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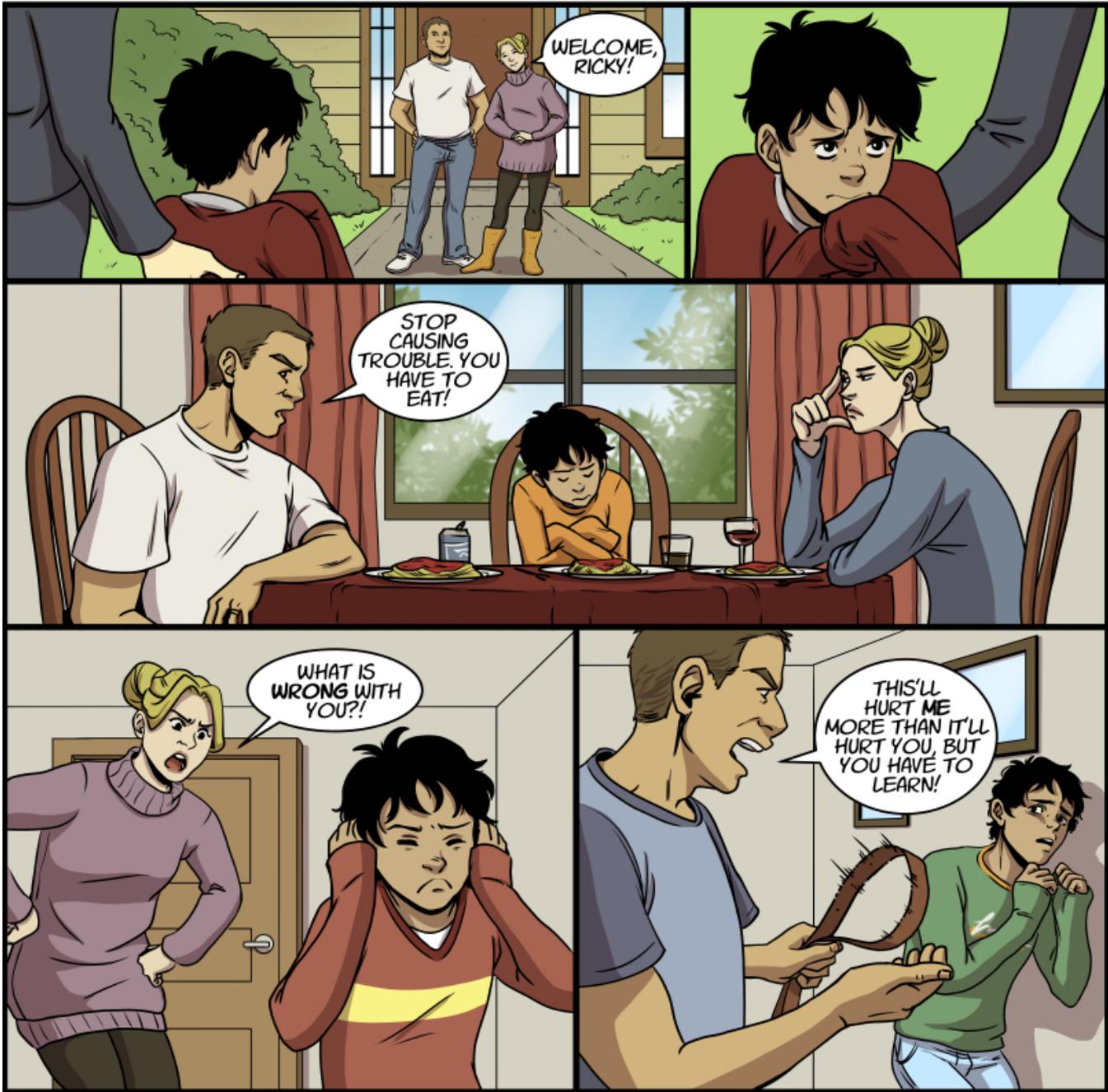
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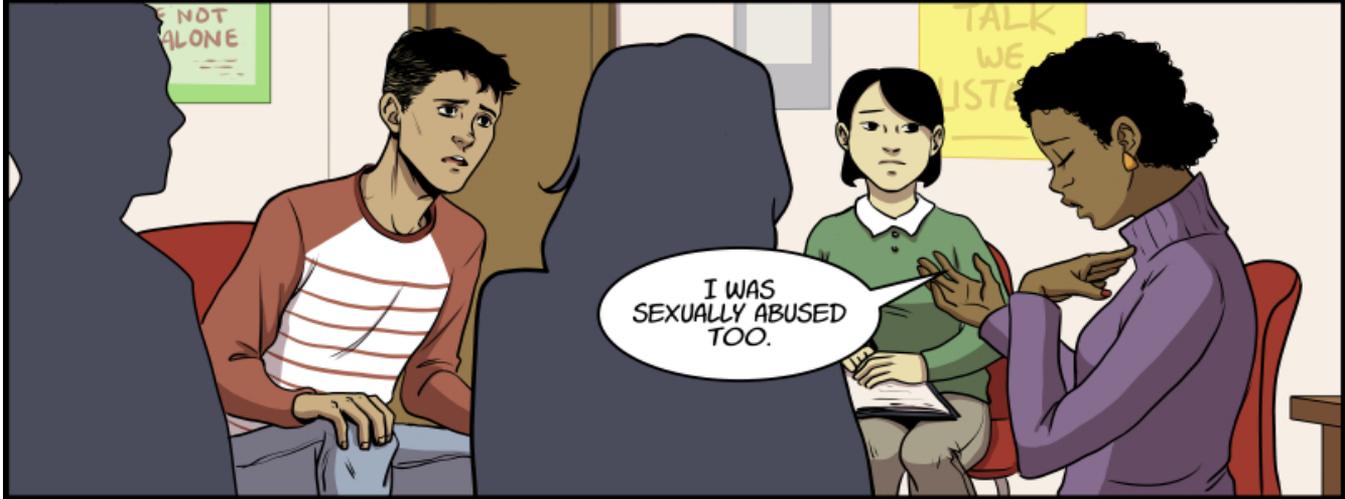
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A SURVIVORS STORY

BY CELINA DAWDY

"I don't see myself as a victim anymore, I see myself as a champion," Kane, a survivor of child welfare, abuse, drug addiction, suicide, and more, said stoically. His demeanor confident, warm, and passionate.

His story began as soon as he came into the world. His entire life had been a constant fight for survival – until now as he stands strong as an activist.

Kane Blacque was born in January 1976. His birth mother was a young woman and a struggling addict. She was only 15 years old when she fell pregnant with Kane.

Only shortly after his birth, Kane would become introduced to unspeakable physical abuse at the hands of his mother, who was addicted to alcohol and sniffing glue.

By his third birthday, his birth mother had been charged with second degree murder in the death of his 14-month-old sister.

At this point, Kane was apprehended and handed to the foster system. He was placed in his first foster home shortly after that, and instead of finding a place of solitude and safety, Kane was repeatedly violated.

The physical abuse from his birth mother would spiral into sexual abuse from his foster brother – who repeatedly raped and molested Kane. Records state that the Child Welfare system had record of this abuse but didn't intervene. This was Kane's first taste of how brutal and corrupt the foster system could be – and would continue to be for many following years of Kane's young life.

At six years old, Kane was finally adopted out of the foster system with his sibling and moved to a much smaller city with his new adoptive parents.

Kane was hopeful that this transition would put an end to the abuse that he had suffered throughout his life. However, his six years with his adopted family posed their own problems.

Moving away from the big city atmosphere, Kane found himself outcasted by a smaller, close-minded town. He was a gay, Aboriginal boy that often found himself to be the target of

bullying in school. He had a difficult time fitting in – and often found his interests being different from that of his peers.

The other children were cruel.

And so was his home life.

His adoptive father was unsupportive of Kane's flamboyant interests. Kane was interested in theatre, drama and dance. He had a personality that was larger than life, and his adoptive father tried to shrink that. When Kane wanted to enroll in artistic extracurricular activities, his father would often respond with enrollment in activities that were "better suited" for boys.

The struggle of his adoptive father's inability to accept Kane for face value was only emphasized with his mother's fiery temper. Though Kane and his adoptive mother had a more supportive, comfortable relationship, she would become abusive when she was in a violent rage. She would beat Kane with nearby objects when she became angry.

In result, Kane became withdrawn and anti-social. Child Welfare reports cite his frequency to act out with both physical and sexual aggression.

At only 13-years-old, Kane's adoptive family had requested Kane be removed from the household and put back into the foster system. The province became his permanent guardian. Over the next three years, Kane would be moved throughout over twenty placements.

By 14-years-old, Kane began prostituting himself – often hired by older men, in their late 30-40s. He would go to school during the day, and then to diving practice. For years, he would finish his day by picking up johns.

In 1991, Child Welfare documents report Kane being allegedly kidnapped and severely assaulted while working as a prostitute. Despite this, there was no resources provided to the boy.

By 16 years old, he became the victim of child predator, Doug Butler.

Butler enticed Blacque into “auditioning” for a sexually explicit film about a gay boy’s coming of age. Butler filmed the “audition” which made Kane a victim of child pornography. Butler was eventually charged with sexual exploitation of a minor and rape years after Kane had first reported the abuse to police, where it fell on deaf ears.

Eventually, Blacque began using drugs and alcohol. He would shoplift, set fires and continued prostituting. He dropped out of high school and quit diving. He attempted suicide many times, however, his attempts were never taken seriously by his caseworkers. Help was never offered to the boy that was failed repeatedly by the system.

Psychiatrists would label him as “extremely manipulative” and would suggest that his suicide attempts “can not be taken seriously”. The healthcare and child welfare system refused to intervene and offer Kane help. Years later, Blacque would end up being diagnosed with major depressive disorder and bipolar disorder. These disorders are now being treated with medication, however, they went untreated for decades due to the disinterest of help from the system.

By 18, Kane was fueled by drug addiction and began with a high-end escort agency in Edmonton. He was one of the highest paid escorts in the city and the agency supplied him with a car and bodyguard.

Alongside all of the abuse, neglect and trauma that Kane Blacque has suffered throughout his life, he also was completely stripped of his Aboriginal identity by the province. Throughout the years, child welfare documents have switched from naming him as “Metis” to eventually “Caucasian”.

Blacque is a survivor of the “Sixties Scoop”. From the early 1950’s to the late 1980’s, Canadian Indigenous children were taken from their homes and placed into predominately non-Indigenous families. This was fueled by the Indian Act of 1952, where the province had jurisdiction over Indigenous child

welfare. This act was devastating to Aboriginal communities across Canada, and ultimately, to the Indigenous children that were completely assimilated into a primarily Caucasian culture – with no recognition or respect paid to their roots.

Decades later, Blacque is still fighting with the Federal Government to be granted his status as Metis, that was unfairly denied to him years ago.

Though faced with years of unimaginable adversity throughout his life, Kane Blacque now finds himself in a loving and supportive relationship with a meaningful job. He is a proud dog dad to his Beagles.

He has been clean of drugs since September 2013 and has worked for SOS Safety Magazine full-time for five years now. He has been with his fiancé for six years.

Kane is an example of a man that came out on top and conquered every difficulty that was imposed on him.

When asked what advice he would give to somebody else going through similar circumstances, he answered, “Find a reason to fight. Just keep fighting. You fight to stay alive.”

He is now a keynote speaker for the magazine and is currently writing a book about his life experiences. He strives to be an advocate for men, boys and LGBT youth.

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Reconciliation is an important part of our human rights work. We must respect, promote, and protect the human rights of Indigenous people for reconciliation to be successful. The process is more than just acknowledging the oppressive history of our past but also incorporating the needs and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples into our shared future. Reconciliation is not only about what we do but also how we do it. No matter how old you are, your equality human rights are protected under the NWT Human Rights Act.

You may find that people sometimes treat you differently or negatively because of your age, your race, where you are from, your gender, gender identity, your sexuality, or because you have a disability. This is discrimination. The reasons you might be treated differently are called grounds. The NWT Human Rights Act protects 22 of them. It is against the law to discriminate against anyone when they are at work, in a public place, renting an apartment or when advertising.

The 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission address historic incidents of discrimination that relate to the grounds protected today under the NWT Human Rights Act. The federal government used grounds such as Place of Origin, Ethnic Origin, Ancestry, Race, Creed, and Family Affiliation as the basis to marginalize and oppress Canada's Indigenous People. These grounds are protected under the NWT Human Rights Act. Years of discrimination and oppression harmed generations of Indigenous People leading to numerous social issues including poverty, lack of education, disability, addictions, family violence, and loss of language and culture. The NWT Human Rights Act protects people from discrimination based on many of these social issues under the grounds of Social Condition and Disability.

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A Peaceful Reminder

- Tommy D.



Now I see a new beginning
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Only I can change myself
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How may I help the hurt
Over and over I will try
Using the Creator's wisdom
Say his words, find his love
Every day is just one at a time

Make the right choice
Enjoy what you learned
Don't reject the lost
I'll find a way, you must say
Come with me down the Red Road
I'll walk with you as far as I can
Never looking back no more
Eventually the grass is greener

Look to the sky, look so high
Out of the blue, a new you
Deliver a message from the heart
Go to your paradise as you see it
Everyday will become a new today

MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

BY CELINA DAWDY

Over the last several years, Canada and the United States have faced a painful epidemic that has affected thousands of families across North America. What began as potentially a coincidence soon turned into an excruciating trend: our Indigenous women have been targeted and gone missing or been murdered.

Not only is the sheer nature of these crimes harrowing, but the Indigenous population has not had the same support and focus from the Canadian Justice System. This has resulted in many of these cases being left unsolved and the families of the women.

The turmoil that families face with their unanswered questions adds to a lack of closure and inability to move forward. It's every mother, father, sister, and brother's nightmare to have lost a loved one - especially under these painful circumstances.

The Harsh Reality

When looking at the data for Indigenous women in 2018, it's clear that the Indigenous population has been thrown into struggles that far outweigh the rest of the country. In fact, Indigenous women are twice as likely to

experience violence than white women. Their murder rates are ten times more than the national average.

The violence and injustice that Indigenous women face should be a vital concern for all of North America. As we move towards truth and reconciliation, it's imperative that we stand up against this human-rights crisis.

According to the RCMP in 2014, over 1000 Indigenous women had been murdered over the past thirty years. The accurate number is assumed to now be closer to 4,000. That's 4000 loved faces that have disappeared from the families and friends that love them.

Western provinces in Canada, such as British Columbia and Alberta, are especially horrendous for MMIWG. Though the majority of the cases occur in busy cities and urban areas, on-reserve communities still require attention and care as we work to rectify this issue.

Public Knowledge

Though it's presumed that this issue has been going on for decades, there is finally much-needed attention

drawn to the movement. Suddenly law enforcement and the Canadian Justice System have recognized the epidemic and are working closely to address it. Numerous non-profit groups, charities, and organizations have opened to provide information, resources, and funding to solve these cases and gain awareness.

One of the most essential strides in the movement is finally giving a voice and a platform to those who have been directly affected by the genocide. More people are working to take action and eliminate predatory behaviour. There is more social support than ever before; however, as a country, we still have a long way to go.

How to Help

For those who have suffered a loss or a loved one has gone missing, there is very little we can do to provide peace or closure. However, we can continue speaking their names and hope that law enforcement comes to some conclusions to solve these cases.

There are several charities that welcome volunteers and donations. Getting involved in advocacy and lending a hand (whether it be emotionally, physically, or financially) provides assistance. Some of our favourite charities are Butterflies in Spirit, Drag the Red, and Native Youth Sexual Health Network.

Red Dress Day, founded by Jaime Black and the REDress program, is now nationally recognized on May 5. It gives Indigenous communities the opportunity to come together and speak their stories and pain.

Aside from the MMIWG movement specifically, it should be a priority of all Canadians to remain active in speaking out against prejudice and injustice. This means wearing an orange shirt on The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, staying educated, and being mindful of the ongoing struggles that the Indigenous community continues to experience.



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NATIVE COUNSELLING SERVICES OF ALBERTA: FREE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

BY DR. DAENA CROSBY

NCSA has provided programs and services designed and delivered by Indigenous people, for Indigenous people, in Alberta for over 50 years. Our mission is to promote the resilience of the Indigenous individual and family, through programs and services that are grounded in reclaiming our interconnectedness, reconciliation of relationships and self-determination.

Today, and every day, we invite our non-Indigenous relations to meet us halfway on the path towards reconciliation. While the intents and impacts of Residential Schools continue to affect us, we are still here. We turn to our languages, cultures, and ceremonies to guide us as Indigenous peoples.

Check out of FREE and FEATURED resources. Watch them on our YouTube channel @bear-pawlegal or go to our website BearPawLegalResources.ca

Home Fire explores family violence and restorative justice from an Indigenous perspective. Featuring commentary from Elders, community leaders, and members of the western justice system, Home Fire examines the colonization of Canada, historic trauma, the western justice system and grassroots healing programs in Indigenous communities.

Journey Home explores healing Indigenous children in the Canadian child welfare system. This powerful documentary provides an Indigenous community perspective on inter-generational trauma and its impacts on children and youth in government care. This research-based documentary highlights community approaches to ensuring children are meaningfully connected to their cultures, communities and identity.

Water: The Sacred Relationship

This documentary and educational curriculum was guided by Cree Elders and led by a team of Indigenous and western scientists. The Sacred relationship explores how reconciling the relationship between Indigenous people and the rest of Canada can lead to healthier water.

www.sacredrelationship.ca

Wāwākamow: Navigating Bail, Galdue Reports and Sentencing in Alberta – River's been charged and can't afford a lawyer. He needs help along the winding path that is Canada's criminal justice system. This video is accompanied by 3 walletcards on the same topics.

Truth and Reconciliation Resource Package – This package is for anyone who wants to learn more and develop understandings of Indigenous cultures and the history and continuing impacts of Residential Schools in Canada.

Educator and Service Provider Resource Package – This package includes a suite of legal education resources which have been curated for educators, caregivers and youthworkers.

Navigating Alberta Children's Services Maps – A series of 8 maps that reveal legal routes through Children's Services system. These maps are for individuals and their caseworkers to help identify points where they can advocate and make decisions for themselves.

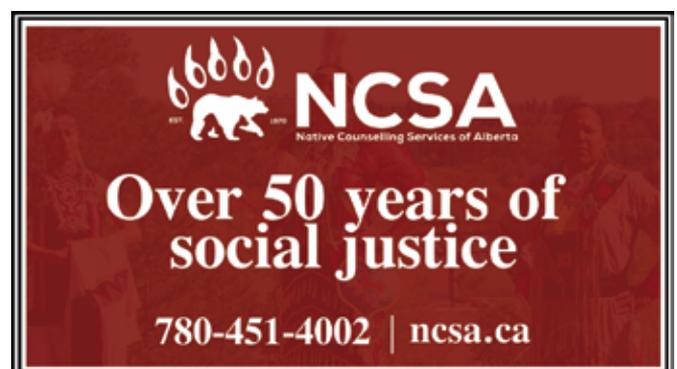
Connections APP – Start scrolling! Learn how to find an Elder, a recipe or how to do your taxes. The Connections APP is designed for Alberta youth and young adults aged 14-26 who are transitioning to adulthood from government care.

Coming Soon...April 2022!

New documentary and publications for families and loved ones of Missing, Murdered and Exploited Indigenous People in Alberta.

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WATER IS ESSENTIAL: THE ONGOING WATER CRISIS IN OUR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

BY HEATHER GUNN

It's no secret that water is a necessity in life. From consuming water each day, to washing our hands, to bathing, and much more – water is essential.

Why is it, then, that many of our Indigenous communities in Canada continue to only have water that isn't safe for consumption or bathing? The Indigenous people in these communities have turned to boiling water or bringing in water from elsewhere since this issue began. This water problem has been ongoing for years, and it's time that something changes. In many cases, people's health is being negatively impacted. The Indigenous people deserve better.

Many politicians on the Municipal, Provincial, and Federal levels have promised over the years to ensure that this water crisis is resolved – and while some action has been taken, the progress is much too slow. In a country as well established and as well off as Canada, no resident should go without clean water.

As tensions have grown and this issue has gone years without an end in sight, Indigenous leaders (Including Tataskweyak Cree Nation in Manitoba, the Curve Lake First Nation, and Neskantaga First Nation in Ontario) initiated a class-action lawsuit towards the Federal Government of Canada. Earlier in 2021, the Federal Government came to an almost \$8-Billion-dollar settlement with those that launched the lawsuit.

While water advisories have been lifted in several communities over the years, there are still many that continue to have them.

According to the Government of Canada's website, there are still 43 long-term drinking water advisories in effect in 31 communities (as of October 25, 2021).

With mounting pressure, it is clear that Indigenous communities are stressing to politicians that this is not something to be left on the back burner. This affects the day to day lives of so many people in Canada and deserves to be a top priority.

An issue as simple as providing clean water to Canadians shouldn't have to result in a lawsuit just for the powerful people in this country to enact solutions, but it has unfortunately come to that.

Time will tell if the government makes good on their promises to get this issue resolved, as they have spoken about time and time again. Actions speak louder than words, and this water crisis needs action as soon as possible. All Canadians deserve clean, useable water.

For more information about the ongoing water crisis, please visit the following resources:

The Council of Canadians: <https://canadians.org/fn-water>

Government of Canada: <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1614385724108/1614385746844>

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SIXTIES SCOOP

BY CELINA DAWDY

In Canadian history, there have been dozens of painful events within the Indigenous community. Unfortunately, many of those events still linger today, such as the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls epidemic and the discrimination that many of our country's founders, the Indigenous people, face. While the government and many citizens are working diligently to reconcile the hurt that's been caused over many generations, there are still notable events that require open discussion, acknowledgment, and understanding. One of many detrimental events is referred to as the "Sixties Scoop".

What was the Sixties Scoop?

The Sixties Scoop is an excruciating reminder of what the Indigenous people face in their homes and communities. It refers to the removal of Indigenous children from their homes and families without consent. It dates back as far as 1951 but was predominant in the 1960s. There are reports of this barbaric practice spanning well into the 1980s.

Once the Indigenous child was removed or "scooped" from their family, they would undergo an adoption process into a non-Indigenous family. Often, they would be stripped of their heritage and culture, and many lost touch with their birth families.

While many associate a child being removed from their home due to inadequate parenting, the Sixties Scoop had no relation to that. These children were being ejected from their loving homes with no cause or reason. It was strictly a racist and harmful practice used to assimilate the Indigenous culture.

In 1951, the Indian Act was amended. This amendment gave the provincial government rights to Indigenous children. While the government argued that this offered the opportunity for Indigenous children to flee from socio-economic barriers and poverty that could often be found on reserves, the amendment undoubtedly caused unimaginable pain and suffering, which would lead to significant generational trauma.

What Impact Did the Sixties Scoop Have?

The Sixties Scoop has had extreme consequences, both to individual adoptees and their communities. Adoptees understandably feel the loss of cultural identity, loneliness, and isolation. In many cases, their birth records were sealed, which challenged many children from contacting their birth families.

In response to this cultural abomination, class-action lawsuits were filed throughout the 1990s. These were especially prevalent in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. Even today, there are settlements and further discussions happening in an attempt to right the wrongs of the Canadian and provincial governments.

How has the Canadian Government Addressed the Sixties Scoop?

There have been more movements and efforts of reconciliation from the Canadian government from 2015 to now. Though it's disappointing to see the amount of time it took for Canada to issue a public apology, we're moving in the right direction. In 2017, the Canadian government offered a \$1.3 billion settlement in the class-action lawsuit. It was the first success in the Sixties Scoop lawsuit action. This lawsuit took eight years to come to a settlement.

Over the years, several provinces have issued a much-needed apology for the hurt, trauma, and failure caused by the government. Though this can never negate the struggles of our history, it's hopefully provided some closure for the Indigenous communities.

How to Move Forward?

The struggles of the Indigenous population have been glanced over by the rest of Canada for centuries. The Indigenous community has been underrepresented, mistreated, and wronged in many different ways - many still present today.

Thankfully, many organizations and charities accept donations for Indigenous communities. Finding a local nonprofit is an excellent way to donate to the cause.

To move forward, it's essential to start open and honest conversations about the past. Giving the Indigenous peoples a safe place to share their struggles and hurt can provide an opportunity for healing and reconciliation. Get loud, stand up against discrimination and racism, and help our future be brighter than our past.

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THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS TRAGEDY & ORANGE SHIRT DAY

The Canadian tragedy that is the Residential School System is a period of time that should not (and will not) be forgotten. With recent discoveries of mass graves at many former Residential School sites around the country, Canadians have had to, now more than ever, face the harsh realities of this dark time in history.

For those who may not be familiar with what took place when these Residential Schools were active, it was a harrowing experience for the children and families involved. This schooling system was rolled out by the Canadian government in the 1880s and was run by churches for many years following the initial rollout (well into the 1900s).

Their main purpose was to attempt to assimilate or indoctrinate Indigenous children into a culture that was not their own. They wanted these children to adhere to their predominantly white or Euro-centric surroundings. Many children were even forced away from their families.

Students who attended these schools have spoken over the years about the intense and cruel punishments that would take place that left them immensely traumatized well into adulthood.

The damage this type of schooling caused is horrendous. Many survivors have told their stories from this dark time, and families of the Residential School children still feel the impacts to this day. Families were torn apart, culture and heritage were pushed to the side, and people were treated as less than human. These school systems left a dark mark on Canada's past.

As a response to this tragedy, each year there is a recognized 'Orange Shirt Day' (held on September 30) in Canada which aims to bring awareness to the children and families that endured suffering from the Residential School system. On this day, people around the country can opt to wear an orange shirt, showing their support and solidarity. The slogan 'Every Child Matters' was also coined to go along with this day – however, it's also widely used outside of the day (and rightfully so).

Orange Shirt Day, September 30, is also now a recognized na-

tional holiday, known as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This aims to bring a broader awareness to the issue and helps to educate all Canadians on this important topic.

As we move towards healing past scars, we must remember to never forget what happened. Remembering the tragic events ensures that our country never reverts back to the horrible events that went on during the time of Residential Schooling. #EveryChildMatters

For those who are looking to donate towards survivors of Residential Schools, MacLean's has compiled an article with multiple places to donate.

Find it here: <https://www.macleans.ca/news/where-to-donate-to-support-survivors-of-residential-schools/>



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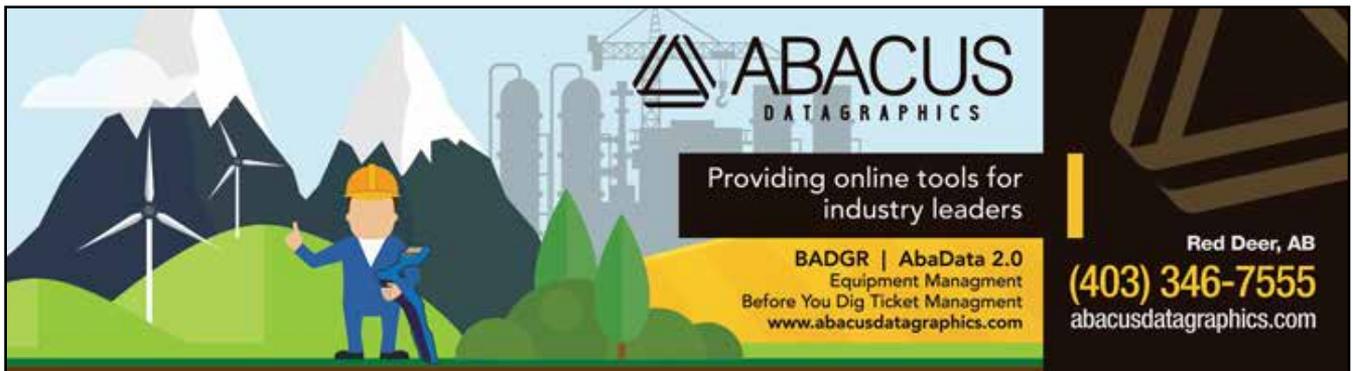
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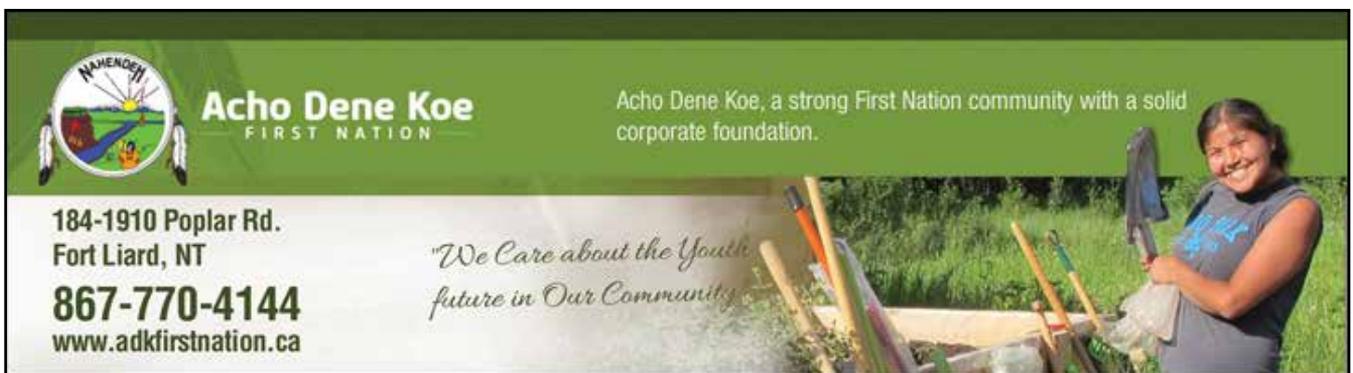


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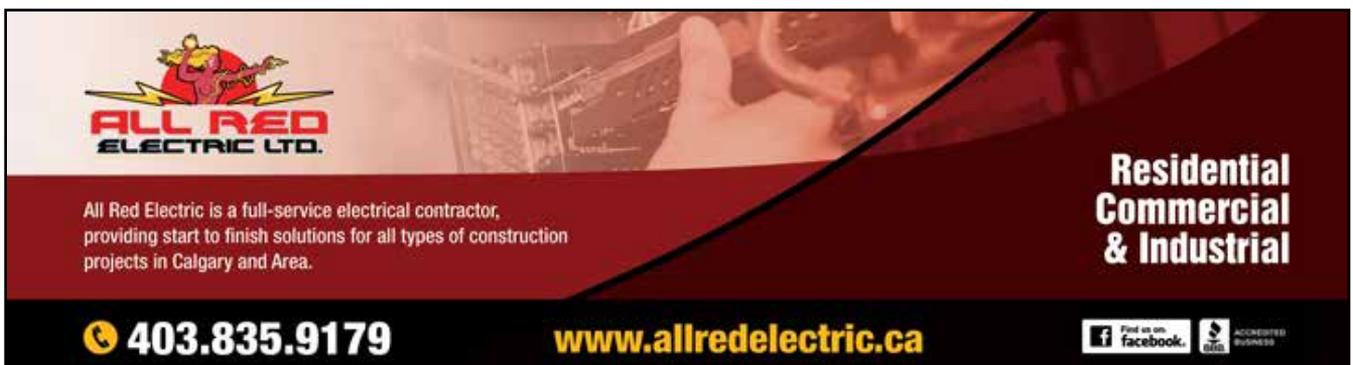


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STRUGGLING AFTER ABORTION? YOU'RE NORMAL.

From Ethan's Perspective

A few days ago, Layla told me she's pregnant. Not gonna lie. I was stunned. I thought we were doing everything to make sure that didn't happen. I guess I didn't think this could happen. I couldn't believe it.

After sitting with the news for a couple of days, I knew I needed to let Layla know I am here to support her. I think she was relieved to hear I wanted talk. I'm glad I got over my own shock so I could be there for her. I made sure to do a lot of listening because I know that, ultimately, this is her choice and I want to respect that.

From Layla's Perspective

A few days ago, I told Ethan that I'm pregnant. I didn't know what to expect when I told him. I wasn't scared to tell him, but I was embarrassed. I thought we were being careful, and I feel stupid for letting this happen.

For a couple of days, I was freaking out inside. Ethan was acting like I hadn't told him. If I tried to bring it up, he'd find a way to change the subject or an excuse to stop texting. I was relieved when he finally came to me to talk about it, because I was starting to think I'd have to figure everything out without him. I talked. A lot. And he listened. I talked about how it's kinda weird to think of myself with a big belly. How I had never really thought about what adoption would be like. How crazy it would be to have a baby now. I mean, I think I'd make a great mom. But now? It would be so hard. But, like, people do it, right? And then, when I talked about abortion, that's when Ethan said he supports my right to choose to have one.

I mean, I guess he's freaked out. I guess it would be super weird for him to watch me get a big belly. Or even try to think about being a dad. Do guys even think about that stuff? So that's probably why he wants me to have an abortion. While I wish I felt support from him to choose to have the baby, I know I don't want to do it alone. I guess this is just what people in our situation do. I just don't really know how I feel about it.

From Ethan's Perspective

We had a good conversation. I fully support a woman's right to have an abortion. I made sure she knew that. I'm going to go to her appointment with her and stay with her and everything. Whatever she would have needed, no matter what she decided, I would have been there. I hope she knows that.

Did you know that being uncertain about your abortion decision and going through with it anyways is known to have negative effects on your mental health? The medical term for uncertainty is ambivalence. And, while it can be difficult for a doctor to screen for it, ambivalence is an absolute contraindication to medical abortion. That means that, if a doctor does detect ambivalence, they are absolutely not to prescribe a medical abortion. It's the same medical language used as when a patient has a known allergy to a medication! It's very serious.

While some people experience only relief after an abortion, many others struggle with more complicated emotions, sometimes even many years later. If you or someone you know is struggling because of a past abortion, there is help.



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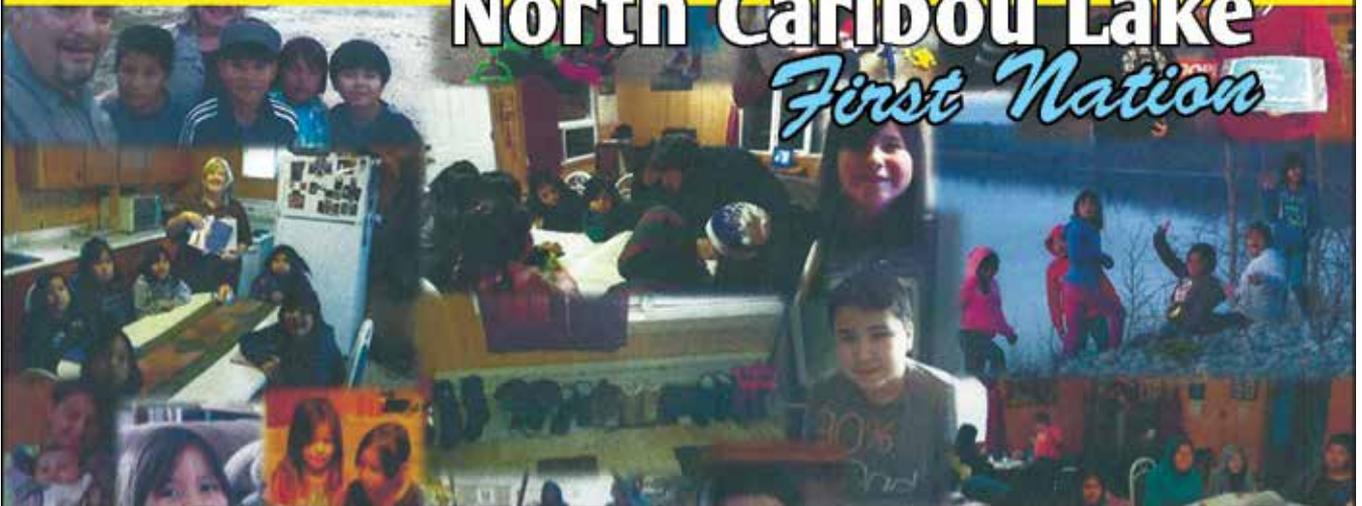
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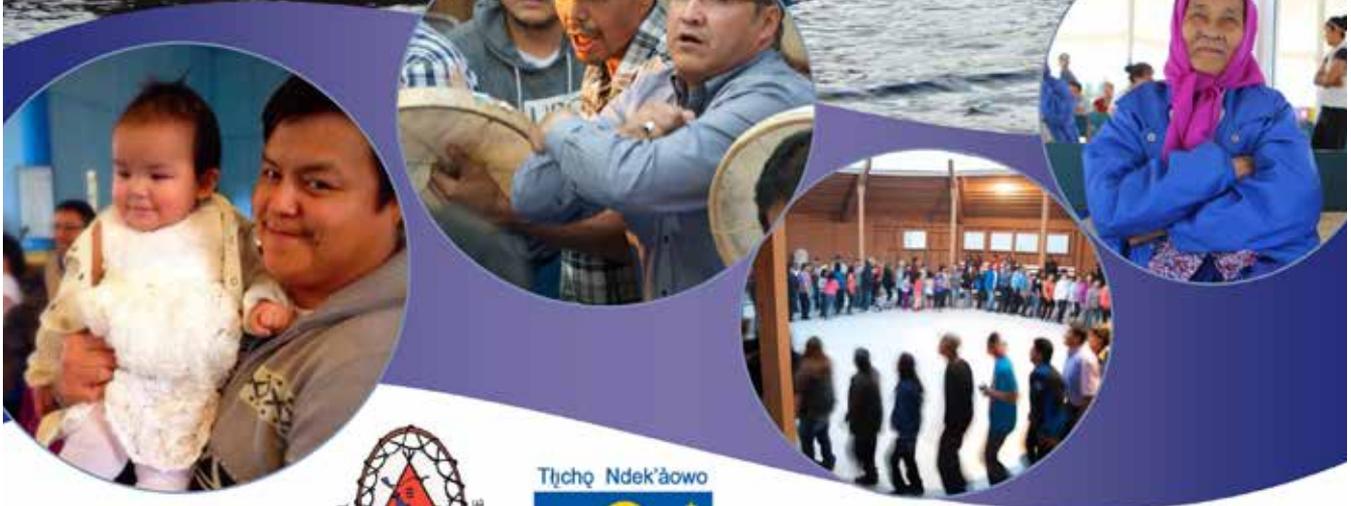




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ATA JOINS PARENT GROUP TO STAND UP FOR EDUCATION

New campaign brings parents and teachers together to ensure no student is left behind

The Alberta government’s reckless changes to public education are putting our children’s future at risk.

That’s the message coming out of a new campaign launched jointly by the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) and the Alberta School Councils’ Association (ASCA).

The campaign responds to a number of threats facing Alberta’s world-class public education system, from funding cuts, to larger class sizes, and the problematic draft curriculum. The campaign is building awareness and support for education by building an alliance of parents and teachers who are standing up and fighting back for Alberta’s children and their futures.

With increasing funding cuts, the government is leaving school boards to make hard choices while costs rise. The impact is severe, including teaching positions and education support workers being cut, the elimination of programs and supports for students, deterioration of school buildings and out-of-date resources.

The government has stopped tracking and reporting on class sizes, resulting in classes growing larger with increasing numbers of students with specialized learning needs and second language learners. As teachers try to manage more students with higher needs, every

needs, every child is left at a disadvantage, with a disproportionate impact on kids who are vulnerable.

The government is making dangerous changes to the K–6 curriculum. The draft curriculum leaves out important lessons in history, wellness and science. It includes Indigenous content that is not authentic, while reducing perspectives of women, LGBTQ2S+ and francophone Albertans. The overloaded draft curriculum includes irrelevant information and learning outcomes that lack high academic standards for younger children. The drafting of the curriculum has largely been political. Teachers were not included in meaningful ways. Politicians and the premier’s friends drafted it—teachers and curriculum experts were not appropriately consulted or asked for feedback. In all, 95 per cent of school districts have refused to pilot it. Learn more about the problematic draft curriculum: www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Research/COOR-184%20Curriculum%20Response%20Report.pdf.

“These changes cannot stand,” says ATA president Jason Schilling. “As teachers, we know funding cuts, class sizes and these changes to the curriculum can be dangerous.”

Schilling says the consequences can be severe: students will experience learning gaps in important subjects while receiving an overload of irrelevant and inappropriate information. Funding and classroom issues mean a lack of individual time with teachers, the loss of special education supports and reduced access to

As a parent, ASCA president Brandi Rai is also concerned.

“These children are the future leaders of our province—the decisions we make about public education now will affect all of us.”

The ATA’s “Stand for Education” campaign highlights these issues and encourages supporters to take action.

Challenging experiences

The campaign launched with a video that focuses on children’s experiences through the challenges of these attacks on education. The impactful spot features metaphors grounded in truth—school hallway lights dramatically turning off and books slamming shut as students try to read them—to convey the message of children being left behind. The video ends with a rallying call for the viewer to join parents, teachers and school boards to stand up for public education. As of early November 2021, the ad received over 800 000 views on social media. The “Stand for Education” video can be found here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=SE30eDepTFQ.

In addition to this ad, the ATA has produced a series of videos featuring personal and poignant interviews from teachers and parents. These videos focus on their lived experiences and reflect the importance of public education and the impact these drastic changes will have.

Each video focuses on a different side of the story: students’ futures in jeopardy, teachers not being consulted in the curriculum drafting process and the impact on the future of Alberta. These videos can be found at [“This campaign is the first step toward our goal of building pressure for government decisions that are pro-public education,” says Schilling. “We are fighting to ensure the government understands that this is a big issue for Albertans.”](http://Stand For Education | Real Stories - You-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Schilling says the campaign is turning up the pressure on MLAs and encouraging them to push back against the draft curriculum, funding cuts and increasing class sizes. He hopes they might begin speaking up in their caucus and the legislature in support of public education.

“Teachers and parents will always put kids first,” Schilling says. “Through the pandemic, we have been working together to ensure students continue to have the best opportunities to learn and be safe doing so. Now we are coming together once again to fight for their education, their opportunities and their futures.”

How to stand up

To this date 18,968 signed the open letter
800,000+ watched the videos
and
22,519 have taken action so far

The campaign has also received widespread media attention from the Edmonton Journal, CityNews 660, the Calgary Herald, CTV News Edmonton and Calgary and the CBC. All this to say, people are clearly enraged at the Alberta government’s attacks on public education.

For more information and to sign the open letter to your MLA, go



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YOU'RE PREGNANT. NOW WHAT?

An unintended pregnancy is always big news. It's the kind of news that can cause you to feel things like dread, excitement, or confusion. Often, multiple emotions can creep up together and even seem contradictory to one another.

Whether you are the one who is pregnant, or you're the partner or parent of that person, a very wide range of emotions are very normal. However, as you try to decide what to do next, there are some common feelings that can complicate your choice.

Fear

Fear isn't a bad thing. Fear's purpose is to push you to take decisive and immediate action. That action will usually look like either "fight", "flight", or "freeze". When you're facing an unintended pregnancy, every choice can feel scary. Fear might be trying to tell you not to move forward at all. That's the "freeze" response. While that kind of response can save your life when encountering a bear in the woods, it won't help you here.

Fear's job is to help you avoid pain. It helps you remember not to touch a hot stove or jump off a cliff. When it comes to making complicated life choices, however, fear can actually hurt you. It's important to remember that fear isn't designed to do your thinking for you. If you're feeling fear, let it remind you that there's an important decision to be made. But don't let it rush you. And most importantly, don't let it do your deciding.

Shame and guilt

Shame is often confused with guilt. However, they are not the same thing. Guilt says, "I did something wrong" while shame says, "I am something wrong." Guilt will address the things you did that led to your current situation. Shame, on the other hand, wants to destroy your self-worth and your confidence. According to Prof. Brené Brown, shame is linked to addiction, depression, violence, suicide, and eating disorders, just to name a few. Guilt, on the other hand, is inversely correlated to those

things. In other words, shame helps bad things grow in our lives, but guilt doesn't.

Brown says shame needs three things to grow: secrecy, silence, and judgment. No matter what choice someone makes about an unplanned pregnancy, if it's made in an environment of secrecy, silence, and judgement, the risk of negative outcomes increases exponentially. If you or someone you know is dealing with an unintended pregnancy, encourage openness, discussion, and acceptance. If you're unexpectedly pregnant, remember that there are safe places you can go to talk through your decision.

Pressure

When an important decision needs to be made, feeling pressure is normal. You can't remain undecided forever.

However, when you're feeling pressured by others, especially when it comes to what you should do about your unintended pregnancy, it is important to take a step back. Pressure can sometimes look like someone else telling you what choice to take. It's also when someone says they'll support you only if you make a particular choice. It can also look like someone offering to reward you for making the choice they want.

Another word for pressure is coercion. Coercion is unacceptable when you're making a pregnancy decision. There are safe places you can go to work through which options are right for you. If you're the parent or partner of someone experiencing an unintended pregnancy, you can also talk to someone about how you can best support your loved one.

Unintended pregnancy is an emotionally charged situation. It's normal to need lots of help. Remember: you don't need to do this alone.



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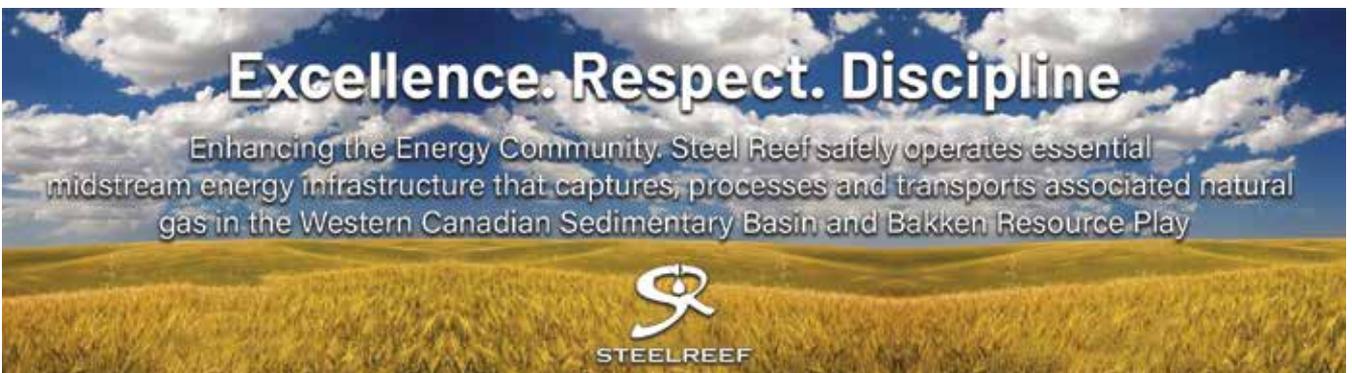
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LONELINESS IN THE WORKPLACE

TORY MCNALLY, CPHR - DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES, LEGACY BOWES

Restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic have left fifty-four per cent of respondents to an Ipsos research poll feeling isolated. Loneliness at work was a real and demotivating problem before the pandemic but now that workplace cultures have changed so much with working from home options and hybrid schedules, it is even more difficult to feel connected to co-workers.

It has been found that the vast majority of your work friends are those who sit nearby. What does that mean in the new office environment where all desks are first-come first-served and everyone is working to a different schedule.

We all know the queasiness of watching groups chat and laugh in the office but feeling too awkward or shy to join in. It really can lead to stress, unhappiness and anxiety. There are ways to combat it! Here are a few tips:

Find someone who is consistently friendly, even if their desk is a bit farther away, and make a point of greeting them each day.

Take advantage of any shared tasks to build rapport - even if it is just taking out the garbage together - laughing and showing your personality will create a memorable moment.

Go slow. It might take several weeks to develop a friendship as the opportunities to connect may be limited. Remembering the little things said during previous conversations remind the person that you are listening and interested in them.

Realize that when people are talking you can walk by with a comment but not be obligated to wow the entire crowd.

The pandemic has made connecting with people so much harder - everything from shaking hands to trying to figure out whether someone is smiling behind their mask has made social situations fraught with anxiety over causing offense.

These anxieties are leading to changes in the culture. Forty-three per cent of respondents to the same Ipsos poll said they felt pessimistic that life would return to 'normal' after public health restrictions are lifted. I am tempted to see the optimism in this, however.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity that employees have been handed to change the role of work in our lives. Technology was supposed to free us from work but instead it has chained our company email to our wrists. Young people today have an opportunity to pick a career that clearly outlines work/life balance. Even better, if you start making demands as a generation, the ones who came before will have to listen.

Young people today have an opportunity to pick a career that clearly outlines work/life balance. Even better, if you start making demands as a generation, the ones who came before will have to listen.

That said, we have to deal with what is in front of us. Employers should take notice of employees who are not contributing to work chatter. A simple, open conversation about how HR can help them, planning some team activities that will allow the isolated employee to shine, or merely including them in the morning banter, can make a difference. The idea is to keep trying and showing that you care about them as a person.

It is important for young people at the beginning of their careers to be engaged and creative at work. Loneliness can prevent people from learning and growing. While it might feel funny to stretch yourself socially at work because one would assume that employees are there to work hard, not to chit chat, employees are people and a business cannot thrive without committed people who feel seen and heard at work.



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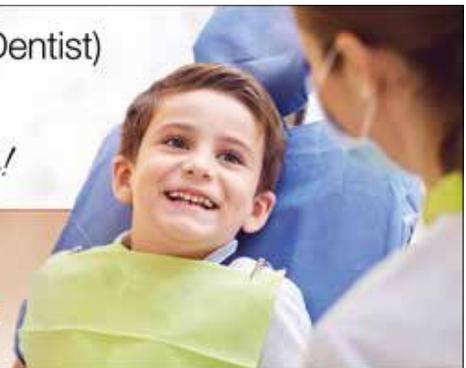
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WE DO NOT WALK THIS PATH ALONE

KINSHIP INTERVENTION PROGRAM PROVIDES YOUTH AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Bobby was about 10 years old when he moved to the city where he met his friend John. Bobby and John were inseparable. They could often be found together in class, on the playground, on the bus and at each other's houses after school. Bobby's mother Janice was relieved that her son found at least one good friend in the city, since they left their family, friends and community back on the Nation.

It was quickly turning to winter and the school was getting ready for the upcoming holiday break. Janice was working a lot more hours to ensure her and Bobby had enough money for the holidays. They were going to go home to the Nation to spend the holidays with family and friends. Thank goodness Bobby has his best friend John to keep him occupied while she worked late hours.

Finally, the holidays were here and Janice and Bobby traveled back to the Nation to settle in with family and friends. Bobby went off to play with his cousins while the adults caught up with Janice.

Then, just as quickly as the kids had all vanished, they returned all wearing sad, surprised faces. No one was talking. They all were attached to their parent. Finally, Janice asked "What is up? Why are you all hanging out with the adults? And why is Bobby sitting by himself?"

Bobby spoke up and said "I'm not sitting by myself. I just want to be comfortable."

One of Bobby's cousins then told Janice that Bobby was doing something that is "not okay."

"Oh," Janice replied, "What was he doing that was not okay?"

Then in unison three of Bobby's cousins spoke up and said "Bobby was taking off his pants and wanted us to do it too."

"Oh," said Janice, and then she asked Bobby if this was true.

Bobby replied "yes" but that he and his friend John did it all the time and it seemed to make him happy.

Janice hugged Bobby and said to him "You should not have to play like that to make someone happy."

Whether you live on the Nation or in the city, the Kinship Intervention Program (KIP) is available throughout central Alberta to provide support to your family as you define it. It works collaboratively towards the prevention of sexual violence in central Alberta's Indigenous youth population. It also aims to address the intergenerational impacts of Indian Residential Schools (IRS) and the legacy of sexual trauma, really to start the conversation.

"We do not walk this path alone," is the main message of KIP.

KIP is both an intervention and prevention initiative that deals with sexually acting out behaviours. Sexually acting out refers to youth who engage in sexual behaviours that are either not age appropriate, hurtful to others or elicit adult concern. Youth sexually act out for many different reasons which can include increased sexual exploration, exhibitionism, excessive masturbation (often in public), inappropriate physical boundaries, intense preoccupation with sexual matters and sexual aggression towards other youth, adults or animals.

Through strategic community partnerships, networking and development, KIP initially targets service providers, community leaders, educators and others who are involved in, or have direct contact with Indigenous youth and/or their families/guardians. KIP initiates community (service provider) dialogue and engagement in the development and implementation of healthy, age appropriate and socially acceptable sexual behaviour in context with the youth's environment. We clearly can't address the situation if we can't talk about, nor will it go away.

KIP is continuously networking and identifying new community engagement opportunities like those in schools, recre-

ation groups and community organizations. We can provide information sessions, healthy sexuality workshops, knowledge and awareness and family supports, all of which contribute to a healthy environment for all. It is okay to talk about sex and sexuality in a respectful, healthy and informed way.

KIP is a program offered by the Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Centre (CASASC). CASASC is a place that specializes in healing sexual trauma so you can talk freely about the hard stuff with no judgement. We provide a range of support services for individuals who are affected by sexual violence including counselling, play therapy, police and court support, crisis support and education.

KIP offers a combination of early intervention practices and a community-based approach, integrating anyone in the youth's support network or community. We are available to answer questions, provide family support, individual counselling through the clinical team at CASASC, and most importantly, we are here to listen without judgement.

KIP is available to any Indigenous youth aged six to 17 who exhibit sexualized behaviour concerns or engages in "sexual acting out." The program works collaboratively with the youth's family and elders. It assists in addressing the inter-generational impacts of IRS and the legacy of sexual trauma by building relationships, increasing the capacity of service providers, navigating the process for service and support, providing referrals, in-person or virtual mental health services, crisis intervention and mental health services for the entire family. Remember, when your child hurts, you hurt.

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WHAT IS CULTURE?

HEATHER DZIOBA - CONTENT COORDINATOR, LEGACY BOWES

The term “culture” in regards to the workplace or classroom may be seen as a buzzword, conjuring images of offices with ping pong tables and spirit weeks, but the reality is that knowing how to improve culture is an integral part of individual and group success. An organization’s culture is part of its overall personality – it’s the foundation of employee or student experience and it determines how people behave and work together. Culture can grow and shift with the circumstances and it also guides people on what behaviors, expectations, and matters of importance are part of the current ecosystem. That means that our environment at work or school is a living entity that naturally evolves. It also means we all have a role to play when it comes to our workplace or classroom culture and it should not be left to Leadership or Human Resources to enforce their vision.

At its core, a great organization values the “we not me” mentality and has an understanding of how important that mindset is towards engagement, productivity, and success. However, as the events of 2020 unfolded, our expectations of what constitutes a good school or workplace culture have changed. Employees and students are now navigating new systems that are made up of people working and studying remotely, who are entirely office- or school-based, or those who are using a hybrid model. It has also forced us into extended self reflection and has amplified our need for belonging. Some of the top reasons for disengagement are feelings of isolation and being undervalued.

How can we adapt to this change while creating a culture of solidarity? Here are a few tips we can apply:

Be welcoming

Socialize with your new coworkers or schoolmates by focusing less on paperwork and more on relationship building. First impressions endure, so move beyond the walk-around introductions and create opportunities for new students/employees to integrate naturally into the environment.

Make goal setting a routine part of conversations

Create simple approaches to meaningful conversations with your fellow staff or students, asking how they are progressing with their professional or personal aspirations. Taking an interest in each can strengthen everyone’s sense of belonging.

Encourage collaboration

People feel greater ownership over systems they contribute towards, so don’t be hesitant to give or receive feedback. It isn’t an easy feat to manage the opinions of a diverse group of people, but it pays off in the end by fostering feelings of trust and accountability.

Create a recognition program

Openly recognizing the successes of your peers reinforces the values and culture that you want to create. This can be done through anonymous nominations that lead to a shoutout through internal communication channels. This increases camaraderie and encourages more dynamic performances.

Be transparent

Prioritize top-down communication by keeping everyone informed about what’s going on in the organization through group emails and timely updates. Establish an open-door policy that promotes accessibility.

Encourage development and growth

All of the conversations about goals and recognitions for growth will mean nothing if there are not any opportunities for improvement and advancement. Behind every high-performing team is an organization that is invested in learning and development.

Great leaders recognize the environment you foster ensures every one feels important and included which in turn leads to success and a feeling of accomplishment for everyone.



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WHY I SEEK HELP FROM A PSYCHOLOGIST

&

WHAT ACTUALLY TAKES PLACE DURING MY SCHEDULED ONLINE CONVERSATIONS.

If there's one thing that has been absolutely certain during my crazy ride as a 15 year Entrepreneur, it's that my life has changed and that my life will keep on changing. Mental illness has impacted both my work life and my personal life. But through it all, I continue to surround myself with like-spirited people. People who "get it"! People who are very close and dear to me and fully aware of my ongoing daily mental and emotional health challenges.

As a male, I have had to learn and get comfortable with the simple act of talking about my depression and anxiety by reaching out for help from a Psychologist. My bigger goal? To be a role model for men everywhere, especially men who are Entrepreneurs, who really need to get comfortable with talking about their daily mental health and to get the help and support they need.

The best thing that I do for myself is to seek out the services of a Psychologist. I'm quite accustomed to having the support of a Psychologist in my life. The particular professional who I now meet virtually every two weeks is actually one of two health care professionals that I have accessed over the past twenty years of my life. Thankfully, my Physiotherapist recommended someone who works in the same rehab clinic that he does and so I was able to get started right away just over a year now.

Cognitive Behaviourial Therapy is the approach that we use in our shared conversations together. And I like it this way. We have conversations about the here and now, how I'm managing myself and my life with all the societal changes occurring due to Covid-19, negative thoughts and beliefs that get in the way of moving forward, and of course, how all of this impacts my mood.

At the front end of our bi-weekly conversations, I am asked, "How would you rate your mood on a scale of 1-10 with ten being the highest?" I've given myself a rating of six for many months but when I'm asked, "How would you rate your ability to manage

yourself in a positive way?", I always give myself a rating of eight!!

Conversations with my Psychologist are just that – conversations. I get to be the director of the conversation topics. This allows both me and my Psychologist to be fully in the moment, to be fully present with one another while I draw upon our inner wisdom and take responsibility to make positive changes in my daily life.

I like the fact that my Psychologist is so well-versed on healthy eating habits, and the importance of sleep and exercise, and their impact on mental health. I also like the fact that we talk about the impact of having to shut down my business due to Covid-19, but that we also talk about my successes in life and my specific successes in moving my business to the online platform.

Our conversations are both insightful and upbeat. I always draw strength from our connection knowing that if I continue to demonstrate care and compassion towards myself and not beat up on myself, I'm in a much healthier place of positive mental health for me, my wife Sharon and of course, our three cats - Smooshie, Bear, Peppie.

After all, I have experienced many episodes of depression and high anxiety over the past twenty years of my life and I am determined to not go to that dark place any time soon.

ROBERT MANOLSON BA, CCDP

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SUBMITTED BY THE OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE



The work of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) extends throughout the Province of Alberta. We respectfully acknowledge that Alberta is the traditional and ancestral territory of many Indigenous peoples of Treaties 6, 7, and 8, including the Nehiyaw (Cree), Denesuliné (Dene), Nakota Sioux (Stoney), Anishinabae (Saulteaux), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Îyâxe Nakoda (Stoney), and Tsuut'ina Nations, the Métis Settlements, and the six regions of the

Métis Nation of Alberta.

We are honoured to work, live, learn, and play on the lands of those whose ancestors have walked this earth since time immemorial.

The OCYA's Mission is "We Stand Up For Young People."

These are not just words to us. This is what we do day-in and day-out. We have been standing up for young people for over 30 years. How do we stand up for young people, and what does this mean when children or youth come to us looking for help? First and foremost, in every area of our office, our highly skilled and dedicated staff are all advocates for young people. This means we listen to what they have to say, support their point of view, and find them the right help to suit their needs, whether that help is inside or outside of our organization. And because we are independent from government, we can focus on what young people need to succeed in their lives and in their communities.

The OCYA also directly supports young people in a number of specific ways:

Intake

information to determine whether to assign an advocate or appoint a lawyer for the young person. If a young person's issue cannot be addressed by the OCYA, we will try to connect them to an organization or service that is able to help. Our intake team also educates young people about their rights, encourages young people to be involved in important decisions in their lives, and to support community members and significant people in their lives to help advocate on their behalf.

Direct Advocacy

The job of our individual advocates is to advocate on behalf of children and youth receiving child intervention services or who are involved with the youth justice system. They help young people to understand and exercise their rights so that their viewpoints and interests are considered in the planning and decision-making that impacts them. Advocates take direction from young people whenever possible. Young people have the same rights as all of us, but they also have specific rights as spelled out in the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child. For young people involved in the child intervention and youth justice systems, there are many times when difficult decisions must be made that directly impact a young person's rights.

Legal Representation for Children and Youth

Alberta is one of the few provinces in Canada that has legal representation for children and youth involved with child intervention matters. Our roster lawyers help young people with non-criminal issues and ensure their voices are heard and not forgotten when important decisions are being made about them. Whenever possible, lawyers meet with and take direction from their young clients.

Investigations

Supporting young people through investigations is another important job of our office. Our investigations team completes independent investigative reviews when young people are seriously injured or pass away (who have involvement with child intervention or youth justice services). Through these reviews, we look at their experiences, identify and analyze the services they received; and make findings and recommendations to improve supports and services. Our recommendations are intended to improve services for young people and to help prevent similar serious injuries and deaths.

Engagement and Education

Promoting and educating young people about their rights is an important responsibility for our engagement and education team. We do this by ensuring that young people learn about our office, their rights, and what to expect when receiving various government services related to the child intervention and youth justice systems. Our staff also provide presentations, workshops and training opportunities about the work of our office and host information booths and tables at conferences and learning events throughout

the province.

Indigenous Youth and their Communities

The OCYA has a dedicated Indigenous engagement team that develops and supports initiatives to help Indigenous young people, their communities, and community partners have input into the work of our office. Growing and strengthening these relationships is critical so that our work is informed, relevant, and connected to those we serve. Some of the team's work includes facilitating culturally relevant workshops for our staff, promoting positive cultural identity through self-advocacy training with community partners, and leading the OCYA in the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action and the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates' Declaration of Reconciliation.

OCYA Youth Council

An integral part of the OCYA is our Youth Council, made up of a group of 10 to 12 young people. They offer lived experiences to amplify the voices of young people in Alberta to address issues faced by youth. The Council provides input, advice and feedback on OCYA initiatives and on-going work. Members may also represent the OCYA at events. When asked, the Council gives input, advice and feedback to external stakeholders on projects affecting services for young people.

Questions? Contact the OCYA at 1-800-661-3446 or visit our website: ocya.alberta.ca.

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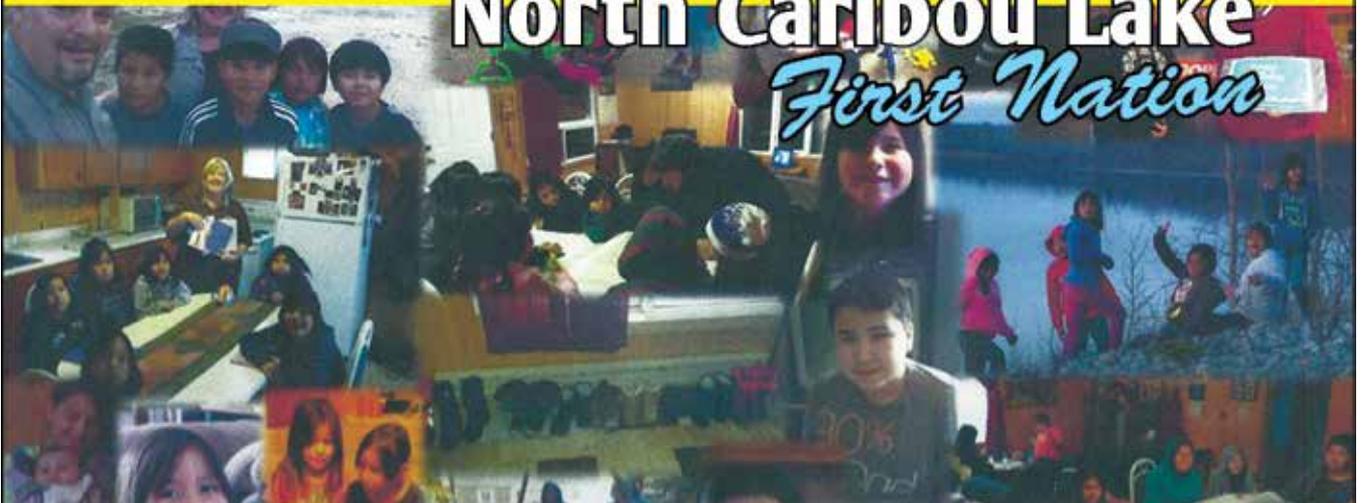
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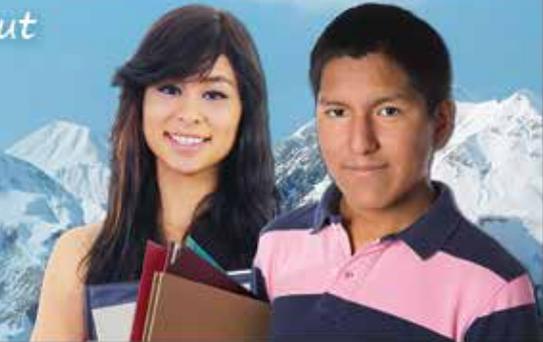
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THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIGENOUS TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS

BY CELINA DAWDY

For those who want to break the chain of prejudice and injustice, understanding the dark history of our country is imperative. In Canada, treaties have become a place of contention between Indigenous people and the Crown.

Treaties, by definition according to Dictionary.com, is a “formal agreement between two or more states in reference to peace, alliance, commerce, or other international relations.” More specifically, we’ll be referring to the treaties formed between ancestral First Nations and their treaties with the French, British, and modern-day Crown.

The Challenge with Treaties

Treaties regarding the Indigenous peoples were first introduced under the rule of King George III in 1763. Contention and resentment formed due to the vast misunderstanding of treaties and how to uphold them.

For the Indigenous people, treaties are sacred agreements that would be solidified with ceremonies and symbolic gifts. However, the Crown sees treaties largely as legal agreements that have been altered and changed overtime. The Crown further sees treaties as a legal opportunity to serve the settlers. Indigenous people remain strongly in the faith that treaties are sacred compromises as two nations become one.

Another significant challenge that treaties harnessed was the method of agreement. Because the Crown considered treaties to be legal documents, they require signatures from the Indigenous elders. Due to potential language barriers, the Indigenous were unable to completely understand and agree to the treaty negotiations.

Many Indigenous people have found that traditional treaties were founded under coercion by the British and French. This has led to a poor relationship with the Indigenous people and settlers, further enhanced by unfulfilled promises by the settlers. For example, one treaty guaranteed access to healthy living for the Indigenous people. This relates to clean drinking water, access to food, and peaceful relationships.

The Numbered Treaties

Between 1871 and 1921, the Indigenous people entered into 11 Numbered Treaties with settlers. These treaties are largely in Alberta, but expand throughout the country as well. They worked to secure an alliance between the settlers and Indigenous people. The Numbered Treaties allowed the Indigenous people to contin-

ue to hunt and gather on unoccupied land and receive annuities.

Treaty 4: Cree, Nakota, Anishnabe

Treaty 6: Cree, Nakota, Anishnabe

Treaty 7: Blackfoot Confederacy, Nakota, Sarcee

Treaty 8: Cree, Dene, Dane-zaa

Why Treaties are Important in our History and Future

Treaties, though introduced with good intention, have a bitter-sweet history in our nation. Though some treaties, such as the Peace and Friendship Treaties of 1725 to 1752, retained a strong relationship between the Crown and the Indigenous people, many treaties have been overlooked. For many Indigenous people, treaties are a source of broken promises.

Understanding where the Canadian government has misled First Nations people and created a hostile environment is essential to moving toward healing and reconciliation. With deep scars on our history such as The Sixties Scoop, it’s clear how many Indigenous people feel as though their rights and agreements weren’t upheld.

Modern Treaties

To amend past failures and work toward reconciliation, modern treaties began being considered and signed in 1973. Since then, 25 modern treaties have been signed to assist the Crown and Indigenous people in moving forward together. Some benefits these treaties have provided include:

Over 600,000 km² of Indigenous land ownership

Protecting Indigenous traditions

The right for the Indigenous people to participate in resources and land management

Self-government rights

Wildlife harvesting rights

Monetary settlements

Conclusion

Though the Canadian government still has a long way to go to heal the broken relationship between our Indigenous people and themselves, strides have been taken to make amends. As citizens of Canada, it’s imperative that we understand the struggles of the Indigenous people and work collectively to reconcile.

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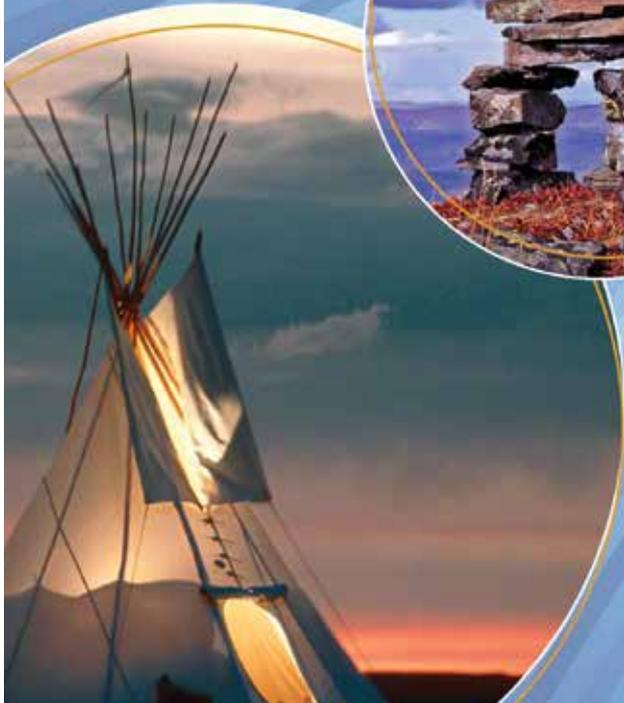
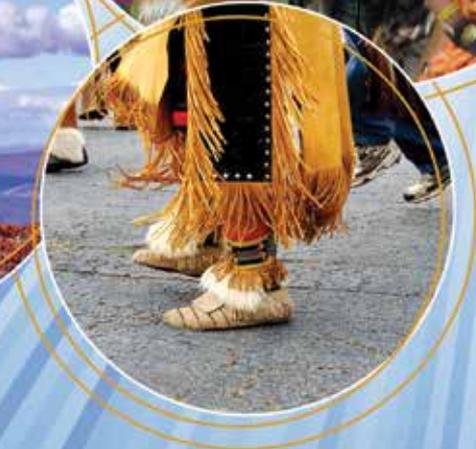
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