- Come together and lean on one another based on the historical and cultural dimensions of each community
- Understand the linkage of colonialism and what we are seeing in Indigenous communities today
- Respect each other's similarities and differences (storytelling, ceremonies, culture, and traditions)
- Safe spaces where these experiences can occur
- Development of a toolkit with these 5 components: 1) relevant information related to Indigenous history and culture; 2) treaty related information; 3) discussions on stereotypes; 4) positive stories; and 5) a list of relevant resources.

Source: https://hopetoolkit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Fostering_Safe_Spaces_for_Dialogue_and_RelationshipbuildingNewcomers_and_Indigenous_Peoples.pdf



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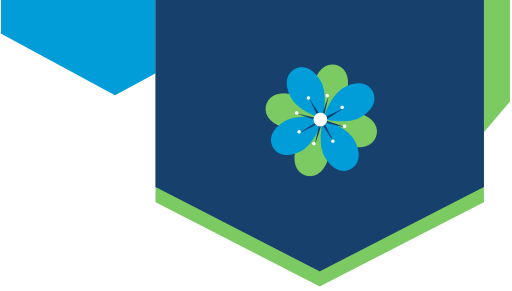
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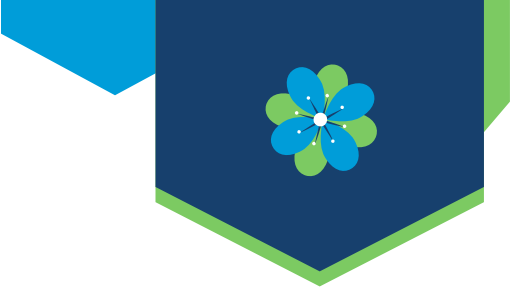
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