



RECONCILIATION DIALOGUE WORKSHOP

Discussion Guide

"Let us find a way to belong to this time and place together. Our future, and the well-being of all our children, rests with the kind of relationships we build today."

— **Chief Dr. Robert Joseph**, Gwawaenuk First Nation, Reconciliation Canada Ambassador

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RECONCILIATION CANADA

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INTRODUCTION

Indigenous peoples and all Canadians are experiencing a watershed moment in Canadian history. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) has completed historic work in creating an accurate record of Canada's history of the Indian Residential School experience and releasing its 94 Calls to Action. Canadians from diverse backgrounds recognize the importance of reconciling the relationships between Indigenous peoples and all Canadians. The closing message of the TRC is clear and consistent: it is critical that the national dialogue on reconciliation continues and each person has an important role to play.

The purpose of the Reconciliation Dialogue Workshop is to bring diverse participants together in a safe environment that allows for meaningful dialogue and relationship building. A Reconciliation Dialogue Workshop provides an opportunity for sharing stories of resilience, gaining a greater understanding of our shared history and exploring pathways to reconciliation including the development of concrete action plans.

Reconciliation Canada uses an Indigenous circle process to run Reconciliation Dialogue Workshops (RDW). Workshops are intended to be inclusive, respectful and safe environments for all participants to speak, be heard and hold space for their fellow participants. Each and every participant in circle has an equal opportunity to speak and to be heard while also committing to listening to others. All participants are asked call upon their highest self and highest consciousness to the process. From an Indigenous perspective, this way of being is one way to work towards reconciliation. For Reconciliation Canada, to 'reconcile' is to weave a stronger and more vibrant social fabric based on the unique strengths of Indigenous peoples and all Canadians.

ABOUT RECONCILIATION CANADA

Reconciliation Canada is an Indigenous-led charity that catalyzes meaningful relationships through values-based dialogue, leadership and action. We engage Indigenous peoples and all Canadians in multi-faith and multicultural reconciliation dialogues and transformative experiences. We are charting 'a new way forward' through the development of meaningful partnerships and community engagement programs and initiatives.

Reconciliation Canada has delivered Reconciliation Dialogue Workshops, National Reconciliation Gatherings, and has co-hosted three "Walks for Reconciliation" across the country. Reconciliation Canada is the leading voice for reconciliation in Canada. As the demand for reconciliation action spreads across the country, Reconciliation Canada's initiatives spread across Canada, and the globe.

OUR SHARED HISTORY

Reconciliation Dialogue Workshops seek to provide an opportunity for participants to explore our shared Canadian history while taking positive steps towards honouring diversity and building resilience. Our goal in this section is to shed light on the history of the Indian Residential School system and the intergenerational impacts that continue to this day.

In order to highlight the diversity and resiliency of all peoples in Canada, we have also provided a brief introduction to three historical injustices that have occurred in this country, for which the affected communities received an official apology from the Government of Canada: the Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act, the Japanese - Canadian Internment, and the Komagata Maru Incident. Our goal here is not to compare one injustice to another, but instead to learn from each affected community and their journey of reconciliation.

The following sections have been adapted from the Reconciling Injustices in a Pluralistic Canada Discussion Guide by Simon Fraser University's Centre for Dialogue.

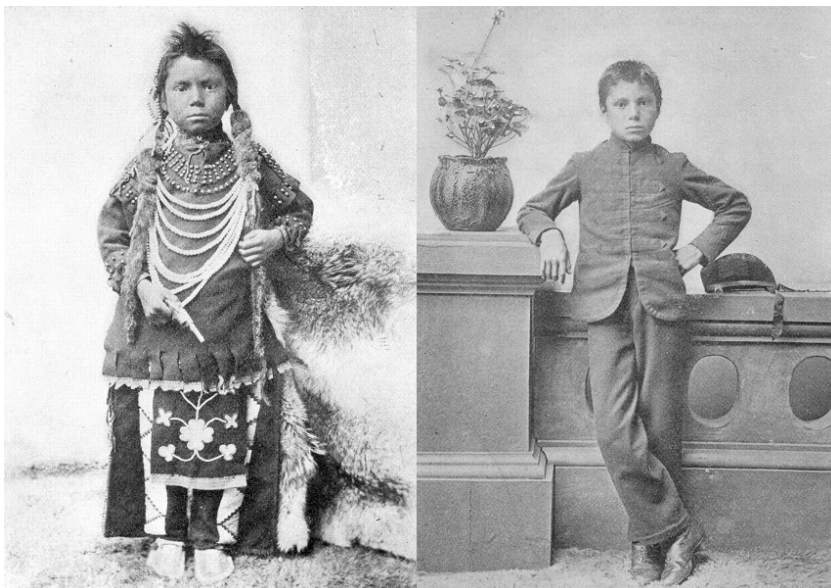


Crowd of all background gathered to take a step on the road to reconciliation, Walk for Reconciliation, Vancouver - September 2017

HISTORY & IMPACTS OF THE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM IN CANADA

Government-funded, church-led, the Indian Residential Schools system in Canada dates back to the 1870s, driven by a policy of forced assimilation, to “kill the Indian in the child.” Over 130 residential schools were located across the country, established to decrease parental and community involvement in the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual development of Indigenous children.

More than 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children attended residential school, many were forcibly removed against their parent's wishes, some as young as five. Families who resisted the Indian agents faced fines or jail time. Children often did not see their parents for years at a time and many children were forced to attend these schools to the age of eighteen. Children were forbidden to speak their language, interact with siblings and practice their own culture. Physical, emotional and sexual abuse was the norm and most experienced severe neglect. The schools were chronically underfunded and conditions were poor with inadequate food, clothing, facilities, staff and medical treatment. Mortality rates at some schools were as high as sixty percent. In 1909, Dr. Peter Bryce, general medical superintendent for the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA), reported that between 1894 and 1908, mortality rates at residential schools in Western Canada ranged from 30% to 60% over five years (that is, five years after entry, 30% to 60% of students had died, or 6–12% per annum). In many schools the focus on education was minimal and students spent the majority of their time doing manual labour.



“Before and after” photos of a young indigenous boy who attended Regina Indian Industrial School, 1897
Photo Credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board R-A8223 (1)-(2)

Intergenerational Impacts of the Indian Residential School System

When students returned to their communities, they often felt they didn't belong. They were not connected to their culture and were ashamed of their heritage as a result of the racism and cultural superiority experienced at the schools. The substandard education many students received did not adequately prepare them to function in an urban setting either. Students separated from their families and communities were deprived of the experience of growing up in a nurturing family, and many former students were not taught the skills needed to work, live, and raise their children.

The abuse and neglect they suffered while at residential school left its mark on their adult lives, as well as the lives of their descendants whose families have been characterized by further abuse and neglect; for most former students, the traumatic experiences of residential school were passed on to the children, grandchildren and greatgrandchildren. The ongoing impact of this multigenerational trauma illustrates how legacy issues from residential schools live on as current realities for many Indigenous individuals and families in Canada.

Longstanding and intergenerational impacts include:

- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse
- Dysfunctional families and interpersonal relationships
- Lateral violence – backbiting, gossip, criticism, put downs, personal attacks, sarcasm, secrets, etc
- Educational blocks – aversions to formal learning programs that seem “too much like school,” fear of failure, self-sabotage, psychologically-based learning disabilities
- Suicide
- Destruction of social support networks (the cultural safety net) that individuals and families in trouble could rely upon
- Voicelessness – entailing a passive acceptance of powerlessness within community life and a loss of traditional governance processes that enabled individuals to have a significant influence in shaping community affairs (related to the psychological need of a sense of agency, i.e. of being able to influence and shape the world one lives in, as opposed to passively accepting whatever comes and feeling powerless to change it.
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
- Millenium scoop

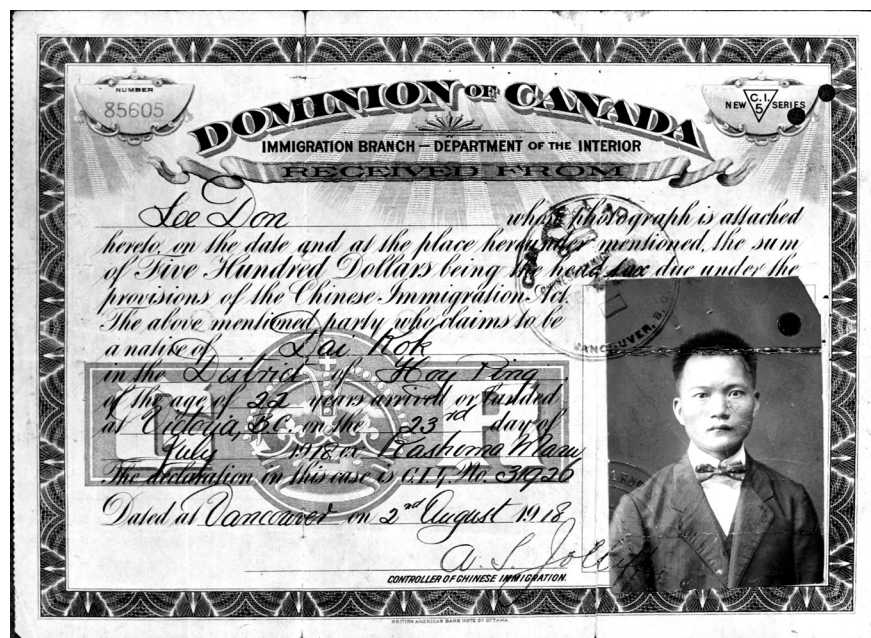
CHINESE HEAD TAX AND EXCLUSION ACT

The 1850's Gold Rush marked the beginning of significant Chinese immigration to Canada, which steadily increased until the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885. The 1880's also coincided with an economic recession and high-rates of unemployment. Now that the low-waged Chinese railway construction crews were unemployed, Canadians began to fear that the newly unemployed Chinese railway workers would begin take jobs that white Canadians felt entitled to. The government reacted by designing and implementing race-based legislative framework designed to legally and economically disadvantage Chinese Canadians and immigrants.

The Chinese Immigration Act / Exclusion Act is one of the most notable pieces of legislation that the Government of Canada released to deter Chinese Immigrants from entering Canada. This 'head-tax' required that all Chinese Immigrants pay \$50 to enter Canada. This amount eventually raised to \$500 and remained in effect until 1949. Many Chinese immigrants experienced long separations from their families, and some were never reunited. Chinese immigrants weren't admitted under the same point system as immigrants from other nations until 1967.

The sentiment of the legislative frameworks surrounding Chinese immigration between 1880 and 1949 can be adequately summed up in the quote from Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier:

"In my opinion there is not much room for the Chinamen in Canada. He displaces a good Canadian, or a good British Subject. Increase of the tax from \$50 to \$500 would be totally inadequate..." (pg 24**).



Chinese Head Tax Receipt, 1918
Photo Credit: Vancouver Public
Library #30625

JAPANESE-CANADIAN INTERNMENT

Within days of the Japanese Government attacks on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, Canadian Pacific Railways fired most of its Japanese workers and the Canadian government seized Japanese fishing boats, forcing fishermen to stay in port. This persecution escalated on December 18, 1941 when Japanese Government forces attacked Hong Kong and imprisoned and killed Canadian soldiers.

Canada's senior military officials and the RCMP opposed action against Japanese-Canadians and believed this community posed no threat to the west coast of Canada. Still, a 100-mile wide strip on the west coast was designated a "restricted area" under the War Measures Act and all Japanese males between the ages of 18 and 45 were removed and sent to road camps in the interior of British Columbia. By March of 1942, all Japanese-Canadians were asked to leave the area and women and children were sent to live in holding facilities in livestock barns at Hastings Park.

In order to stay together, many families agreed to move to Alberta or Manitoba to fill labour shortages. In 1943, the confiscated property of interned Japanese-Canadians was sold to pay for their own internment, leaving most with little more than a suitcase of personal belongings. With the end of WWII, Japanese-Canadians were given a choice to move east of the Rockies or return to Japan to be repatriated. An estimated 4,000 Japanese-Canadians were exiled to Japan by 1946. It was not until April 1, 1949 that Japanese-Canadians were again allowed to freely move across Canada.



Men's dormitory placed in the PNE Livestock buildings at Hastings Park, 1942
Photo Credit: City of Vancouver Archives
AM281-S8-: CVA 180-3541

KOMAGATA MARU INCIDENT

Canada's Continuous Passage Act was enacted in 1908 in an effort to prevent immigration from India. The Act stated that immigrants must "come from the country of their birth, or citizenship, by a continuous journey and on through tickets purchased before leaving the country of their birth, or citizenship." Additionally, if an Indian immigrant was able to make the continuous journey, he or she was required to have \$200 on his or her person to enter British Columbia.

On May 23rd 1914, the Komagata Maru arrived near present-day Stanley Park in Vancouver carrying 376 hopeful immigrants who had chartered the ship to sail from one port of the British Empire, Hong Kong, to another in Vancouver, Canada. Passengers, mostly from Punjab in British-occupied India, understood that their journey would act as a direct challenge to the Continuous Passage Act but asserted the right to free passage within the British Empire. Upon the arrival of the Komagata Maru in Vancouver, the ship was met with hostility and resistance from Canadian authorities, who reiterated that the ship had not adhered to the Continuous Passage Act. Showing support for the Komagata Maru was the Khalsa Diwan Society, established in 1906, and other members from Vancouver's South Asian-Canadian community.

These supporters helped provide relief to the passengers and raised money for provisions and legal aid. Two months passed while the ship stayed docked in Burrard Inlet until the court of appeal upheld the anti-Asian order-in-council. Following a failed forceful attempt to remove the ship from the Inlet, the Prime Minister gave permission to allow the Royal Canadian Navy Rainbow to escort the Komagata Maru from the shores of BC. Before that could happen, an agreement was reached where the government sent provisions to the ship in return for its voluntary deportation. The ship left Vancouver on July 23, 1914. Upon its return to Indian shores, the Komagata Maru was met by British officials and a confrontation occurred that left twenty passengers dead and many more injured.



Komagata Maru Incident, 1914
Photo Credit: Vancouver Public
Library #119

A Shared Tomorrow.

We are Elders from Indigenous and other ancient histories who care about Canadians and answered a call to action in November 2012. For two days, we gathered on the traditional territories of the Musqueam People to explore how Reconciliation, as a way of being, can help our society move forward. To that end we have made a video to explain who we are and invite you to join us on this path. Our purpose is to speak some truths about the trauma of Indian Residential Schools and other atrocities that have been imposed upon humans around the world. As Canadians, we share a responsibility to look after each other and acknowledge the pain and suffering that our diverse societies have endured – a pain that has been handed down to the next generations. We need to right those wrongs, heal together, and create a new future that honours the unique gifts of our children and grandchildren.

How do we do this? Through sharing our personal stories, legends and traditional teachings, we found that we are interconnected through the same mind and spirit. Our traditional teachings speak to acts such as holding one another up, walking together, balance, healing, and unity. Our stories show how these teachings can heal their pain and restore dignity. We discovered that in all of our cultural traditions there are teachings about reconciliation, forgiveness, unity, healing and balance. We invite you to search in your own traditions and beliefs, and those of your ancestors, to find these core values that create a peaceful harmonious society and a healthy earth. With those ways of being in mind, join us in facing the challenge of healing Canada of its painful past so we can leave a better future for our children. With those ancient ways in our hearts and the future in our minds, let's hold hands and walk together. In that spirit, we invite you to join in Reconciliation Canada's initiatives.

Signed,

Larry Grant, Musqueam Elder.

Ashok Mathur, South Asian artist, writer, and cultural organizer; Director of the Centre for Innovation in Culture and the Arts in Canada (CICAC), Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, BC.

Grace Eiko Thomson, Japanese Canadian Historian and Curator; Former President, National Association of Japanese Canadians.

Winnie L. Cheung, Director & Past President of the Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society (VAHMS).

Farid Rohani, Bahai; Chair of the Board, Laurier Institution.

Andy Yellowback, Cree Elder, Northern Manitoba.

Bessie Yellowback, BSW, RSW, Gitksan First Nation Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society Resource Social Worker.

Robbie Waisman, Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society For Education and Remembrance.

Louise Rolston, Member of the United Church of Canada; Former Chancellor of Vancouver School of Theology.

Dr. Marie Anderson, BSW, MSW, PhD. Cooks Ferry Band, Nlakapmuk Tribe; CEO Heywaynoqu Healing Circle For Addiction Society and Co-Developer and Sessional Instructor Chemical Addictions Program, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology.

Yvonne Rigby-Jones, Shuneymuxw First Nation; Executive Director, Tsow-Tun Le Lum.

Barney Williams, Member of The Indian Residential School Survivors Committee for Truth and Reconciliation.

William A. White, BA History and Anthropology; Coast Salish Elder, Tsowtunlelum Elder in Residence/ Cultural Resource Worker; Principal Researcher Kwam Kwum Sulitst HIV AIDS Project Cowichan Tribes.

Chief Dr. Robert Joseph, Gwawaenuk Elder; Ambassador, Reconciliation Canada; Indian Residential Schools Survivor Society.

ATTACHMENT

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action
<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2091412-trc-calls-to-action.html>
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf
- First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers - City of Vancouver
<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/First-Peoples-A-Guide-for-Newcomers.pdf>
- National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
<https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/>

All attachments can be downloaded at:
<http://reconciliationcanada.ca/resources/>