

Skoden

Skoden

Teaching, Talking, and Sharing About and for Reconciliation

SENECA COLLEGE

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[Image Glossary](#)

INTRODUCTION



Welcome to Skoden

Welcome to Skoden: Teaching, Talking, and Sharing About and for Reconciliation. The word Skoden originates from the expression, “let’s go then,” and this resource is designed for use by faculty, staff, and administrators working in post-secondary settings in Canada.

The purpose of this text is to offer support to individuals and institutions working towards understanding the colonial history of Canada and its ongoing impact on people who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Skoden is designed to offer opportunities for reflection on what this truth means for each of us personally and professionally.


These materials were prepared by Elder Blu Waters, Randy Pitawanakwat, and Darcey Dachyshyn, with the support of many others. We are a team of First Nations and non-Indigenous colleagues who work together closely to share truth and talk openly about what reconciliation might look and feel like within post-secondary settings. We hope the information and opportunities for reflection provided here meet you wherever you are on the truth and reconciliation journey.

Navigating Skoden

To navigate through Skoden, you can use:

- The table of contents panel to navigate across the different chapters or,
- The Previous and Next buttons available at the bottom of the window to go forward and back.

There are several interactive activities and videos throughout.

- Links to other pages of the site will always open in the current window, including the image glossary that is linked to through the image name provided beneath each image.
- Links to external sites will always open in a new tab. Links that open in a new tab are denoted with the following icon: 

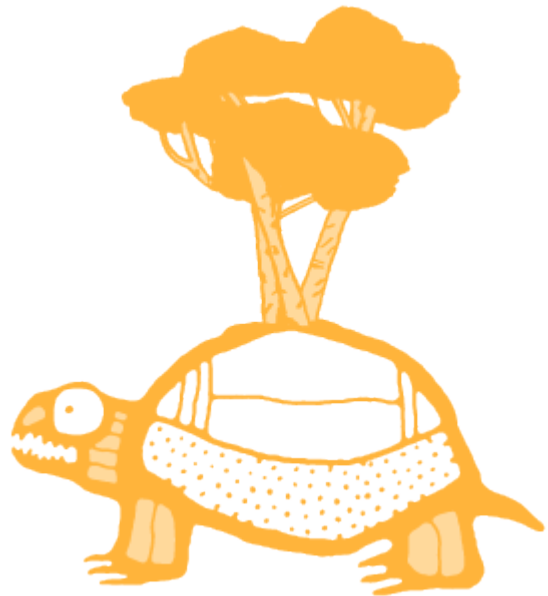
Land Acknowledgement

Though we are all in different places, we are all still on the land somewhere. If not for land, we would not exist. If not for others who have been stewards of the land long before us, we would not exist.

Here on Turtle Island, which is the name given to North America by the people who are Indigenous to this land, we pay special tribute and give thanks to the Ancestral Caretakers of the places we now occupy. In Chapter Three you are encouraged to locate the name of the specific nation(s) on whose land you live and work. For now, wherever you might be:

We would like to acknowledge the land each of us is presently on;
that we are guests here,
and it is our shared obligation to respect, honour, and sustain this land.

Acknowledging the territories we are on is about so much more than the land, and at the same time it is all about the land. The essence of a land acknowledgement is honouring the people and communities on Turtle Island; the knowledge, wisdom, beliefs, teachings, languages, help, support, love, care, and traditions of the many, many Ancestors who have been on this land since time immemorial. In acknowledging the traditional territories of the many Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island we are given the opportunity to welcome these traditions and ways of being into our own lives.



[Turtle Island](#)

Skoden: Teaching, Talking, and Sharing About and For Reconciliation

SKODEN

[Skoden](#)

teachings, Canadian colonization, the history and impact of treaties, and contemporary Indigenous challenges and resilience.

This learning opportunity will assist efforts by Ontario's post-secondary institutions to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA People Calls for Justice, and improve all Canadian students' experiences.

Reconciliation is not an Indigenous issue or responsibility. We are all treaty partners. Skoden encourages non-Indigenous instructors, staff, and administrators to consider what it means to be a treaty partner, how they can address the Calls to Action and Calls for Justice in their own practice, and how to stand with Indigenous communities across Canada.

In Skoden, instructors, staff, and administrators consider how to decolonize and Indigenize those aspects of post-secondary settings they are responsible for. Through a lens of looking back to understand how to go forward in reconciliation, participants learn about Indigenous

Skoden Chapters

There are twelve chapters in Skoden:

- Towards Truth and Reconciliation
- Together in a Good Way
- Land and Centring Ourselves in the Context of Turtle Island
- Pre-contact History
- Colonial History and Legacy
- Being Treaty Partners
- Residential School History and Legacy and Calls to Action
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA People Calls for Justice
- Contemporary Indigenous Challenges
- Cultural Safety in the Classroom
- Indigenous Resistance and Resurgence
- Allyship, Decolonization, and Moving Forward in a Good Way



[Medicine Wheel](#)

Skoden Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of Skoden, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the colonizing history of Turtle Island from the perspectives of the First Peoples of this land.
2. Recognize the ongoing colonial discourses that perpetuate the oppression and marginalization of people who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit on Turtle Island.
3. Integrate the teachings of the local territory into relationships with self and others.
4. Interrogate policies, and social, cultural, and political systems that create and sustain inequities in power and privilege between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.
5. Defend the significance of nation-to-nation relationship-building in the self-determination and self-governance of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities today.
6. Generate personal, professional, and collective acts of reconciliation that contribute to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA People Calls for Justice.



[Three Sisters](#)

How to Proceed



[Four Sacred Medicines](#)

with an Indigenous Elder or Knowledge Keeper to engage in sharing circles to learn from one another.

It is important to consider reciprocity at your institution if you choose to meet with others for discussion with the support of Indigenous colleagues or community members. Remember, non-Indigenous people need to do their own work to unpack the load of untruths and stereotypes they carry. At the same time though it is important to learn the teachings and hear the lived experience of people who are First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. Please be mindful to give back to people for their time in ways that benefit community.

The chapters stand independent from one another and could be explored in whatever order the learner wishes, but it is recommended they be undertaken in sequential order. Likewise, you can engage with the materials on your own, but it is recommended you join with others at your institution to engage in conversation as you explore the topics and the resources in each chapter. The key to the Skoden learning opportunity is reflection, and in each chapter reflective questions and activities for you to undertake are provided. The ultimate experience would be to use the Skoden materials in conjunction with regular opportunities to gather

Contributor Profiles

Content Writers

Elder Blu (Laureen Blu Waters)



I am Elder Blu Waters, and my spirit name is Earth Song. I have mixed Indigenous ancestry with family from the Eskasoni Mi'kmaq First Nation on Cape Breton Island, the Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation in Saskatchewan, and the Red River Métis in Manitoba. I am from the Wolf Clan, and I am a Two-Spirit, neither man nor woman, gender diverse person. I am the Elder on campus at Seneca College and I work out of the First Peoples office located in Odeyto: a space where we bring cultural knowledge to students and provide a place for them to connect, reconnect, or

stay connected with their Indigenous ways of being as they navigate through the colonial post-secondary school system. I conduct traditional ceremonies and provide traditional counseling and traditional knowledge to both students and employees.

In working with administration, faculty, and staff, it is important to provide them with Indigenous understandings, ways of being and knowledge. They can then in turn incorporate those teachings into their work with all students (not just Indigenous students) so that we can all understand whose land we occupy and the critical importance of passing on the information and ideas that have sustained Indigenous people since the beginning of time.

Randy Pitawanakwat

My name is Randy Pitawanakwat, and I am Anishinaabe from Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory and Atikameksheng Anishnawbek. I am a full-time faculty at Seneca College with the role of helping faculty to bring more Indigenous content into their courses, and to create ways to decolonize their pedagogical approaches. I work out of Odeyto, the First Peoples office. Prior to my work at Seneca, I worked with the Indigenous community in the Toronto area for over a decade as a social worker. Much of my knowledge comes from a collection of understandings from oral tradition and experiences throughout my life in Wiikwemkoong and Atikameksheng Anishnawbek.



Darcey Dachyshyn



I am Darcey Dachyshyn, and I am a descendent of colonists of Ukrainian ancestry whose great grandparents were sent to Western Canada to take land from people who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit and turn it in to farmland. My grandfather farmed alongside a Métis road allowance community and my parents enjoyed much wealth gained from the resource extraction of the oil industry. I am fully a product of colonization and acknowledge that I benefit greatly from this.

I joined Seneca College as a full-time faculty just as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada brought forth the 94 Calls to Action. I used my privilege as a full-time faculty to insist that students from the programs in which I teach are provided with knowledge of the colonial history of Canada and the ongoing impact this has had and continues to have on people who are First Nations, Métis, Inuit. Working in collaboration with the First Peoples staff at Seneca College to design curriculum and pedagogy for students led to the conclusion that we needed to provide faculty, staff, and administrators with the knowledge, skills, and insights to deliver Indigenous content in a good way. This led to the creation of Skoden.

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With support from, First Peoples@Seneca, Seneca's Teaching & Learning Centre, and Seneca Libraries Copyright Team.

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[Skoden: Teaching, Talking, and Sharing About and for Reconciliation](#) has been designed to conform with [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0](#) Level AA, as required by the AODA.

The course content has been optimized for accessibility:

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- Hyperlinks are visually distinct and are formatted with meaningful text.
- Proper heading structures were implemented to optimize screen reader navigation.
- All images have alternative text, and when appropriate, a long description.
- The colour contrast of text complies with accessibility guidelines.
- Colour is not used alone to convey information.
- All videos have closed captioning.
- Video transcripts have been created for videos created in-house and for some externally sourced videos.

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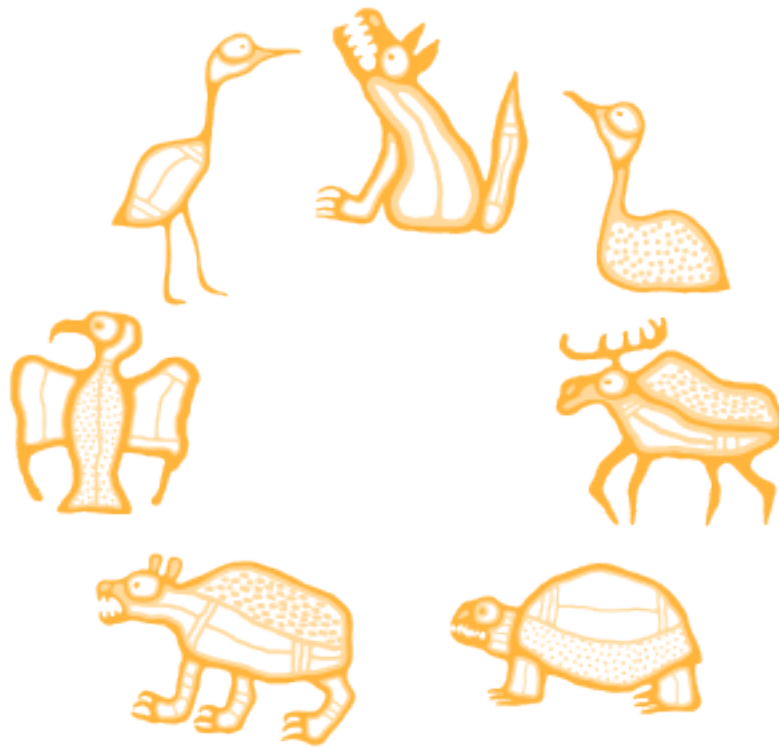
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Contact Information

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This statement was last updated on 23 February 2022.



[Doodem Animals. From top, clockwise: wolf, loon, moose, turtle, bear, thunderbird, crane.](#)

About this Resource

Funding

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SKODEN

CHAPTER 1: TOWARDS TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION



Chapter Overview

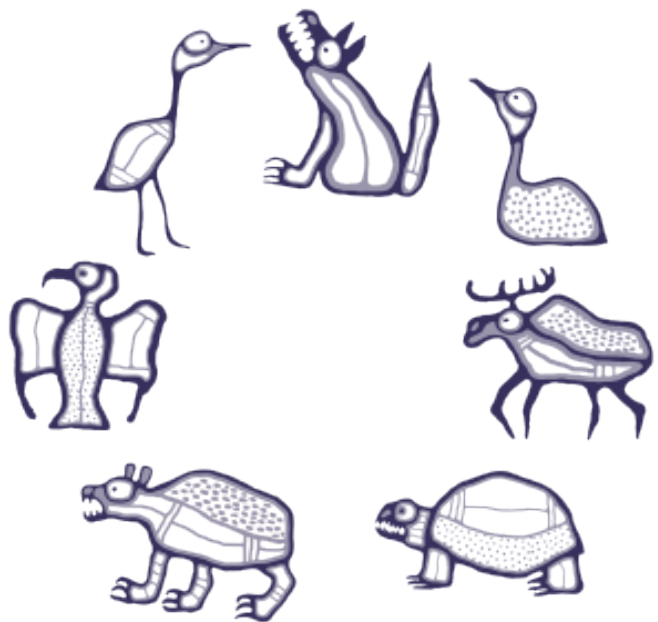
This first chapter provides an origin story of the word Skoden and how it is used. We offer an opportunity for reflection on what it might mean to “get going” on reconciliation in the context of post-secondary education. An Elder Teaching on the significance of the circle is provided, along with reflective questions and activities based on the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel. Further recommended material for viewing, listening, and reading is suggested at the end of the chapter.

Defining Skoden

The word Skoden is common amongst First Nations people across [Turtle Island](#) (the name used by Indigenous people for North America) and is becoming more used and understood by non-Indigenous people thanks to events such as [the painting of Skoden across a water tower in Sudbury](#), Ontario in July, 2018.

Skoden is short form for the statement: “Let’s go then!”

After decades of colonization it is time for non-Indigenous people, as treaty partners on Turtle Island, to get going on restoring right relationships with people who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. In the Calls to Action coming out of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and the Calls to Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA People, we are clearly called upon in post-secondary settings to do our part to ensure the truth is known about our history and its impact on the present. This is an important step towards bringing about equitable relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.



[Doodem Animals. From top, clockwise: wolf, loon, moose, turtle, bear, thunderbird, crane.](#)

Education has in many ways contributed to the ongoing marginalization, oppression, and misrepresentation of Indigenous people. So, let’s Skoden in bringing about positive change!

About Truth

Historically, Kindergarten to grade 12 curricula in this country was very poor at teaching children the truth about the colonial history that has served to marginalize and oppress people who are Indigenous to this land. This is beginning to change, and our hope is that one day soon a resource like this is no longer necessary because everyone educated in Canada will already know the truth. For those of you who are newcomers to Canada, what you will learn in Skoden will dispel the myth of Canada as a wonderful country that is at the forefront of social justice, equity, and human rights. For those of you who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, you have been living the truth of our history going back seven generations.



[Plantain](#)

The truth is, the nation of Canada was founded on patriarchal, monarchist, Christian, white European colonialism. We know that stating this so boldly on day one is no doubt going to offend some people, but we must open ourselves up to the truth about our history. The key point is, this is our historical foundation, but it does no longer need to be our present and our future. History is created by us. We have the power to take this history and its ongoing impact and create a more equitable and just future. Let's begin this exploration of the truth by viewing the video,

Before you begin the video, reflect on the following:

- What did you learn in your school lessons about the history of Canada?
- Outside of school, what messages did you receive about people who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit?

As you watch the video, pay attention for:

- What surprises you or what were you not aware of?
- What confuses you or what do you need more information about?

After viewing the video, reflect on:

- How have your views of Canada changed?
- How have your views changed about the people who are Indigenous to this land?



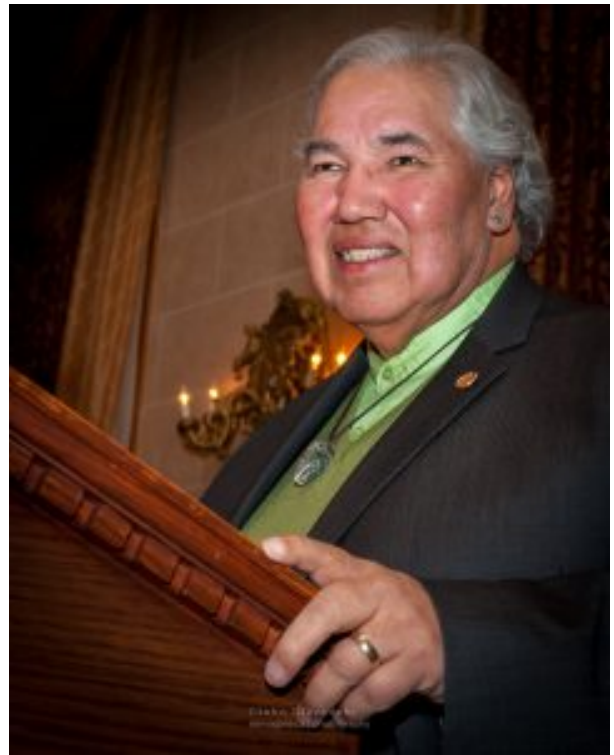
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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=1471#oembed-1>

About Reconciliation

The phrase “truth and reconciliation” is subject to overuse in Canada right now, and awareness as to what reconciliation really means for all of us is sometimes lacking. As you embark on Skoden you are invited to think about what reconciliation with people who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit means to you personally and professionally?

Listen to the podcast interview, linked below, with the Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. If listening to a podcast is not accessible to you, the print interview linked further below provides very similar information. These interviews took place shortly before the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30, 2021). Recognizing this day came about in fulfillment of Call 80 of the Truth and



Murray Sinclair by [John Giavedoni](#). CC-BY-NC-ND.

Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action. Murray Sinclair says in the interview that the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is about atoning for what was done and ensuring it never happens again and that the first step in reconciliation is to learn the truth about Canada. Perhaps engaging with the Skoden materials is for you an act of reconciliation. See below for what to consider as you listen or read.

As you listen and/or read the interview(s) consider:

- What needs healing in yourself that stands in the way of reconciliation with the people, the land, and the way of life that was here before colonization?
- What barriers to reconciliation do you see systemically embedded into Canadian society?

Listen: [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is 1 step on a long journey, says Murray Sinclair](#)

Read: [‘It’s like renewing our vow’: Murray Sinclair says it will take a while to figure out Sept. 30 but we shouldn’t give up](#)

Sharing Circle Teaching

In each chapter, Elder Blu Waters, Seneca College, and community Elder, shares a teaching. This first teaching focuses on the significance of the sharing circle.

Consider:

- How would life be different for all of us, personally and professionally, if we lived by the circle form of governance and decision-making?



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=218#oembed-1>

Video Transcript: [Elder Teaching – Sharing Circle Teaching](#)

Medicine Wheel Questions and Activities

More is said in a later chapter about the Medicine Wheel. Here the concept is introduced that to live life in balance you need to consider four aspects of yourself – your emotions, your body, your intellect, and your spiritual self. In each Skoden chapter reflective questions and activities for you to undertake are provided that correspond to the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel. Click on each of the quadrants to reveal the content.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=212#h5p-10>

When Meeting With others



Pawis-Steckley, J. [Illustration of Indigenous people sitting in a circle](#). Local Love.

It is recommended that you meet with others in a Sharing Circle as you work your way through the Skoden materials. In your first Skoden Sharing Circle be sure to review the Circle Teaching shared by Elder Blu. Below are some protocols to use or consult Elders and Knowledge Keepers in your area for circle protocols relevant to the land you are on.

- Someone offers to begin
- Everyone listens without interruption
- Sharing proceeds in either a clockwise or counter clockwise direction
- General discussion and requests for clarification follow once everyone has had an opportunity to share

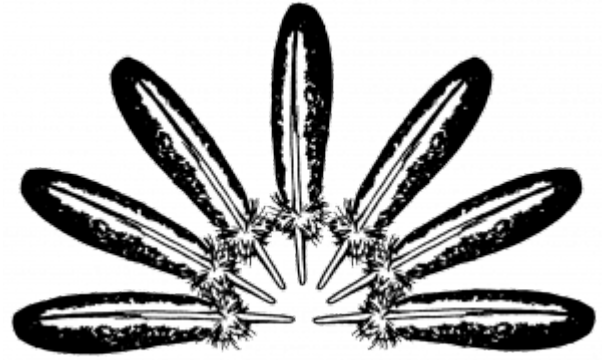
The sharing circle is a great place for people to discuss their responses to the Medicine Wheel Questions and Activities.

Going Further

Documentary: [We Know the Truth: Stories to inspire reconciliation](#)

Podcast: [Aboriginal Peoples Television Network \(APTN\) Indigenous content podcasts](#)

Reading: [Indigenous Writes: A guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada by Chelsea Vowel](#)



[Eagle Feathers](#)

CHAPTER 2: TOGETHER IN A GOOD WAY



Chapter Overview

This chapter introduces various terms and markers of identity used in the past and present that pertain to Indigenous people of this land. The notion of what it might mean to come together “in a good way” both in this Skoden experience and in reconciling with the history and legacy of colonization is discussed. The Elder Teaching focuses on the importance of considering seven generations back and seven generations going forward as we think about how to live life together in a good way. Reflective questions and activities based on the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel are provided, along with further recommended material for viewing, listening, and reading.

Terminology Introduction



[Balsam Fir](#)

Deciding what terminology to use to identify Indigenous people is important, especially considering the historical and present context in which terminology is used to marginalize and oppress the original inhabitants of this land. The word Indigenous is itself a good place to start. Those who are considered Indigenous today, are descendants of people who were living on this land prior to colonization by Europeans.

You will still find the term Aboriginal, rather than Indigenous, used in some contexts, including official Canadian Government documents, but the term Indigenous is becoming the preferred overall term to use. Note that throughout Skoden, Indigenous is capitalized though this is not always done in other contexts.

In what is now known as Canada, there are three distinct groups of Indigenous people – First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. According to their own traditions and teachings, the Inuit and First Nations people have been on this land since time immemorial (forever). People who identify as Métis are descendants of First Nations and European parentage.

Indigenous people identify themselves in many different ways. A term that one person embraces could offend another. It is important to be respectful of how Indigenous people themselves want or choose to be identified.

To get started, watch the short video, [How to Talk About Indigenous People](#), that clearly explains use of the terms Indigenous, Aboriginal, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

Consider as you view the video:

- What is your own level of comfort or awareness about what terms to use in relation to the people Indigenous to Turtle Island?
- What terms did you learn growing up?
- If you are not Canadian born, what terms might you have heard used to refer to people who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit?



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=403#oembed-1>

For a global perspective on Indigenous peoples see: [Who are indigenous peoples?](#) and [Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations](#).

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit

Select the information icons to learn more about each group.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=405#h5p-29>

[Sacred Pipe](#), [Inuit Qulliq](#), [Métis Sash](#)

Other Terminology

Click each term to learn what it means.

Aboriginal

The word Aboriginal is used to refer to the people who have been in a region since the earliest times. Though you will still see this term used, most notably in the Truth and Reconciliation of Canada Commission documents, as this was the official government term used at the time of the Commission, the preferred umbrella term to use today is Indigenous. The term is still used to identify the people Indigenous to Australia.

Afro-Indigenous

An Afro-Indigenous person is someone who is both Black and Indigenous. Afro-Indigenous people are Indigenous but the unique experiences of living in two intersecting identities means that Afro-Indigenous people are sometimes acknowledged separately or in addition to people who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Within Skoden, those who identify as Afro-Indigenous are included when the terminology Indigenous or First Nations, Métis, and Inuit are used.

Ancestral Territory

Land that has been utilized for traditional purposes. This might be different from treaty territory as there were no colonial treaties yet negotiated when nations occupied various territories across this vast land. A traditional territory connects Indigenous peoples both ancestrally and contemporarily to the land.

BIPOC

The acronym Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour is commonly used in anti-racist and anti-oppression discourse and practice.

Indian

First Nations people who are registered under the Indian Act are still identified as this term legally. This makes the term federally legislated and colonial and therefore should not be used in any other way other than in its legal context.

Indigenous People

In the context of the land now known as Canada, the term Indigenous people is used as an

umbrella term for people who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Note the upper case in Indigenous, just as you use upper case in Canadian, and English.

Kanata

A Haudenosaunee word meaning “the village” from which Canada got its name.

Native

This term is usually used to describe a person that could be either First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. Although it is still commonly used, it carries negative connotations and does not honour the distinctiveness of different Indigenous groups.

Native American & American Indian

Used in the context of First Nations in the United States. Not used for First Nations in Canada.

Reserve

A First Nations Reserve is land that the federal government designated for occupancy by a particular First Nation in treaty negotiations. The term used for this land in the United States is reservation.

Turtle Island

What many First Nations refer to North America as.

Living Together in a Good Way

Reconciliation is about learning to live together in a good way. Like all Indigenous Teachings though, living in a good way can have as many interpretations as there are many Knowledge Keepers and Elders providing the Teaching. In addition, a fundamental value in most Indigenous worldviews is that you learn what you are meant to learn at the time you are intended to learn it. Therefore, what each person takes away from learning about living in a good way is going to be unique to them.



[Bear Grease](#)

In Skoden, and the reconciliation work that is needed in post-secondary settings, we focus on decision-making and the importance of considering the teachings of the Ancestors going back seven generations and the needs of Descendants going forward seven generations.

Non-Indigenous people have much to account for due to the damage done to the Indigenous people of Turtle Island. See this APTN Investigates documentary [The Colonial Playbook](#) for a discussion about the ongoing deliberate nature of colonization.

As you view this video consider:

- The term “playbook” is most commonly used in sports, primarily Canadian and American football, and contains a number of standard plays or moves or strategies to be used in the game against opponents. As you view the video pay attention to what strategies are contained within the colonial playbook that the government has always been functioning from?
- What are your thoughts about the position that what happened in the past is regrettable and that though some horrible mistakes were made, Canada is still essentially a great country?



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This is not the end of the story though. We get to work together to write the history that will be

told for the next seven generations. One small step we can take toward living together in a good way is by using appropriate terminology as we build relationships now and into the future.

Two Row Wampum

To live together in a good way as Indigenous and non-Indigenous people was agreed to between the Haudenosaunee and Dutch in 1613 and still serves as a model today. The Two Row Wampum Treaty acknowledges the agreement that the two nations will live side-by-side in a relationship of peace, friendship, respect, and non-interference for as long as the water flows downhill, the grass grows green, and the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. The image of the wampum belt is of two vessels, a canoe, and a ship, traveling down a river, in a relationship of reciprocity and respect. That is what it means to live life together in a good way.

For more information, see:

[A short introduction to the Two Row Wampum](#)



[Two Row Wampum Belt](#)

In a Good Way Teaching

In this teaching, Elder Blu Waters, Seneca College, and community Elder, shares the importance of considering the wisdom of our Ancestors and the future of our Descendants if we are to live life in a good way.

Consider:

- How would life be different for all of us, personally and professionally, if we had in mind the wisdom of the past and the consideration of the generations ahead when making decisions?



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=428#oembed-1>

Video Transcript: [Elder Teachings – In a Good Way Teaching](#)

Medicine Wheel Questions and Activities

In each Skoden chapter reflective questions and activities for you to undertake are provided that correspond to the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel. Click on each of the quadrants to reveal the content.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=430#h5p-11>

Going Further

Documentary: [The Colonial Toolkit](#)

Podcast: [Unreserved](#)

Reading: [Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition by Glen Sean Coulthard](#)



[Eagle Feathers](#)

CHAPTER 3: LAND AND CENTRING OURSELVES IN THE CONTEXT OF TURTLE ISLAND



Chapter Overview

This chapter focuses on the sacredness of land to Indigenous people and the place land acknowledgements can have in coming to understand the role of non-Indigenous people in reconciling with the taking of land and the restoration of right relationships with one another. A Dish with One Spoon treaty is looked to as a symbol for how we can live together sharing the resources of the land. The creation story in the Elder Teaching offers an invitation to live in gratitude and reciprocity with all our relations. Reflective questions and activities based on the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel are provided, along with further recommended material for viewing, listening, and reading.

Why Land Matters

From an Indigenous perspective, land connections are spiritual connections. Every aspect of the land, the water, the plants, the animals, are all related and are considered sacred beings to be cared for and protected. The land is seen as sacred, so to misuse and misappropriate the land is to break a sacred relationship.

All the original instructions on how to live life in a good way are given to us through the land. It is only in acknowledging all our relations upon the land that we can be brought together as one. In the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address time is taken to express gratitude to every aspect of creation and at the end of each refrain is stated, “Now our minds are one.”

With the understanding that Indigenous people consider the land to be sacred, read this document [Historical Primer by Shauna Johnson](#). When complete, consider the loss of identity and of rightful place on this land that people who are First Nations Métis, and Inuit have experienced for many generations.

To further your understanding of land as sacred, see:

[First Nation Relationship to the Land](#)



[Four Sacred Medicines](#)

Land and Reconciliation

In an Indigenous worldview, land is sacred. For many generations a colonial capitalist worldview has done great damage to the land. Truth and reconciliation is about new relationships with one another as human beings, but it is also about reconciliation with the land. As you view the video [Reconciliation Begins with the Land](#) consider:

- What small and large acts of reconciliation with the land can you commit to?



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=1772#oembed-1>

Locating Yourself on Turtle Island

Use the map below, from the [Native Land](#) website, to determine whose land you are on. Prior to colonization, the many First Nations and Inuit living on Turtle Island shared this vast space, each group having what today we refer to as their Traditional Territory. Where you are presently might also be associated with a particular treaty.



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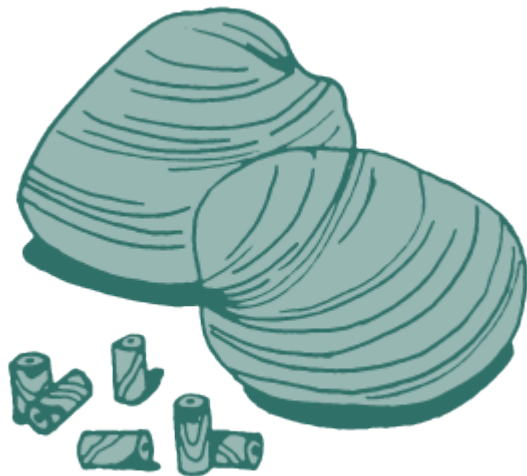
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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=449#h5p-2>

Why Land Acknowledgements Matter



[Clam Shells and Wampum Beads](#)

Indigenous worldview.

Begin by knowing the facts about who are the traditional stewards of the land you are working and living on, and what treaties might encompass the area. Of equal importance is speaking from your heart about what it means to you to be on this reconciliation journey and what insights you are making about the significance of all the relations the land has gifted you with.

For more guidance and resources for preparing land acknowledgements, see:

[What are land acknowledgements and why do they matter?](#)

[What's wrong with land acknowledgements, and how to make them better](#)

Watch this beautiful graphic Tkaronto land acknowledgment: [Uncovering an Oral History of Tkaronto](#).

As you view the video consider how what you say in your land acknowledgement can contribute to telling the truth about this land and how it can serve to re-imagine a new way of relating to all our relations.

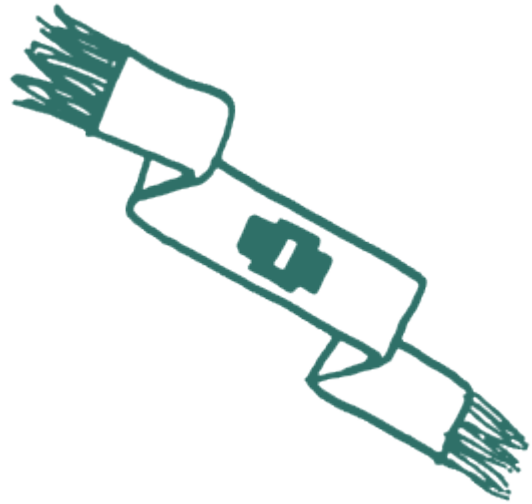
Land acknowledgements are becoming more commonplace and some fear that when done as a token, prescribed, or obligatory gesture that they do little good. In Skoden you are encouraged to develop land acknowledgements and to use them in the various roles you hold in post-secondary settings. Sincerity, rather than a rote citing of unfamiliar territory and nation names, is what you are seeking. The thing to remember is that land acknowledgements will grow with you as you increase your knowledge and commitment to knowing the truth about how land was taken from Indigenous people, and as you increase your understanding of the significance of land within an



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=451#oembed-1>

A Dish with One Spoon

When we consider land and centring ourselves in the context of Turtle Island it is important to heed the teachings of A Dish with One Spoon. This is a treaty agreement between the First Nations surrounding the Great Lakes to live together sharing the resources of the land. The concept of a dish with one spoon can also be considered an invitation for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to live together sharing the resources of the land today. The teachings of the agreement are that the earth is one dish that provides for us all, and that we need to live healthy lives. We have only one spoon to use in sharing all the resources. Therefore, you take only what you need, you always leave something in the dish for others, and you keep the dish clean. It is significant that it is simply a spoon, no knife, symbolizing peace and harmony.



[Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt](#)

For more information, see: [A Dish with One Spoon](#)

For an explanation of the significance of wampum belts view [Voices From Here: Richard Hill](#). As you view the video consider:

- What might be the result of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people coming together today to polish the wampum chains our Ancestors agreed to centuries ago?



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Creation Story Teaching

In this Teaching, Elder Blu Waters, Seneca College, and community Elder, emphasizes two things: the interconnectedness of all aspects of creation, and the total dependence of human beings on all other parts of creation.

Consider:

- How would life be different for all of us, personally and professionally, if the Creation Story shared in this chapter is a creation story everyone knows?



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=462#oembed-1>

Video Transcript: [Elder Teaching – Creation Story Teaching](#)

Medicine Wheel Questions and Activities

In each Skoden chapter reflective questions and activities for you to undertake are provided that correspond to the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel. Click on each of the quadrants to reveal the content.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=466#h5p-12>

Going Further

Documentary: [Stories from the Land](#)

Podcast: [Kineo](#)

Reading: [Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants](#) by Robin Wall Kimmerer



[Eagle Feathers](#)

CHAPTER 4: PRE-CONTACT HISTORY



Chapter Overview

This chapter looks to the seldom acknowledged vibrant life being lived on Turtle Island long before colonization by Europeans. If we are to understand the present, it is important to have more than the colonizers' version of history. Also, the Medicine Wheel is introduced in the Elder Teaching as a wholistic belief system that is part of this pre-colonial way of life and that today, if followed, serves to keep the lives of individuals and communities in balance. Reflective questions and activities based on the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel are provided, along with further recommended material for viewing, listening, and reading.

Pre-contact History Overview

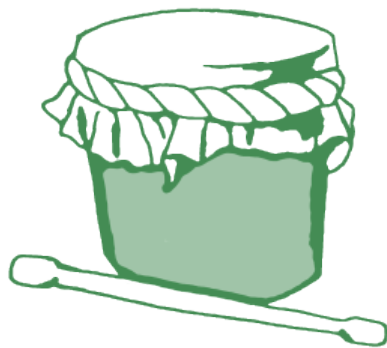
Typically, for decades, the Canadian history shared and taught began with colonization – with explorers and adventurers discovering a vast land that was sparsely populated by savages. Thankfully, that narrative is beginning to change. What can be said though with certainty about what life was like on Turtle Island before colonization?



[Spruce Boughs](#)

Two theories speculate about how the Americas became populated, the Siberian land bridge theory, and the more recent theory that Polynesians traveled by boat to the West Coast. However, as we know from the Creation Story, Indigenous people on Turtle Island speak of themselves as being here since time immemorial.

Given the vastness and climate diversity of the land now known as Canada, it is important to consider how the way of life would have differed for people living in different regions of this land. One of the things that would have been common though is a connection to water not just for survival, but as a significant cultural signifier. Whether the oceans of the North, West, and East Coasts, or the rivers and lakes that drew communities of people to them, we see the traditions and ways of life of the many nations across Turtle Island influenced by the water features near them.



[Water Drum](#)

While there is much evidence that the people Indigenous to Turtle Island pre-contact lived in small groups that relied on hunting and fishing, there is also evidence of communities that had developed agricultural practices that supported large populations. This meant the development of a variety of tools for various purposes including the creative, ceremonial, and communication practices of wood and rock carving.

While Columbus and 1492 get all the attention, there is evidence of contact with the Norse on the northeast coast of Turtle Island as early as ACE 1000. There is also evidence of considerable movement by nations from the north and south and east and west, as artifacts are found in different regions than from where they originate.

A lot of what is known about the way of life on Turtle Island pre-contact comes from the archeological evidence, but also from the journals and reports of the early colonists. We know

that plants were being used for medicinal purposes, maple sugaring was common, and corn, beans, squash, rice, and other vegetables were being harvested.

One of the stereotypes that often gets perpetuated about the First Peoples of the land is the types of shelters or homes they built. Along with the land determining the foods that were eaten, so too did the land determine what shelter ensured survival. If larger communities were established with adequate resources nearby to sustain large numbers of people, then entire villages were created, which included longhouses and lodges, depending on the nation and physical location. If small groups were on the move as hunter-gatherers, then tipis or wigwams were constructed. Tipis were made of animal hide or birchbark. Wigwams were made of saplings,



[Pine Tree](#)

typically from the poplar tree, sinew, and soil. In wigwams, birchbark was used as the outer layer as protection from the elements. Balsam fir or cedar boughs were used as flooring in these dwellings. In the far north, yes, igloos were used, but not year-long. During the warmer weather in the north, tents were fashioned out of hides.

Pan-Indigenizing, making overarching statements that apply to all Indigenous people, is problematic. This is especially the case when it comes to governance and leadership. From the stories and traditions that have been passed down, some communities were hierarchical, either with patriarchal or matriarchal leadership, while others relied solely on the circle governance model of all voices being heard in decision-making. It is also known that Two-Spirit people were highly revered and looked to for guidance as they hold the gifts of both genders and can see things from more than one gender viewpoint.

One final element of life to mention here is that of cooperation and sharing. Many alliances, confederacies, and treaties between nations were held long before colonization. These were always undertaken in the spirit of cooperation, the sharing of resources, trade, and peace.

For a detailed look at what is known about the way of life pre-contact, see:

[The Standard of Living Before European Settlement](#)

Pre-contact History Video Series

The United States television network PBS aired a four-episode series called [Native America](#) that examines the way of life in the Americas before colonization. While heavily focused on the United States context and on South America, much can be learned about the history of the land we are presently on through this series.

If you have access to PBS through your college or university library, you will be able to watch the episodes in full. You can also access the series through clips provided on the [Native America in the Classroom](#) website.

Here is the trailer to [Native America: A Documentary Exploring the World of America's First Peoples](#).

As you view the trailer consider what you learned previously about the people Indigenous to Turtle Island and how this might contrast with the messages you hear in the video and in the course.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=500#oembed-1>

Medicine Wheel Teaching

In this teaching, Elder Blu Waters, Seneca College, and community Elder, shares the importance of keeping the four aspects of life, body, mind, spirit, and emotion, in balance.

Consider:

- How would life be different for all of us, personally and professionally, if we all lived our lives giving equal attention to our emotions, our physical self, our intellect, and our spirituality?



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=503#oembed-1>

Video Transcript: [Medicine Wheel Teaching](#)

Medicine Wheel Questions and Activities

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Going Further

Documentary: [Cottagers & Indians](#)

Podcast: [2003 CBC Massey Lectures, “The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative”](#)

Reading: [Indigenous Peoples within Canada by Olive Patricia Dickason and William Newbigging](#)



[Eagle Feathers](#)

CHAPTER 5: COLONIAL HISTORY AND LEGACY

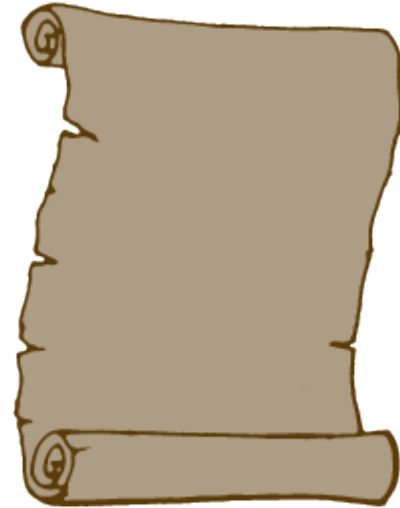


Chapter Overview

European colonization of Turtle Island is the focus of this chapter. The Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius* are presented as the foundation upon which Indigenous people were dehumanized and land was taken. The Royal Proclamation of 1763, the Indian Act, and the response to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples are examined as tools of ongoing colonization. Learning the truth about Canadian history can be emotionally challenging. Smudging and the Four Sacred Medicines are offered in the Elder Teaching as a way for us all to heal. Reflective questions and activities based on the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel are provided, along with further recommended material for viewing, listening, and reading.

Colonial History

Before Europeans began to settle on what is known as Canada, Europeans and Indigenous people were building relationships with one another based on trade, mainly of fur, animal hides, and fish. Because of this, Indigenous people on Turtle Island were accustomed to welcoming European ships as they came and went. These were mainly peaceful relationships that meant Indigenous people and Europeans were sharing and learning from one another. Trade settlements were the earliest forms of settlement that existed before more permanent communities for Europeans were established.



[Scroll](#)

For a detailed look at the early contact relationship between the people Indigenous to Turtle Island and Europeans, see:

[Early Years of Contact, Trade & Settlement](#)

It is important to understand that the history of colonization begins with rather peaceful and mutually beneficial interactions between Europeans and First Nations and Inuit populations. During first contact, Europeans relied on Indigenous people for successful trade and even survival. Early on there was an agreement between Indigenous people and Europeans to share the land. Both parties could see the mutual benefits of their trade relationship. This posture of friendship by Europeans was a facade used to win over trust in order to establish invasive strategies to displace Indigenous people.

A key strategy in the domination of Turtle Island is the [Doctrine of Discovery](#); a doctrine of superiority that legitimized the colonization of sovereign Indigenous nations globally in the name of Christianity. This global take-over included the land of Indigenous people in what is now Canada.

The Doctrine of Discovery claimed that if land was vacant, it could be claimed by explorers in the name of the Monarchy. Since Indigenous people were non-Christian this meant they were less than human (savages), and therefore since the land was uninhabited by humans, Christian Europeans had the right to colonize whatever land they discovered.

The notion of [*terra nullius*](#), meaning empty land, was also used to legitimize colonization. If the land was empty of humans, it was free for the taking. Since Indigenous people were non-Christian, they were uncivilized, nonhuman, or savage, and therefore the land was terra nullius and taking it was justified.

The Royal Proclamation

The [Royal Proclamation of 1763](#) is a document that outlined European settlement of Indigenous land. King George III issued this document to provide guidelines of how Britain could claim territory. The Proclamation states in part:

“And whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to our Interest, and the Security of our Colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians with whom We are connected, and who live under our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions

and Territories as, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds. ...

And We do hereby strictly forbid, on Pain of our Displeasure, all our loving Subjects from making any Purchases or Settlements whatever, or taking Possession of any of the Lands above reserved, without our especial leave and Licence for that Purpose first obtained. ...

And We do further strictly enjoin and require all Persons whatever who have either wilfully or inadvertently seated themselves upon any Lands within the Countries above described or upon any other Lands which, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are still reserved to the said Indians as aforesaid, forthwith to remove themselves from such Settlements.”

While the Old English can be difficult to understand, it seems clear that the essence of the Proclamation is that Indigenous rights and territory are recognized by the Crown (at the time the British King but now the federal government). The Proclamation acknowledges that Indigenous title to land will continue to exist and that it would continue to exist as such unless ceded by a treaty. At the time, it was only the Crown that could purchase land and anyone that wished to buy land had to buy it from the Crown.

Although the Proclamation promises protection of Indigenous lands (and that their land shall never be *molested* or *disturbed*), this is still a colonial document that establishes a colonial view of



[Crown](#)

land as possession. Also, it is a document that was created without the consultation of Indigenous peoples.

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 is still a legitimate official document. Despite this, the settlement of Europeans began to grow in numbers, mostly without consultation or negotiation with Indigenous peoples of the territory. Sometimes, however, *treaties* were established between Indigenous peoples and the government to ensure Indigenous people were compensated for the land taken, although the *fairness* of these treaties are contested.

For more information, watch [Justice Murray Sinclair on the Royal Proclamation of 1763](#) where he explains his “love – hate relationship” with the proclamation.

The Indian Act

“The great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to change” (Sir John A. MacDonalD, 1887).

Although Indigenous people had laws that were established long before colonization, the federal government wanted a more structured relationship of control over them, their communities, lands, and resources. [The Indian Act](#) was created with the purpose of assimilating First Nations people into European-Canadian society. The Indian Act has been historically discriminatory and oppressive, which has contributed to several violations of human rights. Many amendments have been made to the Act over the years but it is still a current piece of legislation used to outline various rules and regulations involving reserve land, governmental responsibilities of band councils, and other aspects of life for Indians with status. It is the Indian Act that defines who can and cannot acquire status.

Visit the webpage [21 Things You May Not Have Known About the Indian Act](#) and read the list. Also watch [The Indian Act Explained](#).



Arms of Her Majesty The Queen in Right of Canada copyright by Government of Canada

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples



[Digitized Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Documents](#) by Library and Archives Canada

The [Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples](#) (RCAP) is a five volume, 4000-page report with over 400 recommendations, designed and established in 1991 and completed in 1996. Its purpose was to look constructively at the progress of the relationship between Indigenous (Aboriginal) people, the federal government, and Canadian society. The Commission, which comprised of seven commissioners, three non-Indigenous and four Indigenous, started at a time when unrest was building in Indigenous communities across Turtle Island. The Innu were protesting military low flying fighter jets and helicopters that were terrifying the children and disrupting the Innu hunting grounds. A children's

author published a book titled [Nutai's Cap](#) about the event. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples came on the heels of the standoff and armed conflict in Kanesatake ([Oka crisis](#)) just a year earlier. It was a culmination of these events and others that led to the start of the Commission. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples aimed at putting a spotlight on the foundation of the relationship between the government, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada.

For more information about the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, see:

[Highlights from the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples](#)

[RCAP: 20 Years Later](#)

[20 years since Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, still waiting for change](#)

[No Turning Back](#)

Colonial Impacts

The chapters to follow detail some of the ongoing impacts European colonization has on the people and land of Turtle Island. As a precursor of later topics, view the stop-action animated short documentary: [Four Faces of the Moon](#).

As you view the video, consider:

- What historical events can you identify in the movie? What expressions of hope do you see?



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=527#oembed-1>

Sacred Medicines Teaching

In this teaching, Elder Blu Waters, Seneca College, and community Elder, shares the view that all of creation is sacred medicine.

Consider:

- How would life be different for all of us, personally and professionally, if we lived believing in the sacred medicines of all of creation?



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=546#oembed-1>

Video Transcript: [Sacred Medicines Teaching](#)

Medicine Wheel Questions and Activities

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An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=548#h5p-14>

Going Further

Documentary: [Colonization Road](#)

Podcast: [2018 CBC Massey Lectures: All Our Relations: Finding the Path Forward](#)

Reading: [Doodem and Council Fire: Anishinaabe Governance through Alliance](#) by Heidi Bohaker



[Eagle Feathers](#)

CHAPTER 6: THE IMPORTANCE OF TREATIES



Chapter Overview

In this chapter treaties are looked to as living documents that have current obligations for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. That we are all treaty partners with inherent rights and obligations is emphasized. The Elder Teaching – All my Relations, reinforces the interconnectedness of not only all human beings, but all of creation. Reflective questions and activities based on the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel are provided, along with further recommended material for viewing, listening, and reading.

The Intent of Treaties

The traditions and protocols of Indigenous treaties existed long before first contact with Europeans. Indigenous people had engaged in their own forms of governance for hundreds of years; sharing resources and building alliances between nations. For First Nations people, treaties are considered sacred. To honour their sacredness, protocols and negotiations involved ceremonial aspects such as a pipe ceremony or an exchange of symbolic items.

Treaties were commonly signified and symbolized in the making of a wampum belt out of purple or black quahog clam shells and white whelk shells. Given the belief in the sacredness of



[Medallion](#)

all things associated with the land and that spirit is alive in everything, the shells themselves are able to hold the intent of the treaties and pass them from generation to generation. For further information about the significance of wampum, see [Wampum holds power of earliest agreements](#).

The peaceful and harmonious alliances between Indigenous groups that were formed hundreds of years ago still exist today. One of the most well-known examples of this is the [Haudenosaunee Confederacy](#) (also known as Six Nations or Iroquois Confederacy) and is considered the first democracy. The Haudenosaunee includes Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca, and later included Tuscarora. There is also the [Three Fires Confederacy](#) beginning in the 1600s that is made up of Ojibway, Potawatomi, and Odawa nations. The [Wabanaki Confederacy](#) dates as far back as the 1680s and includes the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqey, Peskotomuhkatiyik, Abenaki, and Penobscot.

The [Dish with One Spoon](#) treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas, and Haudenosaunee nations living around the Great Lakes is an example of the spirit and intent in which First Nations would have entered into treaty agreements with Europeans. The sharing of resources for the

sustenance of all in a spirit of peace and friendship was at the foundation of the treaty process from a First Nations perspective.

During early contact with Europeans, First Nations began negotiating peaceful co-existence with the newcomers. A well-known example of this is the [Two-Row Wampum](#) between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch that would ensure friendship, peace, and respect for as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow. Indigenous groups across Turtle Island were familiar with the process of negotiation and treaty-making by the time of European contact; however, they were not prepared for the different approaches to the treaty process that Europeans would bring.

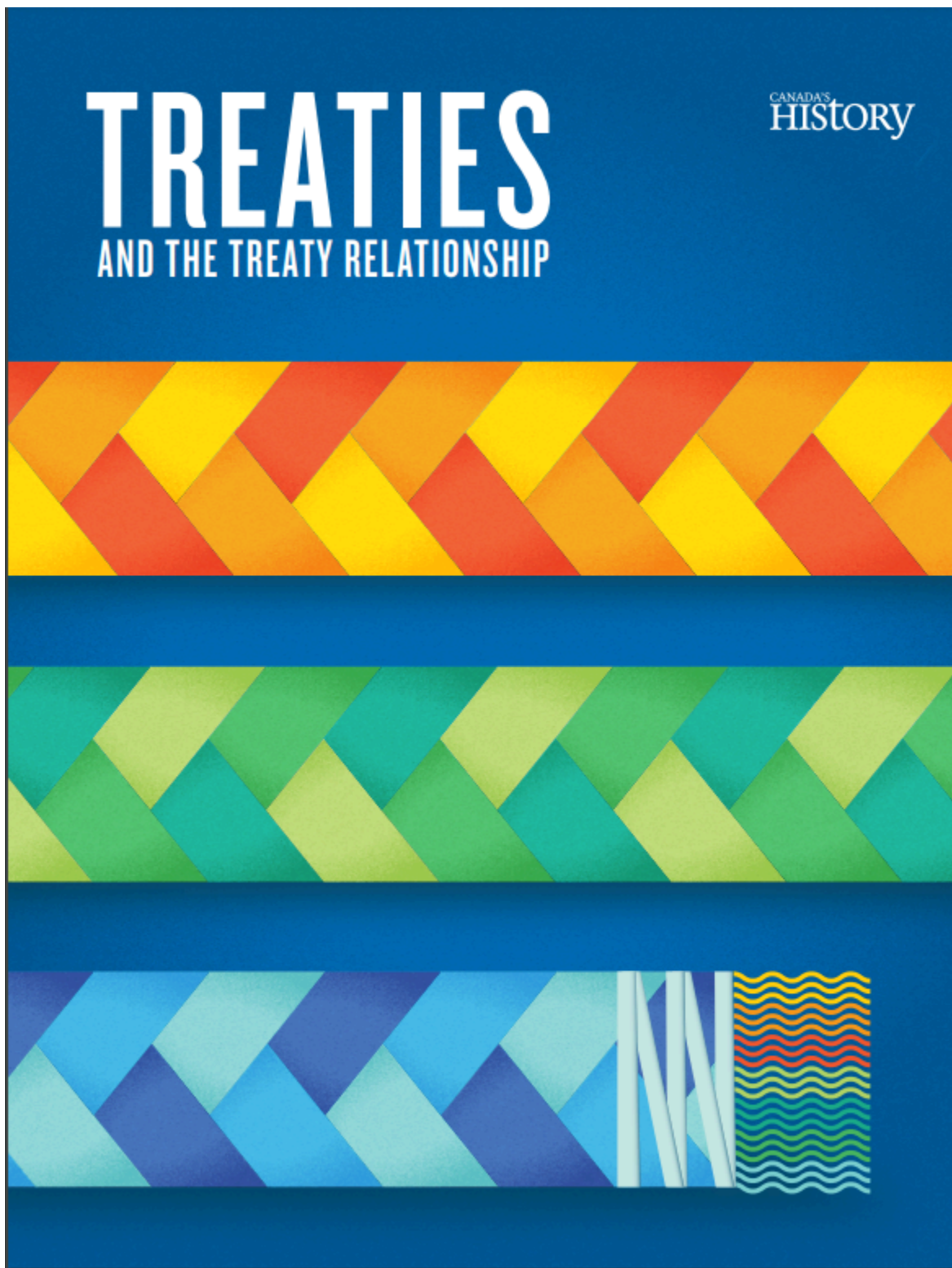


Left: [Two Row Wampum Belt](#). Right: [A Dish with One Spoon Belt](#)

The Treaty Relationship

[Canada's History Magazine](#) has published an issue dedicated to [Treaties and the Treaty Relationship](#). For a helpful explanation of the spirit and intent of the treaty process and what it means for them to be living documents between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people, see [Gakina Gidagwi'igoomin Anishinaabewiyang: We Are All Treaty People](#).

Use this link to download the magazine issue "[Treaties and the Treaty Relationship](#)".



The cover of Canada's History Issue: Treaties and the Treaty Relationship. Cover design was a collaboration between artist Kenneth Lavallee and graphic designer Andrew Workman. Retrieved from [Canada's History](#).

We are all Treaty People

Treaties are not a thing of the past; they are living agreements with current obligations. We are all treaty people, and it is our responsibility to become educated on what it means to be a treaty partner.

To gain more knowledge of what it means to be a treaty person, see [We are all Treaty People](#), a video that promotes Treaty Education within the Mi'kma'ki Territory (Nova Scotia).

Consider as you view the video:

- Who are the Indigenous people of the land I am on?
- Why are treaties important?
- What happened to the treaty relationship?
- How can we reconcile our shared history?



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=622#oembed-1>

For an example of how the Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA) is partnering with local Indigenous nations to work towards reconciliation by learning to live and work as treaty people, see [Treaty Walk: A Journey for Common Ground \(2020\)](#).

Treaties are Nation-to-Nation Agreements

The Government of Canada under the current Trudeau Liberal government has established ten [principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples](#).

- As you read through these principles, how is the Government (Crown) doing in living up to them?
- What could you be doing to hold the government accountable to upholding these principles?



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=625#h5p-15>

All My Relations Teaching

In this teaching, Elder Blu Waters, Seneca College, and community Elder, reinforces the interconnectedness of not only all human beings, but all of creation.

Consider:

- How would life be different for all of us, personally and professionally, if we lived from a place of gratitude for All Our Relations?



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=627#oembed-1>

Video Transcript: [All My Relations Teaching](#)

Medicine Wheel Questions and Activities

In each Skoden chapter reflective questions and activities for you to undertake are provided that correspond to the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel. Click on each of the quadrants to reveal the content.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=630#h5p-16>

Going Further

Documentary: [Trick or Treaty?](#)

Podcast: [Canada Land: Thunder Bay](#)

Reading: [Embers by Richard Wagamese](#)



[Eagle Feathers](#)

CHAPTER 7: RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL HISTORY, LEGACY, AND CALLS TO ACTION



Chapter Overview

This chapter is emotionally challenging. Looking back through our present lens of human rights, it seems incomprehensible that children, their families, and communities would have been treated the way they were during the residential school era. The task is not to try and figure out the mindset of the Government of Canada at that time, but rather to accept that this happened and to come to terms with what this reality means for all of us today. The Elder Teaching on the significance placed on the gifts children are to community adds to the weight of this part of our history. Reflective questions and activities based on the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel are provided, along with further recommended material for viewing, listening, and reading.

Approaching the Topic of Residential Schools

The topic of residential schools can be triggering for all of us. It is important to practice self-care. Take whatever measures you need to maintain your own personal well-being. Perhaps review the material in this chapter with a family member, friend, or close colleague, take pauses, and be sure to take time to lean up against a tree, if able, and let the negative flow away and courage flow in.



Every Child Matters by [Andy Everson, Northwest Coast Artist, K'ómoks First Nation.](#)

The Orange Shirt



[Orange Shirt](#)

reconciliation and to establish anti-oppression policies, frameworks, and curricula for school settings.

The orange shirt, and the statement, Every Child Matters, has become the symbol for recognizing the truth about Canada's residential school history and legacy. On September 30th each year Canadians are encouraged to wear an orange shirt to commemorate and honour the many Ancestors and their Descendants who were impacted by residential schools. The orange shirt first became this symbol when Phyllis Webstad, a survivor of the St. Joseph Mission Residential School, near Williams Lake, BC told her story of being stripped of the orange shirt her grandmother had bought for her and that she proudly wore to her first day of school when she was six years old. September 30th is chosen as Orange Shirt Day as this corresponds with the start of the school year and offers the opportunity to open dialogue about

Introduction to the History and Legacy of Residential Schools

[The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#) (TRC) was established in response to the Survivors of residential schools negotiating the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement – the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history. In 2008, the Commission began its journey travelling throughout Canada, collecting stories and testimonies of Survivors – those who have been directly or indirectly affected by residential schools. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada recorded these stories as well as collected documents from the government. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada published a six-volume report on the history and legacy of residential schools. The [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#) now serves as a repository of all statements, documents, and artifacts related to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.



[Chaga](#)

Senator Murray Sinclair was Chief Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. He attended over a hundred hearings across Canada, listening to thousands of stories from people impacted by the residential school experience. Watch [an interview with Murray Sinclair](#) where he discusses his experience heading the Commission.

As you view the video, consider what part you might play in a fundamental reset of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in this country.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=640#oembed-1>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Report



[Bentwood Box](#). By [Gord Spence](#). [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

The six volumes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report are available through [McGill-Queen's University Press](#) or can be read online at this [Government of Canada](#) website.

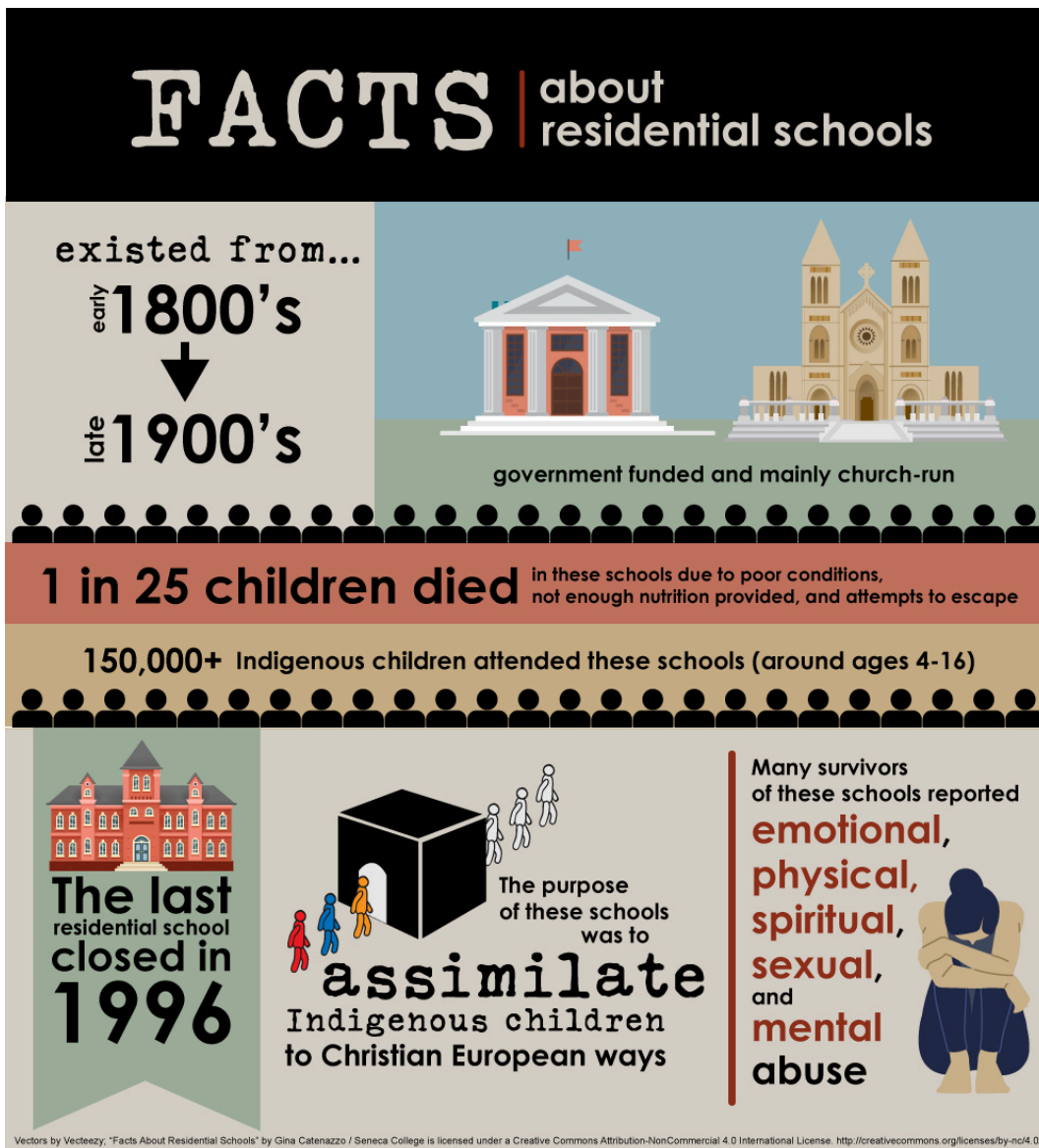
If you are unable to read the report in its entirety, please read The Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, [Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future](#).

An even more abridged version of the report is available as [A Knock on the Door](#), that can be heard as an audiobook.

Residential School History Facts

While the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Report* covers the history of residential schools extensively, here are some quick facts about residential schools.

Source: [Vectors](#) by Vecteezy; "Facts About Residential Schools" by Gina Catenazzo / Seneca College is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#).



Infographic Description: Facts about Residential Schools

- They existed from early 1800's to late 1900's
- They were government funded and mainly church-run
- 150,000+ Indigenous children attended these schools (around ages 4-16)
- The purpose of these schools was to assimilate Indigenous children to Christian European ways
- Many survivors of these schools reported emotional, physical, spiritual, sexual, and mental abuse
- 1 in 25 children died in these schools due to poor conditions, not enough nutrition provided, and attempts to escape the schools
- The last residential school closed in 1996

You can also visit the [Residential Schools Timeline](#) on the *Canadian Encyclopaedia* website.

Map of Residential Schools in Canada

Take the time to learn about some of the residential schools in Canada by clicking on the blue placeholder dots.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=1283>

Map by [CTV News](#).

Quotes about Residential Schools from Government Officials

As mentioned in the overview of this chapter, it is hard to understand the mindset of those making decisions in the past that determined the fate of so many children, families, and communities for generations and generations. What is clear though is that this was no mistake or unfortunate bad decision.

Below are a set of quotes from Canadian Government Officials about residential schools. See these quotes as evidence of the fact that residential schools were a deliberate attempt to rid Turtle Island of Indigenous people's way of life. Use the arrows below the image to scroll through the quotes.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=646#h5p-17>

Hearing the Experience of Survivors

It can be difficult to hear the stories directly from Survivors about their residential school experiences. It is important though to acknowledge their courage in coming forth in their class action lawsuit to speak the truth and ask for accountability from the Government. If not for their voice, we would not be in this moment of opportunity to know the truth about the past and to work towards a more equitable and just future for Indigenous people on Turtle Island.

Watch the animated short documentary, [Namwayut: We Are All One](#), where Chief Robert Joseph shares some of his residential school experiences.

As you view the video, consider the hope Chief Robert Joseph holds that because we are all one, reconciliation is possible.



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Here are two additional opportunities to hear directly from survivors if you wish to engage with: now and in the future.

[Stolen Children: Residential School survivors speak out](#) (18:35) This is a report shown on CBC News: The National that features footage of residential school survivors sharing their experiences.

[We Were Children](#) (1:23:20) This is a feature length movie based on the residential school experiences of Lyna Hart and Glen Anaquod. The movie features interview footage with them and re-enactments by actors.

On the First Day

Rosanna Deerchild, host of the CBC radio show *Unreserved*, wrote a book of poetry, [Calling Down the Sky](#), based on her mother's residential school experiences.

[Hear Rosanna Deerchild reading the poem On the First Day.](#)

As you listen to the poem, consider the role creativity and the arts play in the truth and reconciliation journey.

Read and listen to an interview with Rosanna Deerchild about her poem at:

[Rosanna Deerchild shares her mother's residential school story through poetry](#)



[Wolf](#)

Unmarked Graves at Former Residential School Sites

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission made it clear that there are numerous children who were taken from their families to attend residential schools who were never heard from again, and that it is highly likely that many of these children are in unmarked graves on properties near former residential schools. Currently many First Nations are in the painful process of uncovering the locations of some of these grave sites. The first of these discoveries was at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School on the traditional territory of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc people.

Read [215 Innocent Children](#) an essay by Stephanie Scott, Executive Director at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.



[Kamloops Residential School Memorial, May 30th 2021](#) by [GoToVan](#). CC-BY 2.0.

Calls to Action

Focusing on Canada's residential school history and legacy is challenging. Hope is gifted to us though through the Calls to Action. The 94 Calls make it very clear as to what needs to change in Canadian society in order to learn from the past, to address the inequities that exist, and reconcile relationships. It will take personal, public, and political will to see these Calls to Action met. We all must do our part.

As you read the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#) consider:

- Which of the calls to action are relevant to you in the work you do in post-secondary education?
- What actions are you taking, or do you need to take to meet these Calls?

The CBC has created this interactive news page, [Beyond 94](#), that tracks the progress of the Calls to Action. Visit Beyond 94 and explore the interactive features.

How is Canada doing in meeting the Calls to Action?



Truth and
Reconciliation
Commission of Canada

[Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Logo](#),
Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Children are Gifts to the Community Teaching

In this teaching, Elder Blu Waters, Seneca College, and community Elder, shares the significance placed on the gifts children are to community.

Consider:

- How would life be different for all of us, personally and professionally, if we viewed all children through the teaching that children are gifts to us in our communities?



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=664#oembed-1>

Video Transcript: [Children are Gifts to the Community Teaching](#)

Medicine Wheel Questions and Activities

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An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=666#h5p-19>

Going Further

Documentary: [Inendi: My Auntie survived residential school. I need to gather her stories before she's gone](#)

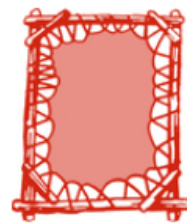
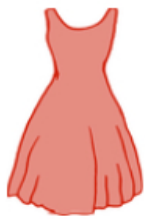
Podcast: [Residential Schools Podcast Series](#)

Reading: [Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada](#) by Paulette Regan



[Eagle Feathers](#)

CHAPTER 8: MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS, AND 2SLGBTQQIA PEOPLE CALLS FOR JUSTICE



Chapter Overview

Before exploring the issues around missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, it must be stated that this chapter contains difficult stories about violence. As you explore the resources provided, it is important to be mindful to ensure you are engaging in self-care. Information about what it means to be Two-Spirit is also provided. The Elder Teaching about the important role of women as the heart of community stands in stark contrast to the systemic and individual violence being perpetrated on Indigenous women and girls in Canada. Reflective questions and activities based on the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel are provided, along with further recommended material for viewing, listening, and reading.

Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA People



[The RedDress Project](#) by Jaime Black.

Violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people is a tragedy affecting First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals and communities. Compared to non-Indigenous populations, Indigenous women and girls go missing or are murdered at disproportionately high rates. The statistics

are troubling. See The Native Women's Association of Canada [Fact Sheet: Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA People in Canada](#) (October 2020).

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls took it upon themselves to include 2SLGBTQQIA people into the work of the Inquiry. Commissioners of the Inquiry heard that the risk of harm that Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA face is very great. A brief overview is provided in the following news report.

[Indigenous LGBTQ people face visibility issues, major service gaps, MMIWG inquiry hears](#)

The 2S at the beginning of the acronym is for *Two-Spirit*. See further in this chapter for a teaching on what it means to be Two-Spirit. For clarification here is what the acronym 2SLGBTQQIA stands for.



2SLGBTQIA by Gina Catenazzo / Seneca College is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

"2SLGBTQIA" by Gina Catenazzo / Seneca College is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

Infographic Description : 2SLGBTQIA

2S - Two-Spirit

L - Lesbian

G - Gay

B - Bisexual

T - Transgender/Transsexual

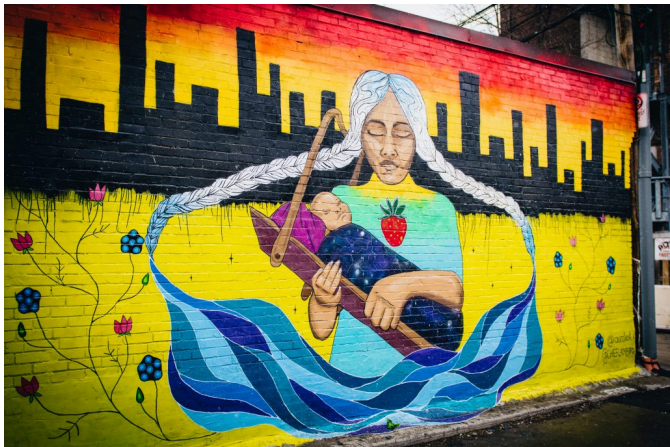
Q - Queer

Q - Questioning

I - Intersex

A - Asexual

Difficult Truth



[Chief Lady Bird and Aura. Graffiti by Chief Lady Bird.](#)
[Photo by Viv Lynch. CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.](#)

The murder and disappearance of women, like the unmarked graves at residential schools, is something Indigenous people have been talking about for decades without much support. It is important to understand the reason why women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people are frequent targets for this violence. Of equal importance is understanding the historical failure of law enforcement and all levels of government to investigate into these cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

The documentary [Finding Dawn \(Trailer\)](#) covers the Robert Pickton murders that went unnoticed over a 30 year span.

For a repository of APTN coverage of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls see: [APTN National News Topics: MMIWG](#)

As with the topic of residential schools, where it can be difficult to hear the stories of survivors and of family and community members of those who have been murdered or disappeared, it is important for us to listen and learn. Below are links to three documentaries you can choose to watch in your own way and time.

[Full Story: The Missing and the Murdered](#) (Crime Beat Global TV Report 13:26)

[Searchers: Highway of Tears](#) (VICE News Report 16:26)

[Our Sisters in Spirit](#) (Documentary 35:40)

National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA People

One of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action that has been completed is the following:

Call to Action #41: We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal organizations, to appoint a public inquiry into the causes of, and remedies for, the disproportionate victimization of Aboriginal women and girls. The inquiry's mandate would include:

- i. Investigation into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.
- ii. Links to the intergenerational legacy of residential schools.

Just like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was created in response to residential school Survivors calling for accountability, a [National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) was created in response to the families and loved ones of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls standing up for justice, equity, and human rights.

The Inquiry took place between September 1, 2016 and June 3, 2019 and [the mandate for the National Inquiry](#) was:

"The National Inquiry must look into and report on the systemic causes of all forms of violence against Indigenous women and girls, including sexual violence. We must examine the underlying social, economic, cultural, institutional, and historical causes that



[National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls logo.](#)

contribute to the ongoing violence and particular vulnerabilities of Indigenous women and girls in Canada. The mandate also directs us to look into and report on existing institutional policies and practices to address violence, including those that are effective in reducing violence and increasing safety.

While the formal name of the Inquiry is “the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls,” our mandate covers all forms of violence. This makes our mandate very broad. By not being limited to investigating only cases of Indigenous women who went missing or were murdered, we can include women and girls who died under suspicious circumstances.

It also means we can address issues such as sexual assault, child abuse, domestic violence, bullying and harassment, suicide, and self-harm. This violence is interconnected, and can have equally devastating effects. Expanding the mandate beyond missing and murdered also creates space for more survivors to share their stories. They can help us look to the future from a place of experience, resilience, and hope.”

[The National Inquiry gathered information](#) about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls through:

- [community hearings](#)
- [institutional hearings, Knowledge Keepers and expert hearings](#)
- past and current research
- collaboration with Knowledge Holders and Elders
- [forensic analysis of police records](#)

National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA People cont'd

During the National Inquiry, there were many [protocols, symbols, and ceremonies](#) that took place to honour Indigenous ways. The commissioners assured that their [approaches](#) were reflective of Indigenous values. There was also a Grandmother's Circle who provided teachings and guidance to the commissioners and those who testified during the National Inquiry.

Watch the video: [Grandmother's Circle](#) (Click on the link. It will bring you to the Closing Ceremony Multimedia Page. You will need to scroll down to the bottom of the page for the video).



[Unity Video - Grandmother's Circle by MMIWG.](#)

At a Closing Ceremony (June 3, 2019) in Gatineau, Quebec, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people presented the Final Report to federal government officials and to the public. The ceremony honoured victims of the genocide through ceremony, dance, song, prayer, testimony, and commemoration.

The Calls for Justice were released in a Final Report titled [Reclaiming Power and Place](#). The Calls for Justice would support just that – the reclaiming of a woman's power and place in their respective communities.

To view key moments during the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls see: [Key Moment Videos](#)

Here is the link if you would like to watch the [closing ceremony of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#).

Two-Spirit People

The current term [Two-Spirit](#) is an English word used to describe people who have always existed within Indigenous communities across Turtle Island. Before colonization Two-Spirit people had been considered gifted beings who were honoured and revered for their gift of two spirits (the spirit of female and spirit of male). Pre-contact with Europeans, many Indigenous communities celebrated and honoured gender diversity, and because of their special gifts, Two-Spirit people were considered by some to be medicine people and healers. Two-Spirit people may define their identities in different ways as, spiritual, gender, and/or sexual identity. Today, those traditions and beliefs are being reborn.

See this this brochure, [Two Spirit](#), for helpful explanations related to Two-Spirit people.

Watch Dr. Makokis, a Cree physician, define Two-spirit and discuss his work in transgender care in the video, [Trans and Native: Meet the Indigenous Doctor Giving Them Hope](#).

As you view the video, consider how life would be different for gender diverse people today if Two-Spirit people had been embraced at colonization rather than shunned.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=781#oembed-1>

Calls for Justice

Just as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission created Calls to Action, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA People created 231 [Calls for Justice](#).

These Calls for Justice were inspired by the truth sharing of the victims, families, and friends of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, as well as victims of violence. The Calls for Justice are based on evidence and law and, although they are recommendations, the Inquiry states that they should be considered as legal imperatives in response to the ongoing genocide taking place in Canada. Fulfilling the Calls for Justice would ensure that Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people will be safe and their rights will be respected.

There are Calls for Justice for all levels of Government related to Indigenous rights, culture, health and wellness, and the justice system. It is not just Governments that need to be held accountable. Calls for Justice provided also relate to industries and institutions such as the media, wellness providers, transportation, hospitality, policing, lawyers, social workers, correctional services, and the resource extraction sector, to name a few. The point being— in post-secondary settings we are preparing graduates who will work within the very industries and institutions being called to a higher standard by these Calls for Justice. It is incumbent on us to do our part to help our students graduate informed and prepared to make changes that will bring about justice for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

Note: You may want to do a roundtable reading of the Calls for Justice for All Canadians with family, friends, or colleagues. As a minimum, read these Calls for Justice for All Canadians:



Star Blanket community art piece by The Saa-Ust Centre in [The Reclaiming Power and Place Report](#)



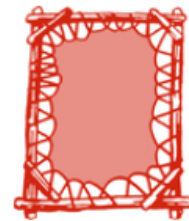
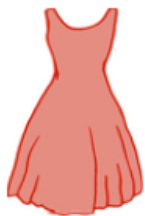
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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=776#h5p-20>

Commemoration and Prevention

The Red Dress has come to symbolize missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. See [The REDress Project](#) (Jaime Black).

The Native Women's Association of Canada [MMIWG & Violence Prevention](#) sponsors the Sisters in Spirit gathering annually on October 4th.

The [Moose Hide Campaign](#) is a movement of men, boys, and all Canadians to end violence against women and girls.



Left to right: [Red Dress](#), [Berries](#), [Moose Hide](#)

Women are the Heart of Community Teaching and Two Spirit Teaching

Women are the Heart of Community Teaching

In this teaching, Elder Blu Waters, Seneca College, and community Elder, shares the important role of women as the heart of community, which stands in stark contrast to the systemic and individual violence being perpetrated on Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

Consider:

- How would life be different for all of us, personally and professionally, if we viewed all women as the sacred heart of our communities?



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=786#oembed-1>

Video Transcript: [Women are the Heart of Community Teaching](#)

Two Spirit Teaching

In this teaching, Elder Blu Waters, Seneca College, and community Elder, shares the important role Two-Spirit people have in bringing multiple perspectives to communities.

Consider:

- How would life be different for all of us, personally and professionally, if we valued Two-

Spirit people for bringing gender diverse perspectives to our communities?



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=786#oembed-2>

Video Transcript: [Two-Spirit Teaching](#)

Medicine Wheel Questions and Activities

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An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=788#h5p-21>

Going Further

Documentary: [This River](#)

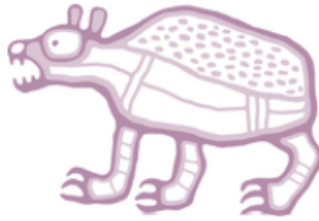
Podcast: [Missing and Murdered: Who Killed Alberta Williams](#)

Reading: [Keetsahnak / Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters Edited by Kim Anderson, Maria Campbell, and Christi Belcourt](#)



[Eagle Feathers](#)

CHAPTER 9: CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS CHALLENGES



Chapter Overview

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities and individuals face many challenges today that are the result of events that began with colonization. The introduction of diseases, the taking of land, actions that resulted in food insecurity, family and community separation, and so much more have led to current issues seen in contemporary society. These issues include the over representation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system, poor physical and mental health outcomes, socioeconomic disparity, education inequity, over-incarceration in the prison system, and systemic racism. In this chapter, a brief overview is provided of some of these key issues. The Elder Teaching about decolonizing and being of One Mind offers a way forward in creating opportunities for healing and partnership. Reflective questions and activities based on the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel are provided, along with further recommended material for viewing, listening, and reading.

Child Welfare

The topic of child welfare deserves a chapter unto itself, and yet in this chapter on contemporary Indigenous challenges, it is one of many topics offered. Therefore, only the most cursory of introductions is provided to some of the key elements within child welfare. Many additional resources are suggested for you to explore on your own.

Damage to the wellbeing of children did not end with residential schools, but rather began there and has continued in various ways since. The challenges today are outlined in this chapter as: The Sixties Scoop, poverty as a justification for child apprehensions, underfunding, birth alerts, and Jordan's Principle.

For a look at the statistics associated with the involvement of child welfare services in the lives of Indigenous families and communities see: [Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal](#).



[Juniper](#)

Child Welfare - Apprehensions, Poverty, and Government Funding

While the Government of Canada has passed legislation designed to [reduce the number of Indigenous children in care](#), still, Indigenous children are apprehended by child welfare agencies at an alarming rate. Clear numbers are difficult to come by nationally, as child welfare is a provincial and territorial responsibility, while at the same time, First Nations families living on reserves are the responsibility of the Federal Government. In many cases, poverty is used as a justification for child apprehensions, and yet little is being done to right the wrongs since colonization that perpetuate a life of poverty for some Indigenous families. See: [How Poverty and Underfunding Land Indigenous Kids in Care](#).



[Blueberries](#)

Furthermore, [Dr. Cindy Blackstock \(seen on Nation to Nation\)](#) and the [First Nations Child and Family Caring Society \(FNCFCC\)](#) have been involved in a Human Rights Tribunal since 2007. Dr. Blackstock and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society have repeatedly ordered the Federal Government to begin funding health and education on reserves at the same level as non-Indigenous children, and to pay compensation to those children harmed by these unjust practices. See: [By the Numbers](#) for a look at how this tribunal process has unfolded over a ten-year period or view this video interview with Pamela Palmater: [Child Welfare Unfair for First Nations](#).

A compensation settlement for these discriminatory child welfare policies has recently been agreed to in principle. See: [Canada, First Nations reveal details of \\$40B draft deals to settle child welfare claims](#). For the full news conference, see: [Ottawa announces agreements on First Nations child welfare compensation and reform](#).

Child Welfare - The Sixties Scoop

Although the last residential school closed in 1996, the government began phasing them out in the 1950s and 1960s. During this time, however, a disproportionate number of Indigenous children were apprehended by child welfare. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were being scooped out of their homes and fostered and adopted by white families. The Sixties Scoop is the name used to refer to this time (a term coined by Patrick Johnson in a 1983 report on Indigenous child welfare). Many Sixties Scoop Survivors reported similar experiences to that of residential school Survivors – a loss of language and cultural connection, experiences with abuse and, of course, a childhood deprived of their family and community.

To read more about the Sixties Scoop, see:

[Sixties Scoop \(Canadian Encyclopedia\)](#)

[Sixties Scoop \(Indigenous Foundations UBC\)](#)

For documentaries about the Sixties Scoop, see:

[APTN Investigates: Adopt an Indian](#) (23:51)

[CBC Docs: Birth of a Family](#) (44:08)

When those affected by the Sixties Scoop filed a class action lawsuit against the Federal Government, several provinces issued official apologies for this practice. Compensation (through the [Sixties Scoop Settlement](#)) is being paid out to people impacted who are First Nations and Inuit, and a [60s Scoop Healing Foundation](#) has been formed. A settlement for Métis and Non-Status Indians is still in process. See: [Sixties Scoop Métis and Non-Status Indian Class Action](#).



[Flowers](#)

Child Welfare - Birth Alerts and Jordan's Principle



[Four Sacred Medicines](#)

[deemed 'unconstitutional and illegal' in B.C.](#)

Birth Alerts

Birth alerts are the discriminatory practice of having a notice placed on a woman's file that indicate reasons why, upon giving birth, the baby should be apprehended and given over to foster care. This birth alert notice is practiced by health professionals or social workers, without parental awareness or consent. Most provinces and territories have officially abolished the practice; however, the stigma associated with Indigenous parents being inadequate still remains. See: [Several Canadian provinces still issue birth alerts,](#)

Jordan's Principle

[Jordan's Principle](#) is named after [Jordan River Anderson](#) from Norway House Cree Nation in northern Manitoba. Jordan was born with complex medical needs in a Winnipeg hospital. He spent his life unable to go live in his family home as the federal and provincial governments could not agree on who would be responsible for paying the out of hospital expenses. Jordan died having never had a chance to live in his home community. The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society successfully lobbied the passing of legislation that ensures children receive the care they need without first having governments agree on responsibilities for payment of services.

Health Outcomes

Intergenerational trauma stemming back to colonization, residential schools, and the resulting low socioeconomic status of today, leads to poor physical health outcomes for some Indigenous people. See: [Social Determinants of Health Inequities in Indigenous Canadians](#). In addition, mental illness, addictions, and suicide can be traced back to their roots in the loss of family, community, identity, culture, and language that began with colonization. See: [Indigenous people, trauma, and suicide prevention](#).

Poor health outcomes for people who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit are often the result of lack of access to health care, or receiving health care that is systemically racist. The College of Family Physicians of Canada has prepared this Fact Sheet: [Health and Health Care Implications of Systemic Racism on Indigenous Peoples in Canada](#).

Mental health concerns and suicide are particularly troubling issues for Indigenous youth. See: [Finding our Power Together](#) for a look at one initiative supporting Indigenous youths' desire to thrive.



[Three Sisters](#)



Wild Rice

Inequity

Income Disparity

The colonial practice of land dispossession that resulted in families and communities losing the ability to provide for the needs of their people, led to a dependence on the state, a state that continually refuses to ensure an adequate standard of living for Indigenous people. The perpetuation of inequity through the failed funding for infrastructure for communities living on reserves perpetuates income disparity. In addition, statistics for urban Indigenous people living below the poverty line exceeds that of non-Indigenous people. In the current COVID-19 pandemic, this leaves [urban Indigenous people especially vulnerable](#).



Maple

Two reports that provide a comprehensive overview of the impact poverty has on Indigenous children are:

[First Nations Child Poverty: A Literature Review and Analysis](#)
[Towards Justice: Tackling Indigenous Child Poverty in Canada](#)

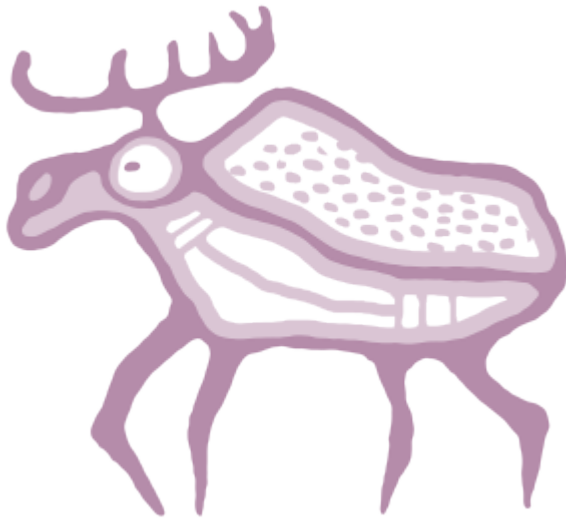
Failed Infrastructure



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=943#h5p-22>

Education Inequity



[Moose](#)

The federal government is responsible for funding on-reserve schools, whereas children living off-reserve (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) are funded and educated by provincial and territorial systems. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, on-reserve schools are significantly underfunded compared to provincial and territorial schools. This underfunding causes challenges in delivering contextually relevant education and many communities face inadequate infrastructure, lack of resources, and challenges in accessibility. There is also a lack of access to early childhood education programs in some communities.

Since many remote, northern reserves do not have high schools, some First Nations children (as young as 13) must travel a far distance from their community to attend school. To learn more, see: [Full Story: Failing Canada's First Nations Children.](#)

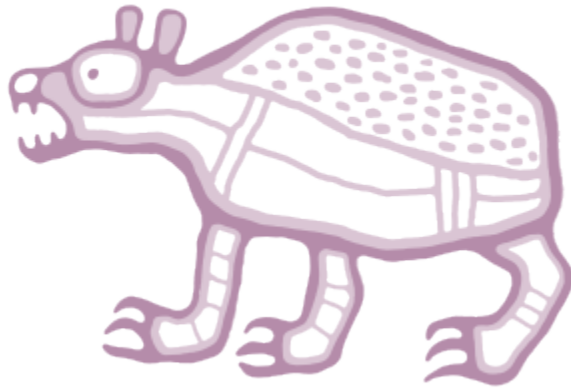
Another challenge that many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children and families face is access to culturally appropriate education that would contribute to language revitalization and cultural survival. Although there are some culturally appropriate programs in education, what is more important is that Indigenous peoples gain control over their education so it is designed and facilitated based on their community's unique needs and aspirations.

Issues related to post-secondary education are addressed in the next chapter.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Appeals for Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) run repeatedly throughout the Calls to Action that came out of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. After many years of resistance, the declaration was [passed into law](#) on June 21, 2020. To read what the Government of Canada is now accountable to,

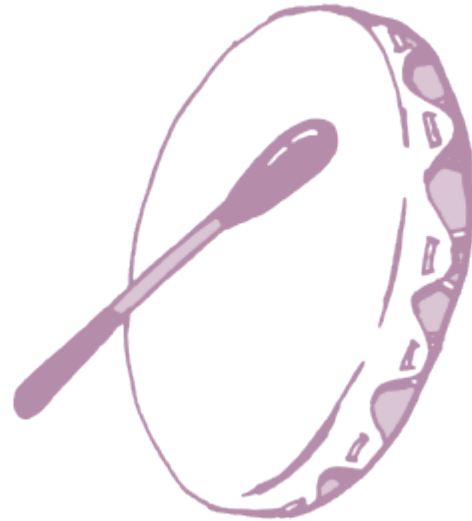
see: [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.](#)



Bear

Justice System

Indigenous people, whether youth or adult, male, female, or Two Spirit, are over-represented in all aspects of the criminal justice system in Canada. This can be attributed to a number of factors stemming back to the acts of colonization that see racism systemically embedded into policing and the criminal justice system at all levels from apprehension to incarceration to release. Furthermore, the intergenerational trauma from residential schools and other colonial acts results in low educational attainment, which leaves many people vulnerable to criminality because of low socio-economic status.



[*Hand Drum*](#)

See these Government of Canada publications:

[Adult and youth correctional statistics in Canada, 2018/2019](#)

[Understanding the Overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the Criminal Justice System](#)

To bring this chapter back to the earlier discussion of child welfare, see this APTN news report on the [‘Child welfare to prison pipeline’ feeding rising Indigenous incarceration rates](#).

One Mind and Decolonizing our Minds Teaching

In this teaching, Elder Blu Waters, Seneca College, and community Elder, shares that decolonizing and being of One Mind offers a way forward in creating opportunities for healing and partnership.

Consider:

- How would life be different for all of us, personally and professionally, if we did the work of decolonizing so our minds can be one?



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=952#oembed-1>

Video Transcript: [One Mind Teaching and Decolonizing our Minds](#)

Medicine Wheel Questions and Activities

In each Skoden chapter reflective questions and activities for you to undertake are provided that correspond to the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel. Click on each of the quadrants to reveal the content.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=954#h5p-23>

Going Further

Documentary: [Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger](#)

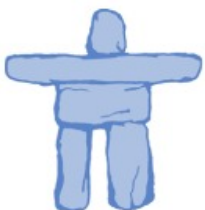
Podcast: [Finding Cleo](#)

Reading: [Legacy: Trauma, Story, and Indigenous Healing by Suzanne Methot](#)



[Eagle Feathers](#)

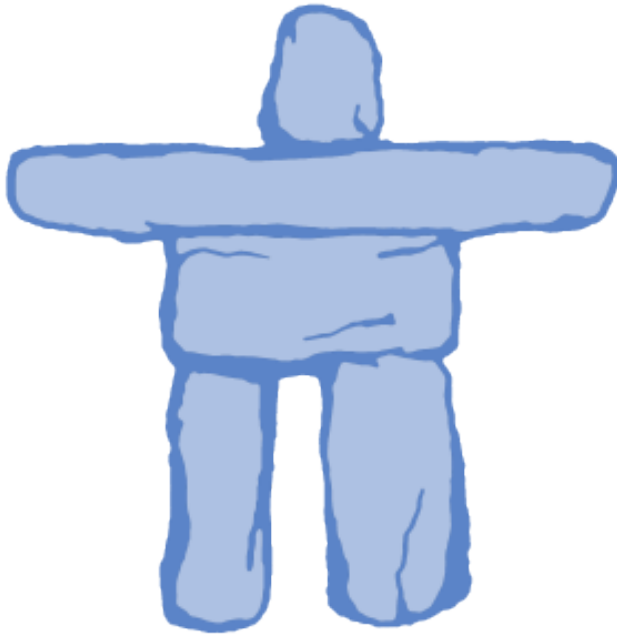
CHAPTER 10: CULTURAL SAFETY IN THE CLASSROOM



Chapter Overview

Skoden has made it is clear there is much to consider when students who are First Nations, Métis, or Inuit attend post-secondary education. In this chapter we look specifically to the concept of cultural safety, first implemented in health care settings, for guidance in making classrooms and campuses safe spaces for Indigenous students and employees. The Elder Teaching reminds us that all are welcome and all have valued contributions to make to the learning circle. Reflective questions and activities based on the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel are provided, along with further recommended material for viewing, listening, and reading.

Cultural Safety



[Inukshuk](#)

Cultural safety as a term and concept was first used in nursing education in Aotearoa (New Zealand) with respect to ensuring pre-service nurses are prepared to meet the culturally specific needs of Māori patients. The principles and practices of cultural safety are now being applied in many countries and in various social services fields. See: [Fact Sheet: Cultural Safety](#) for more background information.

It is commonly stated that cultural safety is not cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural competence, or cultural empathy. Though doing the inner work to become aware, sensitive, competent, and humble in our interactions with those who are from

different cultural backgrounds than us is a key part of the journey towards being a practitioner who offers a culturally safe approach. See: [Cultural Safety](#)

What grounds practice in cultural safety is the difference between an anti-bias and an anti-oppressive approach to being in the lives of those who are marginalized and oppressed. We can value and appreciate difference as we become aware, sensitive, competent, and humble, but there is more. To truly provide culturally safe services and environments then we need to be actively calling out the policies, practices, curriculum, pedagogy, and so on that perpetuates inequity. See: [What is Indigenous Cultural Safety—and Why Should I Care About It?](#)

Cultural safety calls us to examine the sociocultural-historical circumstances that created systemic racism and stereotypes that create barriers. In the context of Skoden, cultural safety means calling out the people, places, and systems that perpetuate the power and privilege that marginalizes and oppresses Indigenous people in post-secondary education. Truly rooting out the ideological beliefs that colonialism has infused in Western society is what will lead to safety for people who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.



[Quill Box](#)

Culturally Safe Post-Secondary Education



[Totem Pole](#)

Creating culturally safe post-secondary experiences for students and staff who are Indigenous means bringing a critical theory lens to the examination of our individual practice and the institutional framework. Everything about post-secondary education is founded on a colonial worldview and value system. Cultural safety involves decentring Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy to make way for Indigenous ways of knowing and being as more than mere add-ons. How can this be achieved? We need to take our cues from post-secondary students and employees who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

Dr. Sheila Cote-Meek, author of, [Colonized Classrooms: Racism, Trauma and Resistance in Post-Secondary Education](#), writes from their own lived experience and that of students and staff interviewed about the challenges in entering the post-secondary setting, and suggests what is needed for Indigenous students and staff to feel safe on campus and in the classroom. For a summary of the book see this [Cote Meek Summary](#).

Two problematic common denominators arise out of the experiences students and staff share in the book:

1. Being called upon as the expert in all things Indigenous.
2. Experiencing racist stereotypes that go unaddressed.

These and other concerns are also discussed in a CBC Unreserved podcast interview [Decolonizing the classroom: Is there space for Indigenous knowledge in academia?](#)

Key suggestions, made in the book and podcast, for how to move forward in creating cultural safety in the academy are as follows:



Ulu

1. Allow students and staff the freedom to remain in their areas of learning and expertise by not calling on them to be Indigenous specialists.
2. Create an Indigenous Services support system that includes a culturally appropriate space, peers, mentors, Elders, and community members.
3. Establish an Indigenous community consultation process for planning and decision-making.
4. Form an Indigenous Education Advisory Committee.
5. Change human resources policies to support the hiring of a cluster of Indigenous staff who will provide support and mentorship to one another.
6. Conduct research with Indigenous people, not on Indigenous people.
7. Acknowledge community Elders and Knowledge Keepers as holding valued information.
8. Seek out ways to give back to the Indigenous communities in your area.
9. Forge pathways that make post-secondary education more accessible to students who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

Cultural Appropriation & Cultural Appreciation

At this point in Skoden you may be convinced you need to make some changes in your courses, or the programs, or work you are responsible for in post-secondary contexts, but you hesitate for not wanting to over-step, offend, or make mistakes. You are right to be conscious of doing things in a good way, but inaction is not an option. The Calls to Action and Calls for Justice clearly implicate post-secondary education in truth and reconciliation work. Yes, non-Indigenous faculty and staff need to make way for Indigenous people to take up positions in post-secondary settings, but equally so, as treaty partners we have a responsibility to hold up our end of the relationship. It is not for Indigenous people to decolonize our minds and those of our students, we need to take up that task for ourselves. There is so much unlearning and new learning to be done.



[Smudge Bowl](#)

Sometimes fear of not knowing the difference between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation holds us back from moving towards acting in ways that will bring about renewed relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Here are a few different (but similar) definitions of cultural appropriation from Indigenous people:

On the [Reclaim Indigenous Arts](#) website, Jay Soule and Nadine St-Louis define cultural appropriation as the following:

“Cultural appropriation is when one person from one culture takes culturally distinct items, aesthetics or spiritual practices...from another culture and mimics it. They adopt it as their own without consent, permission or any cultural relationship to the object or practice, in order to make money or just because they admire it.”

[The Canadian Encyclopedia](#) offers this definition of cultural appropriation:

“Cultural appropriation is the use of a people’s traditional dress, music, cuisine, knowledge and other aspects of their culture, without their approval, by members of a different culture.

For Indigenous peoples in Canada, cultural appropriation is rooted in colonization and ongoing oppression.”

[In a CBC article about cultural appropriation](#), journalist Ka’nehsí:io Deer states that it happens when:

“...elements of a marginalized culture are taken and used by another culture with a huge sense of entitlement attached. That unhealthy sense of entitlement is obvious when an individual cannot even accept criticism from members of the culture they’re appropriating.”

Cultural appreciation on the other hand, is about building relationships of respect and reciprocity where consent and active participation of Indigenous peoples can occur. It is moving beyond stereotypes and towards an engagement with knowledges, taking the time and effort to do so. It is more than teaching about people who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit but learning from them in our shared history.

Listen to CBC host, Rosanna Deerchild, explain the difference by watching this video: [Cultural Appropriation vs. Appreciation](#).

As you view the video, consider how you might explain the harm of cultural appropriation to someone who expresses the view that Indigenous people need to not be so sensitive or “politically correct.”



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Teaching the truth about our history and the ongoing impact of colonization and broken treaties, acknowledging the traditions and teachings that come from this land, and working at building reciprocal relationships with Indigenous people is in no way cultural appropriation, so carry on!

Pretendians

Pretendians in post-secondary settings, and elsewhere, are currently much in the news. A pretendian is someone who claims Indigenous identity without being able to back this claim up with connections to an Indigenous community. See this interview: [Professor under fire for claiming she is Indigenous](#).

This is not a phenomenon isolated to a single individual. Academics at several institutions across the country are being investigated. In addition, this problem is not limited to academia. Many areas of art and culture have been found to have pretendians in their ranks. Furthermore, this is not a new phenomenon. For a historical look at pretendians in the movie industry, see: [Cowboys and Pretendians](#).

In the context of cultural safety in post-secondary settings the issue of pretendians is especially problematic as we seek to provide a safe space for Indigenous students and staff. It is important that local Indigenous communities provide the guidance in this complex issue.



[Shaker](#)

All People are Gifts to the Community Teaching

Elder Blu Waters, Seneca College, and community Elder, shares that all are welcome, and all have valued contributions to make to the community circle.

Consider:

- How would life be different for all of us, personally and professionally, if we viewed all people as gifts to us in our communities?



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=971#oembed-1>

Video Transcript: [All People are Gifts to the Community Teaching](#)

Medicine Wheel Questions and Activities

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An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=974#h5p-24>

Going Further

Documentary: [Mashkawi-Manidoo](#)
[Bimaadiziwin Spirit to Soar](#)

Podcast: [Storykeepers](#)

Reading: [Decolonizing and Indigenizing Education in Canada](#)



[Eagle Feathers](#)

CHAPTER 11: INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE AND RESURGENCE

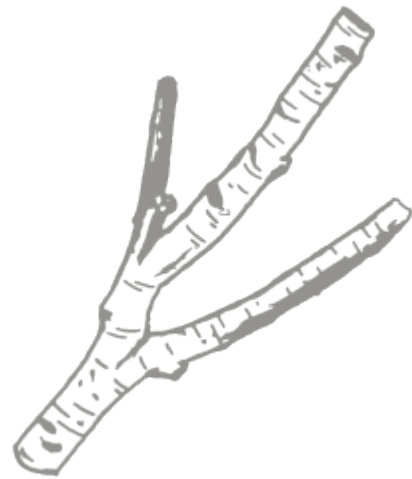


Chapter Overview

This chapter provides examples of how First Nations, Métis, and Inuit are standing up for what is right. At the same time, many Indigenous people are reconnecting and reclaiming aspects of their culture, such as their languages, stories, dances, traditions, songs, and ceremonies. Perhaps these examples of resistance and resurgence will lead you to finding the resolve to stand in solidarity with those on the frontlines of change in whatever way you can. The Seven Ancestor Teachings offering in this chapter challenges all of us to live our lives in a good way so that we live in peace and harmony. Reflective questions and activities based on the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel are provided, along with further recommended material for viewing, listening, and reading.

Current Acts of Resistance

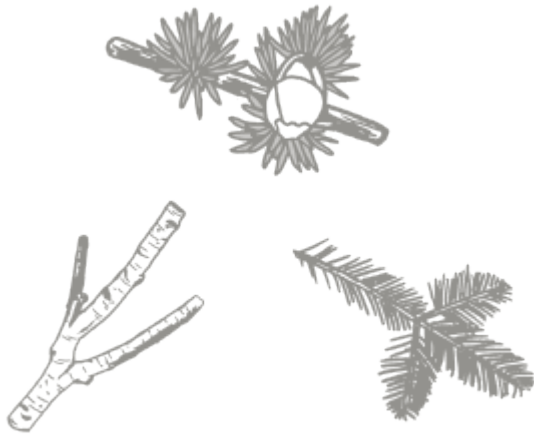
As demonstrated through the historical and present-day state of affairs, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities resisted, and continue to resist, colonial oppression. They have fought against colonial expansion onto traditional territories from the time of first contact and continue to protect the land against resource extraction, pollution, climate change, and industrial exploitation. Indigenous people have mandated the documentation of historical and contemporary impacts experienced by Survivors of residential schools, illuminating the offences committed by the Canadian government who stole children from their homes to assimilate them to



[Birch Bark](#)

Christian-European ways. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit demanded an inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people and continue to push for justice. For hundreds of years, Indigenous children, families, and communities have resisted forced assimilation, treaty agreement violations, and ongoing colonial policies.

Behind these acts of resistance are Indigenous-led organizations, movements, protests, and acts of solidarity that continue to demonstrate the resilience of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children, families, and communities across Turtle Island. Some examples include: [Idle No More](#), [Families of Sisters in Spirit](#), the [Indigenous Environmental Network](#), and the [Unist'ot'en Camp](#). Historically, resistance has taken many shapes including the [American Indian Movement](#) and the [Red Power movement](#). The film, [Pow Wow at Duck Lake](#), demonstrates these historical acts of resistance.



Although the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada propelled Canadians forward into repairing the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit continue to fight for basic human rights such as clean water, access to their traditional territories, and equitable health care. This reveals the unsettling truth that colonization is perpetual, delegating the burden onto Indigenous peoples to continue to fight against colonial oppression.

An example of a contemporary act of resistance is the current [Wet'suwet'en conflict](#). The [Wet'suwet'en](#) people are protecting their land from the Coastal GasLink pipeline that would cross their unceded territory (unceded meaning that the land was never surrendered to the Crown). In exercising their traditional laws, many Wet'suwet'en land defenders have been met with the same colonial violence experienced since first contact. This forces them to reaffirm their rights and titles to their traditional territories. In 1997, the Supreme Court of Canada recognized the Wet'suwet'en nation's title to land as an ancestral right in



[Tamarack](#)

the [Delgamuukw Case](#) and, yet, they still fight for their land and culture today.

While the Wet'suwet'en situation is still ongoing, the short film, [Invasion](#) (2019), serves as an example of how these conflicts between the Canadian Government and Nations that stand up for their sovereignty repeatedly play out.

As you view the video, consider the role the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) had in the past and the role the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) presently has in opposing the resistance of Indigenous people on their own land.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=981#oembed-1>

Indigenous Sovereignty & Self-Government

To understand what is meant by Indigenous sovereignty it is necessary to go back to first contact. When Europeans arrived on Turtle Island there existed vibrant communities each with their own systems of governance and strategic alliances with neighbouring groups of people. Turtle Island was not one nation, but rather the land of many nations. When treaties were later made, these were understood by Indigenous people to be agreements between their Nation and the Crown. Treaties were seen as one sovereign nation and another coming to an agreement on the sharing of land and resources. A treaty agreement was never a giving away of all decision-making, but rather



[Cedar](#)

coming together in the spirit of the circle to come to a common understanding. Never in that understanding was total control given over to the Canadian Government.

Presently, a process of establishing self-government for sovereign Indigenous nations is underway and has been achieved in some parts of Canada. See this Government of Canada website on [Self-government](#). Some key aspects considered in self-government negotiations include, but are not limited to: governing structures, funding, jurisdiction over laws, and program and service delivery.

Land Back

The taking of land was and continues to be at the heart of colonization. If we truly want to move forward in the spirit of reconciliation then giving land back needs to be at the heart of self-government nation-to-nation agreements. Watch this video, [Canada, it's time for Land Back](#), for a clear explanation of the importance of giving land back.

As you view the video, consider how you will explain the land back movement to someone who believes if this happens, they will no longer be welcome here on this land.



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Indigenous Resurgence



[Thunderbird](#)

Indigenous resurgence has happened from the earliest days of colonial interaction to the present day. In response to colonization, Indigenous people have not only resisted colonial violence but they have found ways to reclaim their cultural identity in the process of this resistance.

Many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit are reconnecting and reclaiming their languages, stories, dances, traditions, songs, and ceremonies. They are reclaiming these aspects of their culture through various forms such as music, art, design, oral teachings, literature, film, politics, and many more.

It is an exciting time for Indigenous people across Turtle Island as the digital age provides many possibilities for authentic Indigenous voices to be shared through social media, television, and radio. Now more than ever, one can simply open their Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, or TikTok and be introduced to a wide range of Indigenous content that encourages an appreciation of Indigenous history, stories, and ways of being.

Indigenous resurgence happens in [Indigenous protest songs](#), [Indigenous-made films](#), [Indigenous fashion week](#), political movements like [Idle No More](#), and [cultural camps](#).

Indigenous resurgence means that Indigenous people can reclaim what has been stolen from them whether it is their land, language, cultural artifacts, traditions, teachings, and even their perspectives on our collective history. What Indigenous resurgence also means is that non-Indigenous people gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for Indigenous perspectives that have been hidden from our collective consciousness for far too long.

Indigenous people of this generation are thriving all around Turtle Island. It is important to listen to what they have to say. It is even more important to share with others what you have learned.

Seven Ancestor Teaching

In this teaching, Elder Blu Waters, Seneca College, and community Elder, shares The Seven Ancestor Teachings, honesty, humility, truth, wisdom, bravery, love, and respect, as invitations to all of us to live our lives in a good way so that we can live in peace and harmony.

The Seven Ancestor Teachings are also known as the Seven Grandfather Teachings, and Seven Sacred Teachings.

Consider:

- How would life be different for all of us, personally and professionally, if we all lived according to the Seven Ancestor Teachings?



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=989#oembed-1>

Video Transcript: [Elder Teachings – Seven Ancestor Teachings](#)

Medicine Wheel Questions and Activities

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An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

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Going Further

Documentary: [Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance](#)

Podcast: [Warrior Life](#)

Reading: [This Place: 150 Years Retold by Various Authors](#)



[Eagle Feathers](#)

CHAPTER 12: ALLYSHIP, DECOLONIZATION, AND MOVING FORWARD IN A GOOD WAY

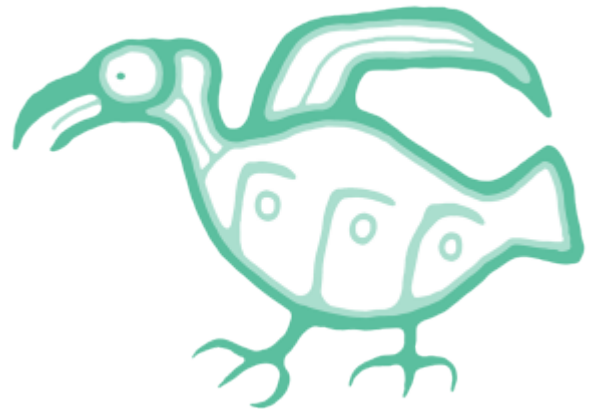


Chapter Overview

In the final chapter of Skoden you are given the challenge of committing to be an ally with people who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Allyship is not about doing something for, or on behalf of others, but rather standing in solidarity in ways that amplify voices other than your own. We also look at what decolonizing and Indigenizing might involve in post-secondary institutions. The final Elder Teaching, The Give Away, offers another teaching on how to live our lives in a good way. Reflective questions and activities based on the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel are provided, along with further recommended material for viewing, listening, and reading.

Allyship

Although we have come to the end of Skoden, it is most suitably a new beginning. The purpose of Skoden is to provide you with the true history of Turtle Island, introduce you to Elder Teachings, and examine the effects of colonization on contemporary issues. Acquiring this knowledge is only part of the journey in recognizing our responsibilities to reconciliation. Through allyship, we can understand our role in the oppression of Indigenous peoples and identify our responsibilities to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children, families, communities, colleagues, and the land.



[Raven](#)

What does it really mean to be an ally to Indigenous people?

Being an ally means disrupting oppressive spaces and places. It is understanding the struggle of oppressed people and how that oppression operates in order to end it through action. Allyship requires self-reflection on one's own privilege as well as one's role in oppression. Allyship is a process rather than a destination; it requires continual learning and self-awareness. It means recognizing there is work to be done and understanding one's responsibilities in that work.

Being an ally comes with profound responsibilities. These responsibilities, although challenging, are filled with hope and opportunity. It is important as you take the journey of reconciliation that you understand what it means to be a responsible ally and to continually critique your role as one.

Dr. Lynn Gehl has developed, from an Indigenous perspective, an extensive list of what it means for non-Indigenous people to be responsible allies.

[Ally Bill of Responsibilities](#)

As you consider the Ally Bill of Responsibilities, which statements resonate with you the most? What fears, anxieties, or apprehensions might you have about your responsibilities as an ally?

The first two points are:

1. Do not act out of guilt, but rather out of a genuine interest in challenging the larger oppressive power structures;
2. Understand that they are secondary to the Indigenous people that they are working with and that they seek to serve. They and their needs must take a back seat;



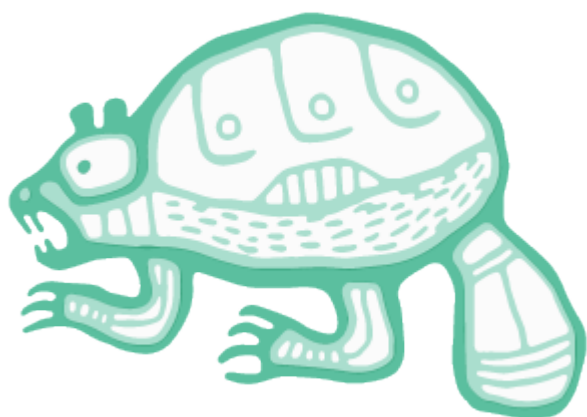
An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=1003#h5p-27>

[Labrador Tea](#)

[Download PDF of Ally Bill of Responsibilities](#)

Decolonizing Post-Secondary Education



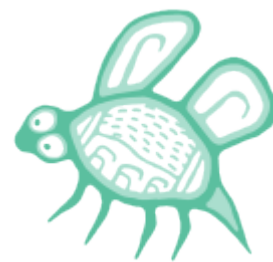
[Beaver](#)

inequities experienced predominately by racialized people. It has caused, enforced, and protected acts of slavery and genocide of Indigenous People, Black People, and People of Colour. It is a local phenomenon and a global phenomenon. Colonization can be found on street names that honour white colonizers, in textbooks that wipe out Indigenous history, and in the dominating European powers that have planted themselves around the world. To deconstruct colonization, we must collectively engage in a process of decolonization.

Decolonization can mean different things to different people. For non-Indigenous people, the process of decolonization could mean interrogating your beliefs about Indigenous people and unearthing your responsibilities to local Indigenous communities. It requires a dismantling of power imbalances that uphold white superiority and dominance over Indigenous children, families, communities, and land. It means learning about and supporting Indigenous ways of being. It means showing up for Indigenous people when they fight for land back, for their rights to fish, for equitable healthcare free from discrimination, for Missing and Murdered

While Skoden has provided facts and information, the hope is that you also learned a great deal about yourself and your relationship to Indigenous people and land through this experience. We also hope you are taking away a desire to look at the ways we are all still impacted by colonization.

Colonization is not an event. It is a structure. It is not something that happened in the past. Colonization is a complex system that is currently working to negatively impact each and every one of us who live on these stolen lands. Colonization has led to the environmental destruction of the land, the attack on human lives, and the economic



[Bee](#)

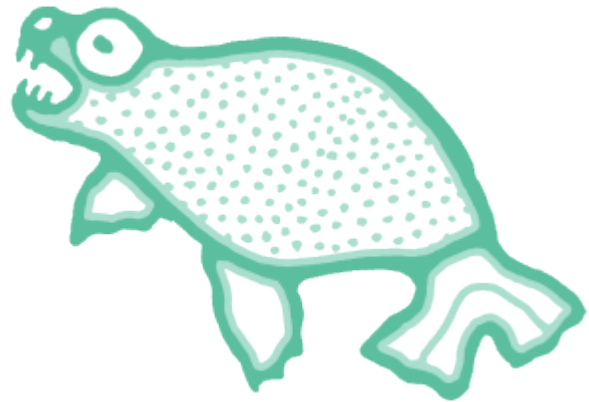
Indigenous Women and Girls, for clean drinking water on reserve, for First Nations children to grow up safely at home, for closing the gap in Indigenous education, for no pipelines, and a myriad of other issues that Indigenous people across Turtle Island are fighting for.

Decolonization is for everyone.

Indigenizing Post-Secondary Education

Indigenizing means acting. It involves making changes to curriculum that moves towards decentering Eurocentric knowledge and the colonial worldview. It involves bringing Indigenous ways of understanding into programs and courses in a systematic, thoughtful, and sustained way. It means writing the expectation that Indigenous content be covered in courses into the learning outcomes and the course assignments, for leaving this to happen through good intentions and hope, is not enough.

Indigenizing involves consulting with the people whose land your institution is on to learn the teachings of that land and then doing the work to incorporate those teachings into your pedagogy. Indigenizing does not mean taking Indigenous content and teaching it in colonial ways. It means taking all content and considering how it can be taught in Indigenous ways.



[Seal](#)



[Sweet Flag Root](#)

Indigenizing includes decolonizing your mind. There is not just one way of doing things. Indigenizing means opening yourself up to new possibilities, to pluralism, to many minds being brought together in the circle.

Indigenizing incorporates the teachings, languages, cultures, traditions, stories, and understandings of the local Indigenous communities into the everyday life of the institution.

Indigenizing provides the opportunity to incorporate a new worldview, one that arises from the land.

Indigenizing delivers on the responsibilities we all have towards fulfilling the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA Calls for Justice.

Indigenizing is upholding our responsibilities as treaty partners.

Indigenizing is an ongoing process of learning and sharing.

Indigenizing unites us with global Indigenous communities.

Indigenizing is reflecting on who we would all be today if, instead of forcing colonial values upon the people of Turtle Island, Europeans had incorporated Indigenous values into their own lives.



[Old Man's Beard](#)

Reconciliation

We began Skoden with a discussion about reconciliation, and now we circle back to reconciliation once again. Watch: [What is reconciliation? Indigenous educators have their say.](#)

As you view the video, consider what you can do to ensure non-Indigenous people do not turn away from knowing the truth and that we hold one another accountable to working towards justice.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=1017#oembed-1>

Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, consistently points to education as the route to reconciliation. Watch: [Murray Sinclair What is Reconciliation?](#)

As you view the video, consider what you can do today to help educate others in ways that will lead toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people?



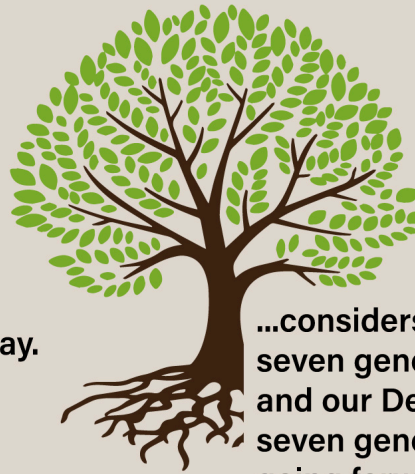
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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=1017#oembed-2>

Post-secondary institutions are uniquely positioned to help Canadians unlearn the racist stereotypes and untruths systemically embedded in society and blatantly taught in schools for decades. We are also uniquely positioned to provide a new narrative, a true narrative of our history and its consequences. The truth telling though, needs to be coupled with Indigenous Teachings that provide us with hope and new possibilities.



...brings all people to the circle as we all have gifts that help the community live together in a good way.



...considers our Ancestors seven generations back and our Descendants seven generations going forward.

Reconciliation



...is living in balance with the four directions, the sacred medicines, all my relations, and with our whole selves, emotion, bodies, minds, and spirits.



...is honesty, humility, truth, wisdom, bravery, love, and respect.



...gives away that which is most sacred so that our minds will be one.

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Infographic Description : Reconciliation

Reconciliation brings all people to the circle as we all have gifts that help the community live together in a good way.

Reconciliation considers our Ancestors seven generations back and our Descendants seven generations going forward.

Reconciliation is living in balance with the four directions, the sacred medicines, all my relations, and with our whole selves, emotion, bodies, minds, and spirits.

Reconciliation is honesty, humility, truth, wisdom, bravery, love, and respect.

Reconciliation gives away that which is most sacred so that our minds will be one.

The Give Away Teaching

In this final Elder Teaching, The Give Away, Elder Blu Waters, Seneca College, and community Elder, shares another teaching on how to live our lives in a good way.

Consider:

- How would life be different for all of us, personally and professionally, if we were willing to give away that which is precious to us for the good of the community?



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=1020#oembed-1>

Video Transcript: [The Giveaway Teaching](#)

Medicine Wheel Questions and Activities

In each Skoden chapter reflective questions and activities for you to undertake are provided that correspond to the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel. Click on each of the quadrants to reveal the content.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/skoden/?p=1022#h5p-28>

Going Further

Documentary: [The Radicals](#)

Podcast: [Telling Our Twisted Histories](#)

Reading: [The Reconciliation Manifesto: Recovering the Land, Rebuilding the Economy by Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson](#)



[Eagle Feathers](#)

IMAGE GLOSSARY

Balsam Fir: Balsam fir can be made into a tea or small boughs placed under your pillow while you sleep to bring about clarity or a clear vision of a direction to take in life.

Bear: The bear is a symbol of healing and when harvested provides medicines, food, clothing, tools, and sacred items.

Bear Grease: Grease is rendered during the harvesting of a bear. The grease is then used as a component of topical healing medicines.

Beaver: The beaver is an important part of creation. It diverts water to where it is needed and is the carpenter of the forest.

Bees: Bees are important in the replenishment of the land as they transfer pollen from one place to another. They also symbolize the cycle of reciprocity as they take pollen from plants to produce honey.

Bentwood Box: Bentwood boxes are traditional to the northwest coast with a variety of uses. This one was commissioned by the TRC in 2009 and travelled to national events, where people placed personal items into the box to symbolize their journey toward healing and expressions of reconciliation.¹

Berries: Strawberries are considered the heart berry and so symbolize women as the heart of communities.

Birch Bark: Birch bark in small amounts is important in fire lighting. In large pieces it is used in the construction of canoes, and the inner bark is used to make medicines.

Blueberries: Blueberries provide nutrition in the summer, and the leaves in the fall when harvested in a traditional way and made into a tea strengthen the body in preparation for the winter.

Cedar: Cedar boughs are used to line the floor of ceremonial lodges and to designate sacred spaces.

Chaga: Chaga is a form of fungus that grows on the side of birch trees and has many medicinal purposes including remedies for arthritis, immune disorders, and cancer.

Clam Shells and Wampum Beads: Wampum are cylindrical purple beads made from quahog clam shells and white beads made from whelk shells that are used to make belts that symbolize agreements made between nations.

1. [From the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#)

Crown: The crown represents the British Monarchy that brought hierarchical colonial ways of being to Turtle Island.

Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt: Since wampum beads are made of the shells of part of Creation, they are believed to have spirit and therefore pass the knowledge of the agreements made from generation to generation.

Doodem Animals: Doodem animals represent community members and the responsibilities they hold. The Doodem someone belongs to is passed from generation to generation. The Bear Doodem are the Medicine Keepers, healers, and guardians of the community. The Crane Doodem are responsible for external negotiations and for representing the community in decision-making between nations. The Loon Doodem are responsible for the internal governance of the community. The Moose Doodem are the artists and are responsible for the wellbeing of the community. The Thunderbird Doodem are the spiritual leaders and visionaries of the community. The Turtle Doodem are the Wisdom Keepers and the mediators who the community look to for guidance in decision-making and during disagreements. The Wolf Doodem are the hunters, providers, and protectors of the community.

Eagle Feathers: Eagle feathers are the highest honour someone can receive, and they command us to speak the truth. Seven feathers appear here to represent the loss of community members.

Flowers: Flowers appear in many Indigenous art forms representing the beautiful gifts of the land.

Four Sacred Medicines: All of Creation is considered sacred in an Indigenous worldview, the plants, animals, water, and so are seen as medicines. The four sacred medicines are an important part of the healing journey for many First Nations individuals and communities. Tobacco, sage, sweetgrass, and cedar are used in many forms and for many purposes in ceremony and in everyday life. Tobacco is used as an offering of gratitude and when burned is used as a messenger to Creator and the Ancestors. Sage is often burned in a smudge, and the smoke is welcomed to your head so you will have an open mind, to your eyes so you will see many perspectives, to your ears so you will hear new truths, to your mouth so you will speak with kindness, to your heart so you will have empathy. Sweetgrass is braided to symbolize hair and is burned as a form of cleansing of the self and spaces. Cedar too can be burned in a smudge but is more commonly used in teas and in bathing for cleansing, healing, and grounding.

Hand Drum: The drum reminds us to connect to the heartbeat of the land. Hand drums are used in ceremonies during the singing of healing songs and the gathering of nations.

Inukshuk: Inukshuk are human shapes created from stone and were originally used as directional markers in the Arctic. Today they are prominent in Inuit art and stand as symbols of safety, hope, and friendship.

Juniper: When harvested and prepared in traditional ways, juniper provides medicine that promotes a strong immune system.

Labrador Tea: The Labrador tea plant grows near marshes and in damp wooded areas. The tea made from the leaves is used to ward off cold and flu viruses. The tea is also prominent in the home when people gather for conversation.

Maple: The first water from the maple tree serves as a reminder of the start of new life. The sap when rendered into syrup provides vital nutrients for the winter season.

Medallion: During early Treaty negotiations medallions were presented as gifts to First Nations negotiators that symbolized agreements made between First Nations and the Crown.

Medicine Wheel: The core teaching of the Medicine Wheel is one of balance. Four elements, four directions, four stages of life, four contributions to community, four colours, all the original instructions on how to live life in a good way are present in the Medicine Wheel and are to be kept in balance.

Métis Sash: The Métis sash originated as a working tool during the fur trade. It held many purposes from aiding in the carrying of heavy fur bundles, to the storage of items around the waist. Today the sash stands as a unifying signifier of Métis culture, identity, and language.

Moose: The moose gives its life to sustain communities. All parts of the body are used to provide everything from food to clothing, to tools, and sacred items.

Moose Hide: Animal hides are stretched and dried for many uses, including the making of clothing, regalia, and crafts. In the context of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people it represents the masculine role in speaking out against violence.

Old Man's Beard: Old man's beard is a fungus that grows on pine trees that are dying and when made into medicine is used topically to combat different forms of bacterial infections.

Orange Shirt: Wearing an orange shirt is a symbol of solidarity with Indigenous people and recognizes our shared history.

Pine Tree: In an Indigenous worldview trees remind us to be grateful for the gift of life, and historically, the white pine became the symbol of peace, friendship, and unity.

Plantain: Plantain leaves are used as medicine to heal burns and insect bites and stings.

Quill Box: Quill boxes are made of birch bark, sweetgrass, and porcupine quills that have been dyed different colours using berries. They are used to store and carry sacred items.

Qulliq: The Qulliq is an Inuit oil lamp made of soapstone with a cotton and moss wick. Historically the lamp provided light, warmth, and a source for cooking. Today the Qulliq serves as a symbol of Inuit culture, identity, and language.

Raven: The raven is often seen as a trickster or as Nanaboozhoo, Nanabush, or Wiindigo whose purpose is to bring teachings about the balance between day and night or good and evil and how we are to understand our responsibilities to community.

Red Dress: The red dress is the unifying symbol representing missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people.

Sacred Pipe: The sacred pipe is used in ceremonies for burning tobacco that serves to send messages to Creator and the Ancestors about agreements being made.

Scroll: The scroll symbolizes the imposed one-sided Western view of historical agreements between Indigenous people and the government.

Seal: Sometimes referred to as the daily bread of Inuit living in the Arctic Region, seals are an important food staple in an environment where agriculture and the farming of domesticated animals is not possible. In addition, the hunting of seals is a significant cultural tradition and source of income gained through the sale of seal skins and products made from them.

Shaker: Shakers or rattles are made of wood and animal hide and bones and are used ceremonially in the singing of prayers and songs. They simulate the sound of the earth as it was created.

Skoden: The word Skoden is slang for “let’s go then” and is used here as a call to post-secondary institutions, and the many individuals that work in them, to commit to the truth and reconciliation journey.

Smudge Bowl: A shell or cast-iron pan is used to hold the sacred medicines, sage, tobacco, sweetgrass, and cedar for burning during ceremonies.

Spruce Boughs: Historically, spruce boughs were used in the creation of shelters and served as a foundation to sleep on. Today these boughs are still used in ceremonies to connect us to land and all of Creation.

Sweet Flag Root: Sweet flag root is used to sooth a sore throat and to support the vocal cords of big drum singers.

Tamarack: The tamarack tree provides medicines that restore calmness, and the trunks are used in the construction of ceremonial lodges.

Three Sisters: Corn, beans, and squash were part of the traditional diet of many First Nations communities. The three sisters rely on each other and work together as a collective to provide the nutrients of life. The reclaiming of traditional food systems is an important part of the healing journey for many Indigenous individuals and communities.

Thunderbird: Thunderbirds are the symbol for change. Entering the circle from the East they bring new life and exiting in the West they return Spirit back to the Sky World.

Totem Pole: Totem poles are significant cultural monuments created by First Nations in the Pacific Northwest. They are meant to commemorate events, histories, ancestry, clans, and people.

Turtle Island: Many First Nations creation stories tell of life being made possible for humans

by the placing of land on the back of a turtle out of which all that is needed to sustain human life began to grow.

Two-Row Wampum Belt: Wampum belts represent the solidified agreements between two parties.

Ulu: The ulu is a knife used by Inuit women in the harvesting of food.

Water Drum: Also called the Little Boy Drum, the Water Drum is a form of communicating with all of Creation through prayer and serves to invite the Ancestors to be present during ceremonies to provide guidance.

Wild Rice: Wild rice is a traditional food for many First Nations around the Great Lakes. Today people are reclaiming the traditional harvesting practices and preparation of this food source, which serves an important role in ending ceremonial fasts.

Wolf: The wolf shows humility in its care and leadership of the pack by observing where support and protection is needed to bring about wellbeing for all.