SHARING OUR KNOWLEDGE

Training for Saskatchewan Shelter Workers

PATHS
The Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan
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http://abusehelplines.org/resources/find-a-shelter/

Sharing Our Knowledge: Training for Saskatchewan Shelter Workers

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INTRODUCTION

Thanks to funding from Status of Women Canada, PATHS was able to embark on a project that would ensure that the needs of the Aboriginal women using our member services were being appropriately and adequately met in our shelters and services. We committed to our funders that we would develop a new model of delivering services in our member organizations. This model would be implemented by the use of “tools” that staff can employ in their work with clients. Four training modules were developed which are intended to enhance staff understanding of the culture and historical background of Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan. Embedded in these modules are the tools which we believe will result in developing the skills of our employees so that they can most effectively support Aboriginal women in their struggle to lead lives free from violence. In addition, this model and these tools can be beneficial to all the women served by PATHS Member Agencies, regardless of their cultural background.

Terminology

The word “Aboriginal” has been used in recent years to mean the people that first inhabited the land. “Indigenous” is another word that can be used to refer to the people who originally lived in a place. Since 1982, the word Aboriginal also has a specific meaning in the Canadian constitution where Aboriginal people are defined as including First Nations (Indian), Métis and Inuit people.¹

Traditions

In these modules we are using the word Aboriginal to refer generally to the traditions of Canada’s first peoples. However, we recognize that while there are commonalities among First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in Canada and Saskatchewan, there are also many differences. Much of the material in this document is based on commonly held First Nations traditions, and much is from Cree traditions. Today, First Nations, Métis or Inuit individuals and communities may follow older traditions, may prefer to follow European Christian beliefs, or have cultural ways that are based on both traditions. In working with the women who use our services, we need to understand the traditions, but also recognize and respect that each person will have their own approach. The broader indigenous practices, Canadian Aboriginal traditions and experiences of colonization in Canada that are discussed in this manual will not apply fully to all First Nations, Métis or Inuit women, but provide a history of a background that at least has likely touched them in many ways.

There is so much to learn and understand about all these traditions, how they were practiced in the past and how they are being practiced in today’s world. The material in this manual is a beginning for us as we embark on this journey of understanding.

**Themes**

The development of these training modules was a collaborative effort. I was fortunate to be able to spend many hours talking with Lorna Rope, a social work graduate from Carry the Kettle First Nation who was living in Regina. This model grew out of our conversations about the experiences of Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan, the circumstances that lead so many Aboriginal women to be fleeing violent relationships, and thoughts about what they might need to heal from the detrimental effects of colonization and all its repercussions. Lorna’s insights into Aboriginal philosophy, history, and culture and how this related to women in our shelters shaped what emerged as the four key themes of this manual. These four themes are the subject of each of the four training modules. Through exploring these themes, we feel shelter and service workers will have a good base for forming a holistic understanding of the lives of Aboriginal women who have experienced violence.

The four key themes of the model are Circular Thinking, Colonization and the Historical Context, The Effects of Culture Loss on Identity, and Values. We felt it was important to start with the module on circular thinking because it grounds us in the knowledge that the Aboriginal worldview is not the same as the Western worldview. The concept of the circle is fundamental to Aboriginal philosophy in that it symbolizes a way of thinking, of creating community, and of interacting with our environment. By examining the circle and what it represents we can better come to understand the cultural roots and current lived reality of the Aboriginal women we seek to support.

**The Tools**

Each training model has a number of tools that staff can use to help them better understand the topic. These tools can also be incorporated into the organization’s programming. You will see the tools listed on the page that introduces each module. Within the module there will be a description of the tool and there is a chance to practice using these tools in the Activities section of each module. These tools centre on the four themes and can be used as concrete ways to illustrate the concepts.

**Talking Circles**

One of the tools you will learn about is the Talking Circle. We encourage you to use talking circles where indicated in the training modules. You will see a 🗣 symbol in front of activities where you can use a talking circle for discussion.

**The Final Product**

Terri Hom, a University of Regina Social Work practicum student from the Lac Courte Oreille Tribe in Wisconsin, was tasked with putting all the material together into a format that could be used for instructional purposes. Thanks to Terri’s thorough and steady efforts, all the previous year’s research, discourse and conceptualization gradually took shape into something that could support our staff in their work. Stacey Kesten and Joanne Havelock, PATHS’ Directors of Research and Communications, added additional research and editing once Terri’s practicum ended. At the beginning of the initiative, we formed an Aboriginal Shelter Directors Advisory Committee. Specifically, I would like to
acknowledge the contributions of Rhonda Sugar, Anna Crowe (WISH Safe House), Frances Montgrand (Qu’Appelle Haven, Fort Qu’Appelle), Vivian Cote (Yorkton Safe Haven), Cecile Mistickokat (Waskoosis Safe Shelter, Meadow Lake), Karen Sanderson (Piwapan, La Ronge), and Maggie Blondeau (Riel House, Regina).

Acknowledging the Elders
Terri consulted with Elder Norma Jean Bird for ideas for content and to ensure that the materials were authentic and accurate. For myself I would like to acknowledge the guidance I received from Elder Inez Dieter and for the inspiration she provided to our Advisory Committee as we set out on this important path.

As we began this work, I identified myself most certainly as a linear thinker. Karen Sanderson, our Executive Director from La Ronge, said to me, “It is a circle, my dear, it is a circle.” And I was committed to finding out what that meant. As the project drew to a close, I felt I had indeed completed my circular journey. I wish everyone well as they embark on their own.

Diane Delaney
Coordinator
Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan
MODULE 1

CIRCULAR THINKING
MODULE 1: CIRCULAR THINKING

Module Outline

Overview
The Aboriginal communication style is circular, as opposed to a linear style of communication.

Goal
To understand the meaning of circular thinking.

Objectives
- To understand the concept of interdependence using the Medicine Wheel.
- To understand circular thinking and how it relates to Aboriginal people.

Key Concepts
- All things are interrelated. Circular thinking emphasizes how the interrelatedness of a situation affects the person as a whole. One needs to focus on all aspects of a situation in order to maintain health and well-being.
- The Circle symbolizes unity, wholeness, continuation, perpetuity, inseparability, completeness, balance, security, equality, comfort and health.

Tools
- Talking Circles
- Medicine Wheel

Readings
1. Talking Circles
2. The Medicine Wheel
3. Circular and Linear Thinking

Activities
1. Interconnectedness
2. The Medicine Wheel as a Tool to Support Clients
3. The Principles of Aboriginal Philosophy as a Tool to Support Clients
Websites

- Introductory Medicine Wheel: Cree-Ojibway Customs
- Endangered Stones

References


"If we choose to try to understand and sensibly appreciate Native Culture, way of life and spirituality, we must be willing, first to accept that there is involved here a very special way of “seeing the world”. Secondly, and a necessary further step, we must make an attempt to “participate” in this way of seeing. The implications are very serious. Quite simply, if we are not willing to consider another way of “seeing the world” and take it seriously, we limit ourselves critically or eliminate entirely our chances of really appreciating North American Native mythology and legend.”

- Quote from James Dumont (1976)
“Circles represent important principles in the Aboriginal worldview and belief systems, namely, interconnectedness, equality, and continuity. According to traditional teaching, the seasonal pattern of life and renewal and the movement of animals and people were continuous, like a circle, which has no beginning and no end. Circles suggest inclusiveness and the lack of a hierarchy. They are found throughout nature – for instance, in the movement of the seasons and the sun’s movement from east to west during the day. Circles are also used in the construction of teepees and sweat lodges. The circular willow hoop, medicine wheel, and dream catcher are powerful symbols. Talking circles symbolize completeness and equality.”

Guidelines for Talking Circles:
During the circle time, people are free to respond however they want as long as these basic considerations are followed:

- All comments are addressed directly to the question or the issue, not to comments another person has made. Both negative and positive comments about what anyone else has to say should be avoided.
- Only one person speaks at a time. Generally the person holding the object speaks. Participants can indicate their desire to speak by raising their hands.
- Silence is acceptable. There must be no negative reactions to the phrase, “I pass.”
- Going around the circle in a systematic way invites each person to participate without a few vocal participants dominating the discussion.
- The group leader facilitates the discussion in a non-judgmental way. In other words, instead of responding with words like, “great” or “good”, the leader can acknowledge or clarify comments, such as, “I understand you are saying that…”.
- Speakers should feel free to express themselves in any way that is comfortable: by sharing a story, a personal experience, by using examples or metaphors, and so on.

Footnotes:
The teachings of the Medicine Wheel are orally passed down and provide the listeners with a means to understand and improve themselves and their world from a spiritual perspective. All the teachings given with the Medicine Wheel begin with the drawing of a circle. It represents constant movement and change. The circle of the Medicine Wheel is cut into four segments of teachings. Many Aboriginal cultures share the belief that the number four is an important number; many things and events occur in fours. For example,

- Four directions (north, south, east, and west)
- Four colours of human (red, white, yellow, and black)
- Four seasons (winter, summer, spring, and fall)
- Four aspects of the individual (emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental)
- Four stages of life (child, adolescent, adult, and elder)
An Example of Medicine Wheel Teachings

The earth comprises four main elements: earth, wind, fire, and water. If one is abused, then the other three suffer. For instance, when all of the trees are cut from an area, that site is at risk for a number of problems. Erosion may occur because the water washed away the nutrient-laden top soil. The wind may blow down small trees, which no longer have the protection of a standing and mature forest. Fires can also start easily in a bush that is dry, has a ground of dead foliage and branches from the trees that were cut, and has dry soil because of sun overexposure caused by the absence of larger trees. This teaching shows that interdependence and balance of the ecosystem is critical to the health of our natural environment.
Circular and Linear Thinking

Characteristics of Circular Thinking

By Diane Delaney

“The Indian's symbol is the circle, the hoop. Nature wants things to be round. The bodies of human beings and animals have no corners. With us the circle stands for the togetherness of people and friends and people united in peace while the pipe passes from hand to hand. The camp in which every tipi had its place was also a ring. The tipi was a ring in which people sat in a circle and all the families in the village were in turn circles within a larger circle, part of the larger hoop which was the seven campfires of the Sioux representing one nation. The nation was only a part of the universe, in the sun, which is round, or the stars, which are round. The moon, the horizon, the rainbow - circles within circles, with no beginning and no end.”

What are the characteristics of the circle? We can think of it as a line where the beginning connects to the end. The centre is the same distance from every point on the line. This equal distance from the middle implies a sense of harmony. Since a circle also encloses something, it can also be seen to be inclusive and protective.

A circle implies repetition because if you keep following the line of the circle you find yourself in the same place over and over again. Circular thinking therefore lends itself to narrative. Oral tradition requires repetition so that the stories are remembered. Repeating stories makes you think about the messages and the values embedded in the stories so that they are ever-present in your mind and will guide you when you are making decisions.

A circle is the shape that is most friendly to the environment because within the circle you can imagine the earth’s cycles. A circle allows you to think about the future because you want to make sure that the cycles continue unbroken – the cycles of the seasons, the cycles of all life. You want to protect these cycles because they are what ultimately sustain human life. We do not want to do anything to the earth that will break these cycles. The fact that human life starts as a circle reminds us of our intrinsic connection to the earth and its cycles.

A circle is non-rational. It allows for intuitive thinking which often involves the use of emotions and feelings. A circle makes you think about the mysteries that surround us that cannot necessarily be explained by rational thinking such as the sun, stars and planets which are also circles. A circle allows

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you to use your intuition to see the complexity of an issue because it deals with the whole - even things that cannot be explained by rational scientific thinking.

Circles are not about reaching a goal. They can be about moving, but it is movement that is conscious of the moment, and not thinking about another place you would rather be. Circles make you think carefully about the present.

Within the circle there is a place for the female gender. The female gender knows intimately of the connectedness of the circle because we are connected to life as it begins. Some say that women are at the centre of the circle:

“Women were named after the fire in the centre of the tipi which brought warmth and comfort. In the Cree language, the centre, the fire, is iskwuptew. “Woman” in Cree is iskwew, more than one woman, iskewawuk. We were named after the fire, iskwuptew, and that is very powerful, because it honours the sacredness of that fire.”

A circle does not ever leave permanently behind any part of the line that makes the circle. You can always find your way back to any place on the line by moving forward. With a circle you are always consciousness about your actions because you will come back to the repercussions of your decisions as you journey around the circle.

Western thinking is typically considered to be linear. Linear thinking focuses on an end point. It is concerned with reaching a goal with little consideration to factors outside of the ones that take you to that goal. In this way it is exclusive thinking. It can inhibit us from reflecting on the consequences of our actions because reaching the goal is more important than the journey. Linear thinking demands scientific rigor and the ability to manipulate our environment to achieve what a person thinks is desirable. Linear thinking is individual focused because the goal is the priority not necessarily what is around you. Linear thinking is a productive way to think when you want to make change quickly. It keeps you focused on what you want to achieve.

Much new knowledge and technological advances come as a result of linear thinking. Many believe that these advances have added to quality of life. But linear thinking does not consider the cost to the environment of what we accomplish. We take resources from the earth without acknowledging the need for balance that the circle implies. We take more than can be replaced. While linear thinking has produced creative and useful things, it has also resulted in environmental destruction. When we think in a linear fashion we do not focus on sharing scarce resources. Rather we focus on producing more so that no one has to do with less. There is little striving for harmony and balance.

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Advocates of linear thinking say that you can get stuck in a circle sometimes making it difficult to change circumstances that really do require change. But circular thinking by its inclusive nature has the mechanism to incorporate the benefits of linear thinking. Change can come from within a circle as people sit together and share ideas and agree together on actions that are good for the individual and the community. Circles build consensus because you can always feel the presence of other people in your circle. Circles allow you to listen better because you are not walking away but are always walking with others. Circles make you think about who is in your circle and what they need. So, when you do reach a decision on what course of action is required or what change needs to be made, you will have considered as comprehensively as possible the consequences of your decision.

There can be a great divide between those who think in a linear way and those of the circular persuasion. The two symbols are opposite in many ways. When you are accustomed to thinking one way it is difficult to think differently. We then find it difficult to communicate with one another because we hold different values and priorities. We all share this planet, however, and we are all interconnected and we must find a way for all of us to be part of the circle. Perhaps it is as Tarnas says in the following quote, that our linear thinking has been a necessary trajectory taking us towards the circle.

“As Jung prophesied, an epochal shift is taking place in the contemporary psyche, reconciliation between the two great polarities, a union of opposites: a ... sacred marriage between the long-dominant but now alienated masculine [linear] and the long-suppressed but now ascending feminine [circular]. And this dramatic development is not just compensation, not just a return of the repressed, as I believe this has all along been the underlying goal of Western intellectual and spiritual evolution. For the deepest passion of the Western mind has been to reunite with the ground of its being. The driving impulse of the West’s masculine consciousness has been its dialectical quest not only to realize itself, to forge its own autonomy, but also, finally, to recover its connection with the whole, to come to terms with the great feminine principle in life: to differentiate itself from but then rediscover and reunite with the feminine, with the mystery of life, of nature, of soul. And that reunion can now occur on a new and profoundly different level from that of the primordial unconscious unity, for the long evolution of human consciousness has prepared it to be capable at last of embracing the ground and matrix of its own being freely and consciously. The telos, the inner direction and goal, of the Western mind has been to reconnect with the cosmos in a mature participation mystique, to surrender itself freely and consciously in the embrace of a larger unity that preserves human autonomy while also transcending human alienation.”

Discussion Questions
1. What are the benefits of circular thinking?
2. How does circular thinking help when working with Aboriginal women?

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Activities

Activity 1

Interconnectedness

Explore the concept of interconnectedness by developing your own Medicine Wheel. Think of four things that are interconnected. Think of as many as you can. Write your answers in the circle. The example below shows how to do this exercise with ‘education’. A child first goes to daycare, then elementary school, high school, and finally a post-secondary school.

Share your examples with the group.

Once everyone has shared their ideas you can see how everything we experience is part of our environment and is interconnected.
Activity 2

The Medicine Wheel as a Tool to Support Clients

As an example of how to use the Medicine Wheel with women who have experienced violence, you can explore safety-planning techniques across a range of elements.

A safety plan might deal only with how to escape in a crisis and get to a safe place. “In addition to physical safety planning, however safety plans can also deal with the emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of being and keeping safe.”

Discuss how you might use the Medicine Wheel in dealing with other issues faced by the women and their children who use our services.

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Activity 3

The Principles of Aboriginal Philosophy as a Tool to Support Clients

Read the following principles then discuss how you might use these concepts to support clients in affecting change in their lives.

Principles of Aboriginal Philosophy

Wholeness (Holistic thinking): All things are interrelated. Everything in the universe is part of a single whole. Everything is connected in some way to everything else. It is only possible to understand something if we understand how it is connected to everything else.

Change: Everything is in a state of constant change. One season falls upon the other. People are born, live, and die. All things change. There are two kinds of change: the coming together of things, and the coming apart of things. Both kinds of change are necessary and are always connected to each other. Change occurs in cycles or patterns. They are not random or accidental. If we cannot see how a particular change is connected it usually means that our standpoint is affecting our perception.

The physical world is real. The spiritual world is real. They are two aspects of one reality. There are separate laws which govern each. Breaking of a spiritual principle will affect the physical world and vice versa. A balanced life is one that honours both. People are physical and spiritual beings.

People can acquire new gifts, but they must struggle to do so. The process of developing new personal qualities may be called “true learning.” There are four dimensions of “true learning.” A person learns in a whole and balanced manner when the mental, spiritual, physical and emotional dimensions are involved in the process.

The spiritual dimension of human development has four related capacities: the capacity to have and respond to dreams, visions, ideals, spiritual teaching, goals, and theories; the capacity to accept these as a reflection of our unknown or unrealized potential; the capacity to express these using symbols in speech, art, or mathematics; the capacity to use this symbolic expression towards action directed at making the possible a reality.

People must actively participate in the development of their own potential. A person must decide to develop their own potential. The path will always be there for those who decide to travel it.

Any person who sets out on a journey of self-development will be aided. Guides, teachers, and protectors will assist the traveler.

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"If we choose to try to understand and sensibly appreciate Native Culture, way of life and spirituality, we must be willing, first to accept that there is involved here a very special way of "seeing the world". Secondly, and a necessary further step, we must make an attempt to "participate" in this way of seeing. The implications are very serious. Quite simply, if we are not willing to consider another way of "seeing the world" and take it seriously, we limit ourselves critically or eliminate entirely our chances of every really appreciating North American Native mythology and legend."

- Quote from James Dumont (1976)
MODULE 2: COLONIZATION AND THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Module Outline

Overview
First Nations and Inuit people existed and thrived on this continent well before the arrival of the first European explorers. The “first people” had their own culture and methods for collective decision making to ensure the survival and growth of their nations. The impact of colonization on First Nations and Inuit people has had devastating effects that continue to be seen and felt in communities across Canada. The processes that occurred also affected Métis people.

Goal
To understand the process of colonization in Canada and how it has affected Aboriginal people in the past and present, recognizing the differences in experiences of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people.

Objectives
- To learn the history of colonization in Canada.
- To understand the relationship between colonization and the current state of Aboriginal affairs.

Key Concepts
- Prior to colonization, First Nations, Inuit and other indigenous cultures existed and thrived in what is now contemporary North America. While Europeans acquired land and goods, they effected changes to the lives and cultures of the original peoples by imposing, often by force, European cultures, traditions, and ways of life.
- The Residential and Industrial School System in Canada drastically affected the family structure of Aboriginal people. Children were not allowed to speak their language or practice any of their cultural ways. Many children died of illnesses or diseases, such as tuberculosis. Many Aboriginal children suffered from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse at the hands of school staff and administrators. Many survivors of residential schools continue to deal with the devastating effects. The legacy of residential schooling is a major factor in the high rates of substance abuse, suicide, and family dysfunction in Aboriginal communities.

Tools
Readings
1. Before the Europeans
2. The Legacy of Colonization and the Importance of Treaties
3. Post-Contact Timeline – Canada and Saskatchewan
4. The Devastating Effects of Residential Schools
5. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Booklet)

Activities
1. Review - Colonization and the Historical Context
2. The Legacy of Residential Schools

Websites
• Native Survivors’ Testimonies of Crimes Against Humanity in Residential Schools http://www.hiddenfromhistory.org/

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• Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, “About Us”, http://www.trc-cvr.ca/about.html
Knowledge of the history of a people strengthens our understanding of who they are and how they came to be. To truly understand a people we must truly understand their history. An accurate understanding of the events that took place in the history of the Aboriginal people of Canada clarifies a process that results in marginalization and turmoil. Equipped with this knowledge, one can better make sense of the struggles, challenges, and consequences of these events. The history of Aboriginal-European relations is painful and complex, however, confronting this history with an open mind and an open heart will only help in the fight to bring peace and health to our communities. The future depends greatly on how we deal with our past, how we educate ourselves and our children, and how we chose to deal with current challenges and circumstances to ensure a healthy future.

Although a comprehensive review of the history of Aboriginal people in Canada is well beyond the scope of this paper, an outline of salient historical events will provide much needed context for understanding the current state of affairs and how to best address the needs of Aboriginal women who are experiencing interpersonal violence.

Pre-Contact

Indigenous people existed and thrived in Canada well before the arrival of the first Europeans. First Nations and Inuit people were sovereign societies with strong communities, histories, traditions, and culture. People belonged to distinct tribes and bands that spanned across North America. Bands and tribes had their own histories, traditions, and processes by which they maintained peace and order.

Although they differed from traditional European methods of governance, First Nations people had effective processes for decision-making and self-governance. Many of these traditions were orally passed from one generation to the next. They were heavily based on established customs and codes of conduct. 9

9 The Canadian Encyclopedia, “Native People, Languages”, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=AtARTA0005650
Language and Culture

It is estimated that 51 or 52 distinct indigenous languages are spoken in Canada.\textsuperscript{10} The people who were originally living on the land which is now Saskatchewan came from a number of groups with important diversity among the groups. The research that is available from early explorers, archaeological studies and First Nations oral traditions indicates that prior to European contact Saskatchewan was a traditional homeland to people from the Chipewyan, Blackfoot, Cree and Assiniboine language families.\textsuperscript{11} The territory occupied by the tribal groups had shifted through time prior to European contact, but was subsequently hugely affected by European colonization.

Three main language groups have resided in the provincial area in recent history, with different languages within those groups:
- Athapaskan: Denesuliné (Chipewyan.)
- Algonquian: Cree –Plains, Swampy, Woodland; Nākawē (Saulteaux) / Anishinabe (Plains Ojibway); Haaninin (Gros Ventre).
- Siouan – Dakota, Nakota (Assiniboine), Lakota.

The most common First Nations languages today are Denesuliné, Cree (Plains, Swampy, Woodland), Nākawē, Dakota, Nakota, and Lakota.\textsuperscript{12} Métis people may also speak English, French or Michif.

Cultural practices changed over time as Aboriginal people moved from one area to another and as ideas were shared among different groups.

With the support of some Christian church leaders, and through the \textit{Indian Act} provisions that lasted until 1951, many First Nations practices were outlawed or limited, such as Potlatches on the west coast or any ceremony involving gift-giving, Sundance ceremonies and pow-wows. The ability to attend those events which were allowed was affected by restrictions on travel. First Nations adapted their ceremonies and were tenacious in continuing to practice many aspects of the culture. Exhibition associations encouraged pow-wows and these gatherings helped promote and preserve crafts such as beading, tanning, and making traditional clothing, as well as traditional dancing.\textsuperscript{13} \textsuperscript{14}

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Territories in the 19th Century

This map shows approximate tribal territories in the first half of the 19th century. Territories often overlapped and some areas would have been unoccupied. These areas were different before European contact and changed through time, e.g. the Saulteaux were originally from the area around Sault Sainte-Marie in Ontario in the 17th century.


Cultural information from:
Native American Languages, “Native Languages of the Americas” [http://www.native-languages.org](http://www.native-languages.org)
Reading 2

The Legacy of Colonization and the Importance of Treaties

European Contact

When the first Europeans set foot on what is now called Canadian soil, they believed that the land was empty and waiting to be settled. Despite the fact that First Nations and Inuit peoples had inhabited this land for thousands of years, European settlers held the belief that no person or group rightfully owned this land and therefore it was there for the taking. The arrival of European explorers and settlers changed the original people’s way of life. It fundamentally affected the relationship First Nations and Inuit people had with the land, its resources, and their ability to grow and prosper as a society.

Colonization

Colonization is the process by which one group systematically takes over the land and culture of another group. In Canadian history, this was accomplished through a succession of events initiated and conducted by European settlers. Colonization drastically affected the original peoples’ cultures and ways of life. First Nations and Inuit culture was systematically attacked through a succession of events that were made possible through laws and legislation.

Treaties

Treaties were signed between First Nations and the Crown of England. Inuit and Métis people did not sign treaties. In essence, treaties are peace and friendship agreements between two or more groups. First Nations peoples have a long history of oral treaty-making to settle disputes over land and end conflicts that resulted in war. They were using the power of treaties well before European contact. For First Nations people, treaties are powerful tools that need to be respected and upheld. They are promises made by two or more groups to improve relations and the well-being of all who are involved. When a group keeps their promises and lives up to the expectations outlined in a treaty, that group will maintain their integrity and trustworthiness.

Treaty making between Europeans and First Nations began to take place early after European contact. Although treaties were traditionally used by First Nations to encourage peace and stability, European treaty-making took on a different tone, benefiting the Europeans. Treaty making between the two groups was also complicated because of differing traditions and often times opposing ideologies, cultural, and spiritual perspectives. For example, First Nations based much of their culture and governance on unwritten, oral traditions. The power of language and one's word was an integral aspect of their way of life. European settlers however, brought with them what we know as the written contract. The fundamental difference in communication and the transmission of thoughts and knowledge has played a major role in the struggle to clarify the meaning of the treaties. It has
been a struggle for First Nation s across Canada to have their rights fully recognized by provincial and federal governments and to have Canadians in general recognize the importance of the treaties and uphold their end of the bargain.

In Saskatchewan, treaties covered items such as access to land and water systems, the right to select reserve land collectively, protection for traditional economic activity (hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering), agriculture, education, health care (access to the “medicine chest”), relief in times of pestilence and famine, annuities, taxation and military service.16

“The signing of Treaties 2 (1871), 4 (1874), and 6 (1876) had come at a time of crisis for Indian peoples. Faced with the impending loss of the buffalo, the mainstay of their economy, they knew that they had to adjust successfully to the changing circumstances or follow their four-legged quarry into possible extinction. They proved persistent negotiators in dealing with the Queen’s representatives to ensure that the treaties were not merely land transfer agreements but provided meaningful and ongoing assistance, especially in time of sickness and famine.”17

Because of the Treaties, First Nations people who are registered as having Status with the federal government have certain rights in relation to services such as education and health and certain restrictions in relation to the Indian Act. Some women and their children who had previously lost their Indian Status had some of their rights restored with Bill C-31, An Act to amend the Indian Act that was passed in 1985.

Métis

“The word “Métis” is French for “mixed blood.” The Canadian Constitution recognizes Métis people as one of the three groups of Aboriginal people living in Canada. Historically, the term “Métis” applied to the children of French fur traders and Cree women in the Prairies, and of English and Scottish traders and Dene women in the north. Today, the term is used broadly to describe people with mixed First Nation and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis, distinct from First Nation people, Inuit or non-Aboriginal people. Many Canadians have mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ancestry, but not all identify themselves as Métis. Note that Métis organizations in Canada have differing criteria about who qualifies as a Métis person.”18

The Métis National Council defines Métis people as having descended from First Nations and the initial European settlers (English, Scottish, Irish and French). A person must also identify themselves

as Métis and be accepted by the Métis Nation. This would include descendants of the Prairie historical settlements and some Métis from Ontario and British Columbia. Some people who have connections back to the early settlements but do not have documentation still do consider themselves as Métis.

Métis culture and spiritual practices are a blend of Indian and European roots, combined with a creation of new traditions, such as clothing, music, dances and the Michif language.

“The spirit of the Métis and the spiritual practices of the Métis are as complex as the ancestral roots of their Indian and European culture and languages. During the time of the fur trade, the Métis middlemen, who worked between their fathers’ and mothers’ cultures, were highly influenced by the Roman Catholic Church … This, however, did not mean that Métis relinquished their Indian cultural belief systems, and were comfortable blending them together.”

Métis people did not receive the same rights and benefits as First Nations did under the treaties, nor were they confined to reserves. Instead of signing treaties, the federal government issued scrip to Métis people individually, in an attempt to extinguish the Aboriginal title of the Métis. Scrip entitled the bearer to a certain size of land area or amount of money but not a specific piece of land. It was offered in regions where treaties were being negotiated with First Nations, or had already been established. Twelve “Half-Breed Commissions” enumerated the Métis and issued scrip over the years from 1885 to 1921 in lands that are now parts of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories. The process for giving out scrip had many problems - inconsistencies in eligibility and how the scrip was administered and challenges in communicating with Métis people who were living in remote locations. Many Métis were convinced by land speculators to trade their land for money, leaving them landless, often migratory or living on road allowances. Currently Métis organizations have legal precedents and agreements on rights and self determination related to matters such as food harvesting and child welfare services.

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21 Bent, op. cit., p. 18.
22 Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, http://www.mn-s.ca/main/
Historical Indian Treaties in Canada

28

Treaties in Saskatchewan

24

Métis Region and Locals

1763 to 1906  **Royal Proclamation.** Established British protection over unsettled land belonging to Indian tribes and recognized Indian title to lands not already colonized. (Métis were not recognized.) Issued by King George III to establish administration in territories ceded by France to Britain following the Seven Years’ War. Recognized Indian hunting rights, forbade private purchase and only allowed for the “sale” of land by Indian groups to authorized representatives of the British Monarch. Established the constitutional framework for the negotiation of Indian treaties.

1850’s  **Province of Canada legislation.** In 1850 An Act for the Better Protection of the Lands and Property of Indians in Lower Canada, held Indian lands in trust for Indian people, but allowed the Commissioner of Crown Lands to do what he wished with that property. An Act where the Better Protection of Indians in Upper Canada imposition, the property occupied or enjoyed by them from trespass and injury was an act to protect the Indians and their lands from abuse until they became “civil or assimilated”. In 1857 the Civilization of Indian Tribes Act expressly made assimilation its goal.

1870’s  **Fur trade communities.** In Saskatchewan’s north, fur trade communities with a largely First Nations and Métis population were established and thriving. These communities included Cumberland House (the oldest continuous settlement in Saskatchewan), Île-à-la-Crosse, Buffalo Narrows, Southend (Reindeer Lake), Lac La Ronge, Pelican Narrows, Green Lake, La Loche and Fond du Lac.

1871 to 1921  **First Nations Treaties signed in Canada.** The following treaties were signed covering portions of what is now Saskatchewan:

- Treaty 2 in 1871
- Treaty 4 in 1874
- Treaty 5 in 1875
- Treaty 6 in 1876 and 1889
- Treaty 7 in 1880
- Treaty 8 in 1899
- Treaty 10 in 1906

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1876 and 1951  **Indian Act.** The Indian Act gave the federal government exclusive power over First Nations and their land, essentially making the people wards of the state. It gave government power to control the ways in which bands governed themselves, created a legal definition for Indian status and promoted the policy of assimilation. The Act dealt with the management of reserve land and communal monies. Indian Agents enforced government policies and managed the financial affairs of the reserves. The Indian Act has been amended but is still in force.²⁹

1883  **Residential schools.** Began as a national initiative.

1884  **Cree leadership.** Saskatchewan Cree leaders met with Canadian government agents to discuss Ottawa’s failure to live up to the agreements reached with the Queen as compensation for the loss of lands and traditional livelihood.

1885  **Northwest Rebellion.** Led by Louis Riel, the Métis of Batoche rebelled against the Canadian Government as part of their continued movement to be recognized politically and to be supported in their efforts to ensure economic and social prosperity for their people. Riel was hanged for treason.³⁰

1885  **Big Bear imprisoned for treason.** Largely seen as a response to Big Bear’s continuing efforts to ensure that the treaties were honoured, Big Bear was falsely accused of supporting the Métis rebellion and was convicted of treason and imprisoned for two years. In prison he became ill and died shortly after his release. Eight warriors were also hanged for their involvement, the largest mass execution in Canadian history.³¹

1867  **British North America Act.** The BNA Act created the Canadian federation and established federal and provincial responsibilities and ensured that the federal government would be responsible for “Indians and Lands reserved for the Indians”. Métis people were not recognized.

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³¹ Waiser, op. cit., p. 165.
1885 to c. 1921  **Métis scrip.** Scrip was offered to many (but not all) Métis instead of treaties. The federal government attempted to extinguish the Aboriginal title of the Métis by issuing scrip to the Métis individually. The certificate entitled the bearer to a specific amount of land or money, but not a specific piece of land. Offered in areas where a treaty had already been signed with Indian people or was being negotiated. Twelve “Half-Breed Commissions” enumerated the Métis and issued scrip from 1885 to 1921 in lands that are now parts of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories.\(^32\)

1885 to 1930's  **Reserve Pass System.** The Pass System was instituted as a temporary measure during the Northwest Resistance of 1885 to control and monitor Indian people. Indian people had to get permission from the Indian Agent to leave the reserve. An Indian person who was absent from the reserve without a Pass was classified as a criminal. Neither the Indian Act nor any other Federal legislation empowered the Department to institute such a system. The Pass System was still in use in the Treaty 4, 5 and 7 areas as late as the mid 1930's. It was removed from the Indian Act in 1951.\(^33\)

1897 to 1915  **Prospering First Nations farm economies.** Farm economies prospered during these years. After this time success was stifled by the federal rules that required a permit from the Indian agent to sell goods off-reserve and fines imposed upon white settlers who bought goods off reserve.\(^34\)

1905  **Saskatchewan enters Confederation.** The Canadian government extinguished Aboriginal title in areas not covered by treaties in order to have unencumbered legal access to as much land and resources as possible in Saskatchewan. The Canadian government promised to compensate First Nations people by way of services and support when necessary.

1908  **The Saskatchewan Elections Act.** Like many other provinces, upon entering Confederation, Saskatchewan disqualified Indians from voting.\(^35\)

\(^{32}\) Bent, op. cit., p. 18.
\(^{34}\) Waiser, op. cit., p. 175.
1913 **Directive to end “senseless drumming and dancing”.** Duncan Campbell Scott, Head of Indian Affairs for 20 years, as deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs, issued a directive to put an end to Aboriginal cultural practices as part of his policy of assimilation which was grounded in a belief in the inherent violence of Aboriginal people and documented disdain for their culture and philosophy. Duncan is also famous for his remark, “I want to get rid of the Indian problem.”  


1917 **Ottawa forbids the splitting and drying of fish by Aboriginal people.** Because of regulations such as this one, and intense and unrestricted commercial exploitation of the land by white settlers and trappers, the traditional livelihood of the Aboriginal peoples was greatly diminished  

37 Waiser, op. cit., p. 268.

1917 **Soldier Settlement Act.** Over 72,000 acres of reserve land was appropriated and given to veterans of World War I. Indian veterans were not eligible to receive the land.

1920’s **Emergence of Tribal Councils.** After the passing of the chiefs involved in the original treaty making a number of years previously, First Nations people began to re-organize and formed the Protective Association for Indians and Treaties and other organizations. These groups existed for the purposes of continuing to put pressure on the Canadian government to honour their treaty responsibilities.  

38 Ibid., p. 243.

1935 **Saskatchewan Métis Society.** The Society was started by Joseph Ross and Henry McKenzie of Regina to solicit financial support from the government and settle land claims.  

39 Ibid., p.316.

1936 **John Baptiste Tootoosis travels to Ottawa.** Tootoosis was the Saskatchewan secretary for the League of Indians of Canada and highly regarded for his knowledge of First Nations traditions. He travelled to Ottawa to advocate for the resolutions put forward by the League.

1950 **Inuit Right to Vote.** "Esquimaux” were disqualified from voting federally in 1934. No exemptions were offered for those who served in the armed forces. The Inuit obtained the right to vote in 1950.  

40 Moss, op. cit.
**Indian Right to Vote.** Since colonial days, voting federally or provincially was essentially denied to most Indians through requirements concerning enfranchisement, property ownership, residence off-reserve and laws based on gender and racial discrimination. Some exemptions were made for those who had served in the military. In 1960 the federal government granted Indian people the universal right to vote federally without having to give up their Indian status. 41

**Compulsory enfranchisement.** The compulsory enfranchisement provisions of the Indian Act were eliminated in 1961, thus ending one of the key components that had supported Indian assimilation since the 1800’s. 42

**Provincial right to vote.** Quebec was the last province to extend the right to vote to Indians after British Columbia (1949), Manitoba (1952), Ontario (1954), Saskatchewan (1960), P.E.I. (1963), New Brunswick (1963), and Alberta (1965). 43

**First jury duty.** Indian people could not serve on juries because they were not enfranchised. Even after they had the federal and provincial franchises Indians’ names were omitted from voters’ lists compiled for jury purposes. The first time Indians served on a Canadian jury was January 24, 1972. 44

**Saskatchewan Indian Federated College affiliated with the University of Regina.** Formerly the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College, the college affiliated with the University of Regina.

**Kitsaki Development Corporation.** One of the first examples of incorporated economic development initiatives by First Nations communities. Now called the Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership, they currently own shares in thirteen operating companies which provide employment for people in the La Ronge area. 45

**Canadian Constitution.** The Constitution defined Aboriginal people as including Indian, Métis and Inuit people. 46

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41 Ibid.
43 Moss, op. cit.
44 Ibid.
**1982**  
**Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.** Article 25 outlines Aboriginal and treaty rights, including those recognized by the Royal Proclamation, and any rights due to existing or future land claim negotiations. Article 15 establishes equality under the law without discrimination, and particularly disallows discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. Article 28 ensures that rights and freedoms are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.\(^{47}\)

**1985**  
**Bill C-31.** Allows reinstatement of women and their children who had lost their Indian Status due to marriage with a non-Status Indian or a non-Indian, and for people who had lost their Status through voluntary or involuntary enfranchisement.\(^{48}\)

**1991 to 1996**  
**Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.** The themes of the report were: governance, land and economy, social and cultural issues and the North. The report also looked at women, youth, urban and historical perspectives. Through public hearings Aboriginal communities across Canada were visited. Wide-ranging recommendations called for a complete restructuring of the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.\(^{49}\)

**1992**  
**Treaty Land Entitlement.** Saskatchewan and twenty-five First Nations signed the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement. Eight separate but similar agreements with individual First Nations have been signed since. This agreement is a recognition that First Nations did not receive the land to which they were entitled under the treaties. First Nations will receive approximately $595 million over 12 years to buy up to 2.28 million acres of land to add to their reserves.\(^{50}\)

**2003**  
**First Nations University of Canada.** Saskatchewan Indian Federated College became the First Nations University of Canada and a full member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. The University operates with a Board of Governors under the jurisdiction of the Indian Governments of Saskatchewan, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.\(^{51}\)

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\(^{47}\) Ibid.  
\(^{48}\) Bent et. al., and Government of Saskatchewan First Nations and Métis Relations, “First Nations History”  
http://www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/community/fn-history  
\(^{49}\) The Canadian Encyclopedia, ”Aboriginal Peoples, Royal Commission on”,  
http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=a1ARTA0011169  
\(^{50}\) Saskatchewan First Nations and Métis Relations, “Treaty Land Entitlements”,  
http://www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/lands/tle/  
\(^{51}\) University of Regina, 2011-2012 Undergraduate Calendar, p. 285.
2005  Kelowna Accord. The Accord was the result of a process of policy negotiations around the need for action and a new relationship between the Government of Canada and Aboriginal peoples. Cross-Canada roundtables covered health, lifelong learning, housing, economic opportunities, negotiations, and accountability with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis sessions. The Accord resulted in agreements between federal, provincial, and territorial governments and leaders of five national aboriginal organizations including the Native Women’s Association of Canada, to improve conditions for Aboriginal peoples. 52 It has not yet been implemented.

2010  Rights of Indigenous Peoples. On November 12, the Government of Canada announced it would endorse the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a non-binding document that describes the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples around the world. 53

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The Residential and Industrial School System in Canada was a systematic attempt to eradicate the indigenous culture, worldview, and way of life. The atrocities that occurred during this time have had devastating and lasting effects on Aboriginal communities across Canada. The negative consequences that resulted from this system have rippled down from generation to generation and can still be seen to this day. The tragic legacy of residential schooling is a major factor in high rates of substance abuse, suicide, mental health problems, and family dysfunction.

The concept of assimilating the indigenous people by using formal education was first introduced by European missionaries as far back as the 1600’s. The Indian Act of 1874 placed further responsibility on the federal government to assimilate children by means of education. This legislation set the stage for the organization of a systematic attack on indigenous culture. The Residential School system was born out of racist thought that was pervasive throughout white Canada that perceived indigenous peoples as being “uncivilized” and an inherent problem for the future success of Canadian society.

Throughout the history of the Residential School System, Indian, Inuit and Métis and Inuit children were separated from their families at a very young age, stripped of their language, culture, and traditional ways, and forced to take on the beliefs of white, Christian Canada. Not only did residential schooling fracture bonds between children and their families and brutally cut the transmission of cultural identity, survivors of the system have reported horrific accounts of physical, sexual, emotional, and spiritual abuse. It is estimated that over 100,000 children attended these residential schools across Canada.

Although most residential schools were closed and ceased operation by the mid 1970’s, the last school did not shut its doors until 1996. This school was located in Saskatchewan. Unfortunately, it is not because of a sudden shift in moral thinking that brought the residential school system to an end. In the 1950’s it was established that residential schools were not assimilating the children as successfully as the government had planned. Further, many people at this time held the belief that “the natives” should in fact not be given educational tools and skills because this would make it possible for them to compete with whites for jobs and positions in Canadian society.

The Residential and Industrial School System was indeed a dark period in Canadian history. Without a true understanding of the history of residential schools it is impossible to grasp the devastating effects that it has had on Aboriginal people across Canada.
Residential Schools Institutional Timeline\textsuperscript{54}

1620-1680 – Boarding schools were established for Indian youth by the Récollets, a French order in New France, and later the Jesuits and the female order the Ursulines. This form of schooling lasted until the 1680s.

1800's – Missionaries were running several institutional schools.

1820's – Early church schools were run by Protestants, Catholics, Anglicans and Methodists.

1842 – Bagot Commission recommended training children in manual labour schools far from parents.

1857 – Gradual Civilization Act legislated the assimilation of Indians.

1860 – Indian Affairs was transferred from the Imperial Government to the Province of Canada. The Imperial Government had changed its policy from fostering the autonomy of native populations through industry to assimilating them through education.

1847 – Egerton Ryerson recommended domestic education and religious instruction for the Indian population, focusing on agricultural training. This became a model for residential schools with government funding.

1870-1910 – Period of assimilation where the clear objective of both missionaries and government was to assimilate Aboriginal children into the lower fringes of mainstream society.

1876 – Indian Act legislated all Indian peoples as Wards of Federal Government.


1883 – Industrial Schools were built far from reserves to limit parental and cultural influence.

1920 – Indian Act legislated compulsory attendance; children were forcibly taken/ parents fined or jailed.

1931 – 80 residential institutions were in operation.

\textsuperscript{54} Assembly of First Nations http://www.afn.ca/residentialschools/history.html
1948 – There were 72 residential schools with 9,368 students.

1974 – After the government gave control of the Indian education program to band councils and Indian education committees over 34 per cent of staff members had Indian status.

1975 – A provincial Task Force on the Educational Needs of Native Peoples heard recommendations from native representatives to increase language and cultural programs and improve funding for native control of education.

1979 – Only 15 residential schools were still open in Canada. Indian Affairs created initiatives including attempts to make the school administration more culturally aware of the needs of Aboriginal students.

1980's – Adult students began disclosing sexual and other abuses while attending the schools.

1986 – The United Church of Canada formally apologized to Canada's First Nations people.

1989 – Non-Aboriginal orphans at Mount Cashel Orphanage in Newfoundland made allegations of sexual abuse by Christian Brothers at the school. The case paved the way for litigation for residential school victims.

1990 – Phil Fontaine, leader of the Association of Manitoba Chiefs, demanded that the Catholic Church recognize the physical and sexual abuse suffered by students at residential schools.


1993 – The Anglican Church offered an apology to Canada's First Nations people.

1994 – The Presbyterian Church offered a confession to Canada's First Nations people.

November 1996 – The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples devoted a chapter to residential schools.

1996 – The last federally run residential school, the Gordon Residential School, closed in Saskatchewan.

1997 – Phil Fontaine was elected National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

1998 – The United Church's General Council Executive offered a second apology to the First Nations people of Canada for the abuse incurred at residential schools.

1998 – The Assembly of First Nations established the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Unit.

2001 – Canadian government began negotiations with the Anglican, Catholic, United and Presbyterian churches to design a compensation plan.

December 12, 2002 – Presbyterian Church settled Indian residential schools compensation.

March 11, 2003 – Agreement reached for the Canadian government to pay 70% of the compensation and the Anglican Church of Canada 30%, to a maximum of $25 million to compensate victims with valid claims of sexual and physical abuse at Anglican-run residential schools.

September 19, 2007 - The federal government-approved agreement to provide nearly $2 billion to the former students who had attended 130 residential schools under the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

April 28, 2008 – The federal government announced the commencement of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on residential schools.

June 11, 2008 – Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized to former students of native residential schools.

April 29, 2009 – Pope Benedict XVI expressed "sorrow" to a delegation from Canada's Assembly of First Nations for the abuse and "deplorable" treatment that Aboriginal students suffered at Catholic church-run residential schools.

Saskatchewan Residential Schools

**SK-1 Battleford Industrial School** (RC) Battleford opened 1883; closed 1943.

**SK-2 Beauval Indian Residential School** (RC) Beauval; opened 1895; closed 1983; now Meadow Lake Tribal Council’s Beauval Indian Education Centre.

**SK-3 Cowesses Indian Residential School** (Marieval Indian Residential School) (RC) Marieval; opened 1936; closed 1975.

**SK-4 Crowstand Indian Residential School** (PB) Kamsack; opened 1888; closed 1913.

**SK-5 St. Michael’s Indian Residential School** (Duck Lake Indian Residential School) (RC) Duck Lake; opened 1892; closed 1964.

**SK-6 Emmanuel College** (AN) Prince Albert; opened 1865; closed 1923.

**SK-7 File Hills Indian Residential School** (File Hills Colony School) (MD) Okanese Reserve; opened 1889; closed 1949.

**SK-8 Gordon Indian Residential School** (AN) Punnichy; opened 1889; new school built in 1911, burned down in 1929; reopened 1930; Government takes over school 1969; closed 1996

**SK-9 Guy Indian Residential School** (RC) Sturgeon Landing; opened 1926; closed 1964.

**SK-10 Ile-à-la-Crosse Indian Residential School** (RC) Ile-à-la-Crosse; opened 1878; closing date unknown

**SK-11 Lake La Ronge Mission Indian Residential School** (AN) La Ronge; opened 1914; new school built in 1920; closed 1947.

**SK-12 Muscowequan Indian Residential School** (RC) Lestock; opened 1932; closed 1981

**SK-13a Prince Albert Indian Residential School** (St. Albans Indian Residential School) (AN) Prince Albert; opening date unknown; closed 1951

**SK-13b Prince Albert Indian Residential School** (All Saints Indian Residential School) (AN) Prince Albert; opened in 1865; amalgamated with St. Albans in 1951 to become Prince Albert Indian Residential School in 1951

**SK-13c Prince Albert Indian Residential School** (AN) Prince Albert; opened in 1951; closed 1964

**SK-14 Qu’Appelle Indian Residential School** (Fort Qu’Appelle Indian Residential School; Lebret Indian Residential School) (RC) Lebret; opened 1884; school burned down in 1908; closed 1969

**SK-15 Regina Indian Residential School** (PB) Regina; opened 1890; closing date unknown

**SK-16 Round Lake Indian Residential School** (MD) Whitewood; opened 1886; closed 1950.

**SK-17 St. Anthony’s Indian Residential School** (Onion Lake Catholic Indian Residential School) (RC) Onion Lake; opened 1891; closed 1968.

**SK-18 St. Barnabas Indian Residential School** (Onion Lake Indian Residential School) (AN) Onion Lake; opened 1893; school burned down in 1943; closed 1951.

**SK-19 St. Phillips Indian Residential School** (Keeseekoose Day School) (RC) Kamsack; opened 1899; closed 1965.

**SK-20 Thunderchild Indian Residential School** (Delmas Indian Residential School) (RC) Delmas; opened 1933; school was burned down by students in 1948
The United Nations Convention on Genocide states that genocide is any of a number of acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group by:

1. Killing members of the group;
2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm;
3. Deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.55

Cree students attending the Anglican Lac La Ronge mission school56

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56 “Thou Shalt Not Tell Lies”, Cree students attending the Anglican-run Lac La Ronge mission school in La Ronge. Lac La Ronge, Saskatchewan, March 1945. Bud Glunz, National Film Board of Canada, PA 134110
The school is gone now. But the hill where it stood is visible, down a dusty gravel road, from Lorne Pratt's grandmother's house on the George Gordon First Nation in Saskatchewan. Sitting at the kitchen table, Pratt looks out the window and remembers the evening when, as a 12-year-old student, he tried to commit suicide on the second floor of the old brick residence - the only way he could think of to escape the constant sexual abuse he had suffered over a five-year period. Now 32, an elegant man with high cheekbones and deep, sad eyes, Pratt recalls how he wrapped an elastic belt around his neck and hanged himself from the metal frame of his bunk bed, feeling the elastic pull, struggling for breath, finally blacking out. He was saved when school employees cut him down and rushed him to a hospital in Regina, where he remained in a coma for five days. When he was finally discharged, he was sent home to his mother, Leona, in Saskatoon - never to return to the school. "It was," Pratt says, "the happiest day of my life."58

58 O'Hara, ibid.
Activities

Activity 1

Review - Colonization and the Historical Context

Answer the following statements as True (T) or False (F).

1. The government wanted children to attend schools that were located near their reserves. _____
2. Residential schooling not only attacked First Nations languages, but storytelling too. _____
3. The loss of traditional parenting skills is perhaps one of the most profound outcomes of the residential school system. _____
4. Missionaries respected the beliefs of Aboriginal peoples. _____
5. Aboriginal societies were largely governed by unwritten customs and codes of conduct. _____
6. Many children in the residential schools died from tuberculosis because they were not hospitalized. _____
7. Treaty 4 was signed on September 15, 1874. _____
8. Today, there are a total of 36 signatories to Treaty 4. _____

Match the word with the correct definition.

1. Reserves ___ A. An agreement between two states that has been formally concluded and ratified.
2. Status Indian ___ B. Extermination of a people’s culture.
3. Colonization ___ C. A person who is registered as an Indian under the Indian Act.
4. Assimilation ___ D. Defined who was an Indian.
5. Indian Act ___ E. Invasion, dispossession and subjugation of a people.
6. Cultural genocide ___ F. A process in which a cultural group is absorbed by another and takes on its cultural traditions.
8. Treaty Indian ___ H. Indian who belongs to a First Nation that signed a treaty with the Crown.
Answer Key - True or False:

1. **False** – “If these schools are to succeed, we must not have them near the bands; in order to educate the children properly we must separate them from their families. Some people may say that this is hard, but if we want to civilize them we must do that.”
   

2. **True** – “Government and church officials who ran federal and provincial schools and, later, teachers in provincial schools took hold of the storytelling that systematically shapes the thinking and dreams of a people. Through school curricula, they have transmitted stories that claim to tell history, what is right and wrong, what it means to be successful, and what constitutes the very nature of the world. Stories, like language, embody culture.”

   In an effort to resist cultural erosion by the mainstream media, the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation has “… turned the tools of mass media into a form of storytelling that resonates with the oral traditions of the Inuit.”... “In fact, Aboriginal communication societies in Canada have established Aboriginal language use as vital to their storytelling. But, in many parts of Canada, Aboriginal peoples no longer speak their language. Where English and French have become common, the focus is on making sure that Aboriginal stories are not only told, but are told by Aboriginal people.”


3. **True** – “Survivors of the schools knew only the rigid, authoritarian, and emotionally distant discipline of the teachers and caretakers in the schools. This became the way many of them then controlled their own families. As each person learns to parent from their parents, so the effects of poor parenting skills became a legacy of successive generations. Several writers have noted, "how dysfunctional patterns of behaviour may be seen in the adult children of former students, leading them to conclude that: 'native child-rearing patterns have been indelibly marked by residential schools in ways that will last for generations.'"”

   Source: Where are the children? Healing the legacy of the residential schools

4. **False** – “Several religious orders also came to the New World to convert the Aboriginal peoples.”

5. **True** – “Before European explorers arrived in North America; First Nations and Inuit peoples lived within their traditional territories…their cultures and traditions ranged from nomadic lifestyles, such as those of the Plains peoples, to more permanent communities, such as the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois). First Nations and Inuit peoples felt a strong connection with nature, and their ways of living were closely linked to the land. Although Aboriginal societies did not have centralized, official governments in the way that Europeans societies did, they were self-governing through unwritten customs and codes of conduct.”


6. **True** – “The ongoing outbreaks of tuberculosis at the schools were taking a toll on the students' lives. This disease spread quickly through the poorly ventilated and overcrowded school dormitories, and the malnourished and physically weakened students easily succumbed to the infection. Thousands of residential school children died from tuberculosis and from the many other ailments they contracted at the schools.”


   “…the government’s unofficial attitude was that they weren’t interested in the Indians and Eskimos because they were dying races and wouldn’t last long. They demonstrated this attitude in not hospitalizing Indians and Eskimos with tuberculosis.”


7. **True** – Treaty 4 was signed on September 15, 1874 between Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and 13 separate Cree and Saulteaux Nations at Fort Qu’Appelle. Twenty-three First Nations, including the Assiniboine, later signed adhesion to Treaty 4.


8. **True** – 29 First Nations are from Saskatchewan, and 7 are from Manitoba. The Treaty 4 territory covers most of southern Saskatchewan, part of western Manitoba and part of southern Alberta.

Answer Key-Matching:

1. **G.** Reserves are land bases with which Indian status is integrally connected that was set aside for Indians and held in trust by the government through the Department of Indian Affairs.

2. **C.** Status Indians are people who have their names listed on the official Indian Register maintained by the federal government. Status Indians are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law. Non-status Indians are those people who consider themselves Indians or members of a First Nation but whom the government does not recognize as Indians under the Indian Act, either because they are unable to prove their status or have lost status rights. (Many women lost their status rights by marrying non-Aboriginal First Nations or other men who did not have Indian Status.) Non-Status Indians do not have the same rights and benefits as Status Indians.

3. **E.** Colonization profoundly affected the culture and sovereignty of the indigenous peoples.

4. **F.** Europeans came to acquire land or goods and, in the process, effected changes to the lives of the indigenous people, imposing, often by force, Europeans cultures, traditions, and ways of life. This is the process of assimilation.

5. **D.** Under the Indian Act not only did it define who was “Indian”, Indians did not have the full rights of Canadian citizens. For example, they did not have the right to vote. To end this, it introduced a policy of enfranchisement (to grant the right to vote).

6. **B.** The residential schools isolated the children and many had no contact with their families and communities for years. When the children returned home many no longer could speak their first language. The children no longer understood or practiced their traditions and customs. They no longer shared their family’s beliefs and values. Many people have used the term cultural genocide to describe the effect of residential schools on individuals and entire communities.

7. **A.** Since the 1870s, many First Nations people have claimed that treaties have been misinterpreted and that many treaties have not been honored. For example, the treaties did not include some oral promises made by government negotiators.

8. **H.** Treaty Indians is a term for Status Indians who belong to a First Nation that signed a treaty with the government.
Activity 2

The Legacy of Residential Schools

Thomas Moore before and after his entrance into the Indian Residential School in Regina

Qu’Appelle Indian Residential School

Why are the tipis outside the gates? (See next page for the answer.*)

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59 “Thomas Moore before and after his entrance into the Indian Residential School in Regina in Saskatchewan in 1874, Library and Archives Canada /NL-022474
Darlene’s Story

The legacy of residential schools lives on among the children of residential school survivors, and even among the children of their children. The following story describes how one child of a residential school student, Darlene Isaac-Downey, finally found peace in her troubled life.

Abused by those who were supposed to protect her from most of her first 26 years, Darlene vividly recalls how her mother shoved a dirty cloth diaper down her throat because she hadn't cleaned her room properly. Some of her teeth were knocked out. Her mother took her into the bathroom and abruptly wiped away the blood that was dripping down her face. “I was screaming, mommy, my teeth are gone!” she said. “I couldn't breathe.” During yet another incident, her mother stabbed her in the back for not putting enough water in a pot for spaghetti.

Eventually, Downey grew so tired of her pain; she wanted to poison her mother's drink, hoping the abuse would stop. Although she suffered cruelty at the hands of her mother, Downey now understands her mother's behavior. Her mother is a survivor of a British Columbia residential school, where she was beaten and abused. “She was only passing on what she was taught,” states Downey.

In 1999, Downey went back to her reserve in Fort St. James, B.C., to visit her mother's grave. “I left a yellow rose,” she said. The next year she went to a sweat (lodge). “It was there I prayed and asked the Creator to help me forgive.” During the sweat, Downey saw a bright light and felt someone breathe on her. It was the moment her prayers were answered. “I cried, knowing that at long last I had made peace with my mom.”

After looking at the pictures and reading Darlene’s story, discuss your answers to the questions that appear below.

1. How would you feel if, as a child, you were forcibly removed from your home and separated from your family for an extended period of time?
2. How do you think this would affect your relationship with your family?
3. How do you think it would affect your life as an adult?

*Answer from previous question on previous page:
Parents of the children had to camp outside the gates of the residential school in the hopes of having a chance to see their children.

Supplementary Discussion Questions

1. Do you believe colonization still exists in any form in Canadian society today?
2. What changes are happening to overcome and go beyond the effects of colonization?

MODULE 3

The EFFECTS OF CULTURE LOSS
ON IDENTITY
MODULE 3: THE EFFECTS OF CULTURE LOSS ON IDENTITY

Module Outline

Overview
As in every culture, it is very important to consider the stages of personal identity development when looking at family practices, values, beliefs and attitudes.

Colonization greatly harmed the cultural identity of Aboriginal people in Canada. Aboriginal spiritual leaders, families and communities encourage the development of cultural identity, but there are challenges in maintaining or regaining cultural practices. Aboriginal people are often living in two different cultures.

Goal
To define the effects of culture loss on identity.

Objective
To learn about culture loss and how it affects identity.

Key Concepts
- The Indian Act was first passed by the Canadian Government in 1876 and although it has had some amendments, it is still enforced today. It defines who can claim Indian status, rights and duties of Status, the reserve system and self-government. Different terms are used to label people and it is important to understand these terms, what they mean for Aboriginal people’s rights and ability to access services, and how they affect Aboriginal people’s sense of identity.
- Identity crisis is confusion, or an uncertainty about one’s place in society and the world. Erikson believed that one’s identity crisis first occurred during adolescence and was the most significant conflict a person would face. His ideas can be used to look at how Aboriginal people have been affected by colonization.
- Today many Aboriginal people are reconnecting with their culture, traditions, and languages.

Tools
- Erikson’s Identity Model
- Cradle Board Craft and Grandmother Teachings
Readings
1. Identifying Terms
2. The Effects of Culture Loss on Identity

Activities
1. Using Erikson’s Identity Model
2. Cradle Board Craft and Grandmother Teachings

Websites
- Aboriginal Cultural Identity
  [http://www2.brandonu.ca/Library/cjns/19.1/cjnv19no1_pg1-36.pdf](http://www2.brandonu.ca/Library/cjns/19.1/cjnv19no1_pg1-36.pdf)
- Re-conceiving Notions of Aboriginal Identity
  [http://iog.ca/sites/iog/files/content_files/1-Bourassa_Peach_paper.pdf](http://iog.ca/sites/iog/files/content_files/1-Bourassa_Peach_paper.pdf)
- The Indian Act: Historical Overview

References
- Sherryl Whitehawk, [http://www.whitehawk.ca](http://www.whitehawk.ca)
Readings

Reading 1

Identifying Terms

The intent of providing these working definitions is not to make distinctions which separate or label people. The intention is to clarify, educate, and create a sense of belonging and commonality for all.

First Nations
A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian", this term is the used to refer to the collective nations of Canada's first people. Although the term “First Nation” is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term "First Nations people" refers to both Status and Non-Status individuals. The term "First Nation" has been frequently used to replace the word "band" in the community’s name.

Indian
The use of this term dates back to the time of Christopher Columbus. He named the people he met on the eastern shores of the Americas “Indians” when he was trying to find a route to India. Historically, the Federal Government used this label when referring to First Nations people.

Aboriginal
The term refers to the original inhabitants of a place or the descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people - Indians, Métis people and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

Inuit
The Inuit live throughout most of the Canadian Arctic and Subarctic in:

- the territory of Nunavut,
- the northern third of Quebec in an area called Nunavik,
- the coastal region of Labrador, in an area called Nunatsiavut,
- in various parts of the Northwest Territories, mainly on the coast of the Arctic Ocean and formerly in the Yukon.

Collectively these areas are known as Inuit Nunangat.

Métis
A person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation.

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62 Adapted from Saskatchewan Learning, “Aboriginal Themed Lesson Plans – Supplemental Resources”
http://www.saskschools.ca/curr_content/aboriginal_res/supplem.htm#12prins
Indigenous
Someone who belongs naturally to a region and did not move there or something which occurs naturally in a region and was not moved there.

(Indian) Status
First Nations people who are registered in the federal offices of Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (in 2011 renamed Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada).

Non-Status
This term refers to First Nations people who have lost their status. For instance, prior to 1986 First Nations women who married non-status men lost their status. Status could also be lost if a man chose to vote. World War veterans lost their status upon returning home. Sometimes women and children also lost status through arbitrary decisions of the Indian Agent.

Treaty Indian
Refers to a First Nations person who comes from a nation that signed a treaty with a government.

Non-Treaty Indian
A First Nations person who comes from a nation that did not sign a treaty with a government. Most First Nations people in British Columbia are non-treaty people.

Registered Indian
This term refers to First Nations people who belong to an Indian band and are registered as such through the federal government.

Band
A community of Status Indians which is recognized under the Indian Act.

Reserve
A Canadian term used to describe land set aside for use by First Nations people.

On Reserve
First Nations people who choose to live on a Reserve. They are governed by the federal government and not the provincial government.

Off Reserve
When Status First Nations people live off a Reserve, provincial governance applies in some areas.
Culture is intimately and intricately connected to the development of an individual’s identity. One’s cultural identity typically informs traditional family practices, values, and belief systems. A strong sense of cultural self-awareness is connected to feelings of belonging and purpose. Conversely, a disruption in the transmission of culture and traditional values typically leads to poor identity development. Colonization greatly harmed the intergenerational transmission of Aboriginal traditional culture and consequently resulted in a devastating blow to the personal identity development of many generations. Today, although many Elders and spiritual leaders in First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities are making great efforts to assist younger generations in reconnecting with their traditional cultural identities, the effects of colonization, in particular, the residential school system, and the overall influence of European culture have created a difficult climate for identity growth.

Culture loss plays a major role in the poor development of personal identity. An identity crisis can be thought of as an overwhelming sense of confusion and uncertainty about one’s place in society. Psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists have been extremely interested in learning about the development of one’s “self”. Erik Erikson, a 20th century developmental psychologist, was particularly curious about personality and social development in human beings. In his extensive work with Sioux people in South Dakota and the Yurok people of northern California, Erikson was provided with a strong foundation for the development of his theoretical frameworks that later resulted in theories describing personal identity development and the effects of culture loss on, what he termed “identity confusion”. The culmination of Erikson’s work on social development resulted in the formation of what is referred to as Erikson’s 8 Stages of Psychosocial Development, or Erikson’s Identity Model.

Erikson’s theory of personal identity development posits three major things:

1. all individuals are confronted with psychosocial stages of development where the individual must establish new basic orientations to herself and her social world;
2. the development of one’s personality and identity continues throughout the entirety of one’s life span; and
3. each stage of development has a positive and negative component to it.

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Erikson identified and described eight stages of psychosocial development in the human life cycle. Each of these stages introduces a new dimension of social interaction and can be successfully navigated by the individual depending on their interactions with the social world. If an individual is, for whatever reason, unable to attain the positive dimension of each stage, problems in personality and identity development will ensue. Because culture is so intimately connected with one’s social world and their experiences and interactions with it, the devastating effects of culture loss on a people can be seen through Erikson’s model as well.

It should be noted that each dimension, positive and negative, is not resolved or unresolved solely in the stage of development it first appears. A child who is unsuccessful at navigating through one stage can be resilient to those effects by positive social interactions at different stages. On the other hand, a child or adult who successfully incorporates a new dimension of social interaction can have that compromised by negative experiences during later stages as well. In other words, it is important to acknowledge that personality and identity development flows back and forth through the life span and does not necessarily move along a linear cumulative track. Change is possible.

**Stage 1: Trust vs. Mistrust (Birth – 1 year)**
In this first stage of life, a child is introduced to the dimensions of trust and mistrust. Depending on the quality of care a child receives, that child will either come to trust the world around her or him, the people in her or his social world, and her or himself. If a baby develops a healthy perception of the world being a safe place and other people as being helpful and dependable, that child will be able to adopt trust as a new dimension of social interaction and will have successfully navigated through this stage of life. Conversely, a baby will develop an attitude of fear and suspicion towards her or himself and the rest of the social world if she or he is neglected, rejected, and/or provided with inconsistent and inadequate care. This will foster a basic mistrust within the child that will be carried through later stages of development.

**Stage 2: Autonomy vs. Doubt (2 years – 3 years)**
The second stage of development coincides with a child’s developing physical and mental abilities to navigate on his or her own through their social and physical worlds. It is in this stage that a child is presented with the opportunity to develop a sense of autonomy and personal agency. When a child is encouraged and able to do things on his or her own, at their own pace, like walk, climb, drop, push, and pull, that child will take pride in their new abilities and accomplishments and develop a sense of personal control. At the other end of the spectrum, if a child is cared for in a way that does not allow him or her to accomplish things on his or her own, he or she will develop doubt in the child’s capabilities. Further, if a child is overly criticized or chronically rushed, he or she will begin to develop a sense of shame. A healthy balance of allowing a child to develop and master skills on her or his own while providing the child with a safe environment and help when needed is ideal in helping to foster autonomy. Too much independence can be equally as harmful as too little.
Stage 3: Initiative vs. Guilt (4 years – 5 years)

Building on the motor and mental abilities that have developed thus far, in this third stage of development the child will begin to initiate purposeful activities of her or his own. For example, children during this stage will often be able to run around, play games, ride bikes, cut things, hit, colour etc. They are also beginning to be able to articulate thoughts and feelings, express emotions, and ask questions. If caregivers encourage these types of activities and respond in ways that reinforce the child’s sense that initiating activity on their own is acceptable, the child will incorporate initiative into her or his personal development. Conversely, if a child is deterred from engaging in physical and intellectual activities, or made to feel as though he or she does not have the freedom to initiate them because “play is bad” or their questions and comments are stupid or unwelcome, the child will develop a sense of guilt. This guilt has the potential to move with the child into later stages of development.

Stage 4: Industry vs. Inferiority (6 years – 11 years)

In this stage of development children begin to develop deductive reasoning skills and the ability to learn and play by rules. They are typically interested in figuring out how things work, how they are made, and what they do. Children are like little detectives during these years. A sense of industry develops in children when they are encouraged to make things, do things, and explore their own creations. This sense of industry is reinforced when they are praised for the results of their creations. On the other hand, when these activities are regarded by caregivers or others in their social environment like classroom teachers, and daycare workers as inappropriate, children will develop a sense of inferiority.

Stage 5: Identity vs. Role Confusion (12 years – 18 years – Adolescence)

Adolescence is a time of continued physiological and mental growth and development. As a result of this growth, teenagers begin to perceive and respond to their social worlds in new ways. Along with these changes comes a heightened sense of self-awareness and self-consciousness. At this point in the psychosocial development of a human being, an individual is confronted with the task of integrating all he or she knows about themselves, the world around them, and their interactions with that world to form what is known as a "personal identity". Success in this endeavour can be measured by the extent to which the individual can make sense of her or his past while moving forward into the future all the while ensuring continuity between the two. If a child is able to accomplish this she or he will develop a strong sense of who they are, where they have been, and where they want to go. At the other end of the spectrum, role confusion occurs when an individual is unable to attain an integrated psychological identity. This may occur in part as a result of the unsuccessful attainment of positive dimensions of social interactions in previous stages of development and/or difficult social circumstances that hinder the development of an integrated identity. Role confusion is characterized by a sense of not knowing oneself, not knowing where one belongs, where one has come from or where one is going. It is clear during this stage that culture and
the transmission of values, beliefs, and traditions play a major role in the development of an integrated psychological identity.

**Stage 6: Intimacy vs. Isolation (Young Adulthood)**
The sixth stage of development takes place during a time that covers late adolescence until middle age. In this time, individuals are typically navigating through "finding oneself". They are concerned with developing careers and family. At this stage, individuals are confronted with the challenge of successfully adopting a sense of intimacy. To do this, individuals must be able to open themselves up to another person; to care about another and share life’s up’s and down’s without the fear of losing themselves along the way. To be able to do this greatly depends on the outcome of previous stages, relationships with caregivers and others thus far, and the current social conditions they find themselves in. If meaningful and intimate relationships are not able to develop in an individual’s life, it is likely that he or she will develop feelings of isolation and a sense of being alone in the world.

**Stage 7: Generativity vs. Self-Absorption (Middle Age)**
The seventh stage of development coincides with the middle-aged years of one’s life. This phase is typically characterized by involvement with family and work. To successfully navigate through this stage and develop a healthy dimension of generativity, an individual must concern her or himself with the progression of society. She or he will help to ensure the success of future generations by attempting to make the world a better place. Those who are unconcerned with the welfare of future generations will develop an attitude of self-absorption and tend towards stagnation in learning and developing as a human being.

**Stage 8: Integrity vs. Despair (Retirement)**
In this final stage of development, an individual is confronted with time for reflection on one’s life, his or her accomplishments, and regrets. If the person is able to look back on life and take satisfaction in what he or she has done, a sense of integrity will develop. However, if the individual perceives his or her life efforts as unsatisfactory or dwells on missed opportunities, a sense of despair and longing for what might have been will inevitably develop.

**Conclusion**
The implications of Erikson’s Identity Model for Aboriginal people and the disruption in culture they have suffered are far-reaching. Erikson’s theory can be a helpful tool in better understanding the circumstances of many Aboriginal people and can help explain the devastating effects of culture loss on psychosocial development and identity formation. Erikson’s analysis can guide our efforts in supporting women in their healing and growing journeys.
Activities

Activity 1

Using Erikson’s Identity Model

Identity Wheel

In summary, Erikson theorized that to develop into a holistically healthy human being, a person first learns to trust through strong attachment to a caregiver. She then develops independence. The next steps are freedom to explore, development of positive social relationships and intimacy, the opportunity to contribute socially through work and parenting and finally to reflect peacefully on the experiences of one’s life. Erikson’s Identity Model can help you to see what development stage(s) were interrupted due to different traumas (residential school, sexual abuse, family violence, etc.). You can use this tool to help guide and support women in their efforts to reclaim their cultural identity. Use the wheel and the following explanation to answer the questions in the review that follows.

Infancy (birth to 18 months)
Identity Aspect: Trust vs. Mistrust Action: Attachment
Children develop a sense of trust when caregivers reliably provide care, and affection. A lack of this will lead to mistrust.

Early Childhood (2 to 3 years)
Identity Aspect: Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt Action: Personal Agency
Children need to develop a sense of personal control over physical skills and a sense of independence. Success leads to feelings of autonomy, failure results in feelings of shame and doubt.

Preschool (3 to 5 years)
Identity Aspect: Initiative vs. Guilt Action: Exploration
Exploration Children need to begin asserting control and power over the environment. Success in this stage leads to a sense of purpose. Children who try to exert too much power experience disapproval, resulting in a sense of guilt.

School Age (6 to 11 years)
Identity Aspect: Industry vs. Inferiority Action: Exploration
Children need to begin asserting control and power over the environment. Success in this stage leads to a sense of purpose. Children who try to exert too much power experience disapproval, resulting in a sense of guilt.

Adolescence (12 to 18 years)
Identity Aspect: Identity vs. Role Confusion Action: Development of Social Relationships
Teens need to develop a sense of self and personal identity. Success leads to an ability to stay true to yourself while failure leads to role confusion and a weak sense of self.

Young Adulthood (19 to 40 years)
Identity Aspect: Intimacy vs. Isolation Action: Development of Intimate Social Relationships
Young adults need to form intimate, loving relationships with other people. Success leads to strong relationships, while failure results in loneliness and isolation.

Middle Adulthood (40 to 65 years)
Identity Aspect: Generativity vs. Stagnation Action: Working and Parenting
Adults need to create or nurture things that will outlast them, often by having children or creating a positive change that benefits other people. Success leads to feelings of usefulness and accomplishment, while failure results in shallow involvement in the world.

Maturity (65 to death)
Identity Aspect: Ego Integrity vs. Despair Action: Reflection on Life
Older adults need to look back on life and feel a sense of fulfillment. Success at this stage leads to feelings of wisdom, while failure results in regret, bitterness, and despair.
Review

1. 56 year old Anna was sexually abused by her uncle when she was 5 years old. She has always had flashbacks and feels ashamed. According to Erikson’s eight stages of development, failure at this stage of development resulted in
   ____ Feelings of inferiority
   ____ A sense of guilt
   ____ A poor sense of self
   ____ Mistrust

2. Helen a 60 year old First Nations woman was deprived of her mother and father from the age of 8 when she was placed in residential school. A negative result has been repeated difficulties in personal relationships and jobs that have lead Helen to have feelings of inferiority. What would be a positive outcome of Helen’s experience?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

3. Barbara is in her 50s. She was sexually abused when she was 12 years old and when she tried to stop it, she was physically abused. Erikson believes that adolescence is the time when we ask the question, “Who am I?” Erikson suggests that the adolescent must integrate the healthy resolution of all earlier conflicts. In not being able to stop the sexual abuse Barbara didn’t develop the basic sense of trust. According to Erikson’s eight stages of development, failure at this stage of development resulted in
   ____ Feelings of shame and doubt
   ____ Sense of guilt
   ____ Feelings of inferiority
   ____ Role confusion and weak sense of self

4. Dorothy is a married woman in her early 60s. She is a non-status Indian because her father lost his status by being fully employed by Ontario Hydro. She regained her status by marrying a man recognized as an Indian in 1942, but once again became non-status when her husband became a permanent employee of the Ontario Railroad in 1962. She and her husband regained their status back through the passing of Bill C-31 in 1985. According to Erikson’s eight stages of development Dorothy is currently in the middle adulthood stage. How has the loss of her status impacted her stages of development up to this point?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
5. Georgina is a 65 year old First Nations woman who remembers her mother hitting her when she was 7 years old because she dumped all the beer out. She was in the residential school most of her childhood, and was abused there. She remembers living in fear from the time she woke up to the time she went to bed. At 16 years old she left the residential school and got married at 17. Her husband drank a lot and she started drinking with him. She drank for 27 years and quit with the help of spiritual guidance. She accepted being a “native person” and started speaking publicly about the suffering at the residential school. According to Erikson’s stages of development which best describes Georgina’s behavior?

___ Ability to stay true to self
___ Successful strong relationships
___ Feelings of usefulness
___ Feels a sense of fulfillment

Answer Key

1. A sense of guilt. In the Preschool (3 to 5 years) Stage a child learns to initiate tasks and grapples with self-control. Expressions of guilt include becoming easily depressed, putting oneself down, slumped posture, poor eye contact, and low energy level. Expressions of initiative include being a self starter, accepting challenges, assuming leadership roles, setting goals and going after them, and moving one’s body easily and freely.

2. A positive outcome would be acquiring skills for and developing competence in work and enjoying learning and achievement. At the school going stage, the child’s world extends beyond the home to the school. The emphasis is on academic performance. Now the child needs to perform and produce good results. As the world expands a bit, the child’s most significant relationship is with the school and neighborhood. Parents are no longer the complete authorities they once were, although they are still important. The residential school played a major role in the outcome of the developmental crisis of industry versus inferiority. If children are praised for doing their best and encouraged to finish tasks then work enjoyment and industry may result. Children’s efforts to master school work help them to grow and form a positive self-concept and a sense of who they are. Children who cannot master their school work may consider themselves a failure and feelings of inferiority may arise. For example, a child may also have felt a sense of shame when the teachers would punish a child for the “failure” of not being able to speak English in front of the class. Shame stems from a sense of self-exposure, a feeling of one’s deficiencies are exposed to others. Teachers also exert a significant impact on children. Most children in lower primary levels tend to heed the words of their teachers more than their parents. The child who had her or his sense of industry encouraged at home can have it derogated at school through an insensitive teacher. Since the First Nations children were not allowed to go home to their parents the negative outcome of feelings of inferiority was reinforced. The negative outcome is the child feels inadequate and questions her or his own ability.

3. Role confusion and weak sense of self. According to Erikson it is during adolescence that children are exploring their independence and developing a sense of self. Children that receive proper encouragement and reinforcement through personal exploration will emerge from this stage with a strong sense of self and a feeling of independence and control. Those who remain unsure of their beliefs and desires will be insecure and confused about themselves and the future.
4. Not being able to maintain status has impacted her development stages having negative outcomes of poor self esteem, confusion of “Who Am I?” and resulting in loneliness and isolation.

5. This phase occurs during old age and is focused on reflecting back on life. Those who are unsuccessful during this phase will feel that their life has been wasted and will experience many regrets. The individual will be left with feelings of bitterness and despair. Those who feel proud of their accomplishments will feel a sense of integrity. Successfully completing this phase means looking back with few regrets and a general feeling of satisfaction. These individuals will attain wisdom, even when confronting death.

Supplementary Discussion Questions

1. In what ways did colonization force First Nations, Inuit and Métis people to lose their identity?
2. During what stage(s) is it more than likely an identity crisis first developed among Aboriginal children?
Activity 2
Cradle Board Craft and Grandmother Teachings

Materials Needed:

- Cradleboard- 4 pieces of wood (cut to shape)
- Leather cord (14 feet)
- Paint-red, white, green, brown, blue
- Tan fabric (6 x 4.5”)- for face
- Green fabric (14.5 x 12” - for blanket
- Blue fabric (7 x 5.5”) - for bonnet
- Eyelet trim (9.5”)- for bonnet
- 1 small towel- for baby
- Sand paper
- Large safety pin

Steps to make cradleboard:

1. Sand pieces of wood, as needed.
2. Paint cradleboard pieces red and decorate with symbols.
3. Assemble the 4 pieces of the cradleboard using the leather cord.
4. Lace leather cord through the top two holes -for hanging.

Steps to make baby:

1. Roll hand towel to form baby.
2. Wrap tan fabric around towel, for baby's face.
3. Then wrap green fabric around baby, to form the blanket.
4. Wrap blue fabric around the head to form the bonnet.
5. Add eyelet trim under the edge of the bonnet.

Grandmother Teachings
After you make your cradleboard and baby read together Some Grandmother Teachings and discuss any reflections you may have on these teachings.
Some Grandmother Teachings

We are all grandmothers – from the time we are born we carry our grandchildren.
Our birth brings “future”.
Since the baby was secure and bundled in the mother’s womb for 9 months, the moss bag imitated this bundle and the baby was secure and safe.
The moss bag gave the baby a sense of security, love and closeness they felt in the womb.

Bundled babies left the baby to learn about the four sacred gifts: seeing, hearing, tasting and smelling.
The moss bag helps the baby to learn about life.
Babies slept better.
A baby girl was carried on the mother’s back facing forward so she could watch her mother clean, cook and sew. It was believed that the girl was observing and learning.
A baby boy was carried facing back so he could observe the wild life, the weather patterns in the sky. This prepared him to become a hunter, provider and protector.
Babies in moss bags were content.

The moss bag was used as a teaching tool to young people.
Parenting skills were taught to children as young as 2 years old.

Animal hide was used. This was sewn together with sinew.
Dark sturdy cloth was used in later years.
Used material was often used.
The symbols on the moss bag often family/clan symbols used for protection.
The color red and purple were often used for babies that came from the blood line of Chiefs.
The color green was used for babies that came from a family line of healers. The moss was only changed at bedtime and the morning.
The color yellow and orange were used by the drummers and singers. (sun)
Moss was rinsed and dried in the sun or by the fire to be reused. Soiled moss was burnt.
Northern tribes used moss.
Southern tribes used bull rushes.

A pregnant woman should not make the moss bag as it would be very difficult for the mother if the baby died at birth; it was also believed that the making of the moss bag would put too much expectation on the little child to come into the world. The baby would then not be able to fulfill the expectation.
Family members should not make a moss bag for a pregnant woman for the same reasons as the above listed reasons.
Babies were kept in the moss bags until they were 5-6 months old.
Some tribes had cradle boards that could be hung in a tree.
Moss bags were reused many times with many children.
Babies only had one moss bag.
The father collected the moss for the moss bag.  

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65 Sherryl Whitehawk, [http://www.whitehawk.ca](http://www.whitehawk.ca)
Module Outline

Overview
Aboriginal societies were largely governed by unwritten customs and codes of conduct. For collective decision-making, the family was the basic unit. Other units include village, clan, tribe, and nation. Storytelling is a primary method of passing on cultural knowledge to the younger generation. Elders refer to their stories as “teachings” since they are used to pass on important aspects of the culture, such as local history, traditions and values.

Goal
To understand how values are connected to Aboriginal culture.

Objective
To learn about cultural values as expressed in stories passed down between generations.

Key Concepts
- Being clear and thoughtful about our values helps us to make decisions which result in healthy communities.
- Oral stories are vital to the continuity of indigenous cultures and are passed down from generation to generation. Oral stories can differ considerably among various groups. Storytellers are highly respected and honored members of their communities because they are the keepers of the historical record of a people’s culture. Within the Aboriginal communities there is an effort underway to ensure that traditional values are understood and made the center of life.

Tools
- Tipi Teachings
- Cultural Teachings: First Nations Protocols and Methodologies

Readings
1. The Importance of Narrative
2. Cree Teachings
3. Traditional Code of Ethics

Activities
1. Understanding Cultural Practices
2. My Value System
3. Ethical Dilemmas
Websites
- Canada’s First Nations [http://www.ucalgary.ca/applied_history/tutor/firstnations/myths.html]

References
- McAdam, Sylvia, *Cultural Teachings: First Nations Protocols and Methodologies*, Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, Saskatoon, 2010
- Utah Education Network, [http://www.uen.org/.../downloadFile.cgi?...MY_VALUE_SYSTEM...MY_VALUE_SYSTEM]
Readings

Reading 1

The Importance of Narrative

The two books The Spell of the Sensuous and Cree Narrative Memory explain the history and importance of the oral tradition.

The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World
By David Abram, Vintage Books, 1997

The Spell of the Sensuous documents the journey from universal reliance on the oral tradition to the development of the alphabet and the now common preference for the written word. In this excerpt Abram discusses the importance of and the dynamics of storytelling in oral cultures.

"Without a versatile writing system, there is simply no way to preserve, in any fixed, external medium, the accumulated knowledge regarding particular plants (including where to find them, which parts of them are edible, which poisonous, how they are best prepared, what ailments they may cure or exacerbate), and regarding specific animals (how to recognize them, what they eat, how best to track or hunt them), or even regarding the land itself (how best to orient oneself in the surrounding terrain, what landforms to avoid, where to find water or fuel). Such practical knowledge must be preserved, then, in spoken formulations that can be easily remembered, modified when new facts are learned, and retold from generation to generation. Yet not all verbal formulations are amenable to simple recall – most verbal forms that we are conversant with today are dependent upon a context of writing. To us, for instance, a simple mental list of the known characteristics of a particular plant or animal would seem the easiest and most obvious formulation. Yet such lists have no value in an oral culture; without a visible counterpart that can be brought to mind and scanned by the mind’s eye, spoken lists cannot be readily recalled and repeated. Without writing, knowledge of the diverse properties of particular animals, plants, and places can be preserved only by being woven into stories, into vital tales wherein the specific characteristics of the plant are made evident through a narrated series of events and interactions. Stories, like rhymed poems or songs, readily incorporate themselves into our felt experience; the shifts of action echo and resonate our own encounters – in hearing or telling the story we vicariously live it, and the travails of its characters embed themselves into our own flesh. The sensuous, breathing body is, as we have seen, a dynamic, ever-unfolding form, more a process than a fixed or unchanging object. As such, it cannot readily appropriate inert “facts” or “data” (static nuggets of “information” abstracted from the lived situations in which

66 Goody, Jack, The Domesti-
cation of the Savage Mind, Cambridge University Press, 1977 and Ong, Walter J., Orality and
Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word, Methuen, New York, 1982, p.99, as referenced in Abram p.120.
they arise). Yet the living body can easily assimilate other dynamic or eventful processes, like the unfolding of a story, appropriating each episode or event as a variation of its own unfolding.

And the more lively the story – the more vital or stirring the encounters within it – the more readily it will be in-corporated. Oral memorization calls for lively, dynamic, often violent, characters and encounters. If the story carries knowledge about a particular plant or natural element, then that entity will often be cast, like all of the other characters, in a fully animate form, capable of personlike adventures and experiences, susceptible to the kinds of setbacks or difficulties that we know from our own lives. In this manner the character or personality of a medicinal plant will be easily remembered, its poisonous attributes will be readily avoided, and the precise steps in its preparation will be evident from the sequence of events in the very legend that one chants while preparing it. One has only to recite the appropriate story... about a particular plant, animal, or element in order to recall the accumulated cultural knowledge regarding that entity and its relation to the human community.  

“By invoking a dimension or a time when all entities were in human form, or when humans were in the shape of other animals and plants, these stories affirm human kinship with the multiple forms of the surrounding terrain. They thus indicate the respectful, mutual relations that must be maintained with natural phenomena, the reciprocity that must be practiced in relation to other animals, plants, and the land itself, in order to ensure one’s own health and to preserve the well-being of the human community."

“The curvature of time in oral cultures is very difficult to articulate on the page, for it defies the linearity of the printed line. Yet to fully engage, sensorially, with one’s earthly surrounding is to find oneself in a world of cycles within cycles within cycles. The ancestral stories of an oral culture are recounted again and again, – only thus can they be preserved – and this regular, often periodic repetition serves to bind the human community to the ceaseless round dance of the cosmos. The mythic creation stories of these cultures are not, like Western biblical accounts of the world’s creation, descriptions of events assumed to have happened only once in the far-off past. Rather, the very telling of these stories actively participates in a creative process that is felt to be happening right now, an ongoing emergence whose periodic renewal actually requires such participation.”

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67 Ong, pp 43-45 as referenced in Abram p.120.  
69Abram, op. cit., p. 121.  
70 Abram, p. 186.
Cree Narrative Memory: From Treaties to Contemporary Times
By Neal McLeod, Purich Publishing Limited, 2007

Cree Narrative Memory tells of the importance of storytelling in Cree culture in Saskatchewan in terms of all aspects of Cree society including how storytelling is used to describe the process of colonization which the Cree people endured and how it can be used to create a vision for the future. The excerpts come from the Introduction to the book and the conclusion. The entire book has many profound insights into Indigenous philosophy, and in particular Cree tradition and history.

“As the late Lakota writer Vine Deloria, Jr. noted, Indigenous people tend to envision their collective memory in terms of space rather than time. It is the sense of place that anchors our stories; it is the sense of place that links us together as communities. Indeed, it is the sense of space that connects us to other beings and the rest of creation.

The connection Indigenous people have to the land is housed in language. Through stories and words, we hold the echo of generational experience, and the engagement with land and territory. nêhiyawêwin, Cree language – perhaps more poetically rendered as “the process of making Cree sound” – grounds us, and binds us with other living beings, and marks these relationships.

The “echo” metaphor has often been used by Cree storytellers as a way of describing the past coming up to the present through stories. The late Jim Kâ-Nipitêhtêw, an elder from Onion Lake, said that what he knew was like an “echo of older voices from a long time ago.” Once, when Edwin Tootoosis was visiting my father he told me, “môy ê-kistawêt” (“It does not echo”). He was referring to the land, and the fact that the land no longer had sound in the same way it had before.

I have heard stories of a great deer that lived by a hill near Prince Albert. This deer was able to hear from a long distance. As the landscape was changing, with the coming newcomers, the deer, with this exceptional capacity to hear, retreated into the earth.

With the coming of newcomers to the territory of the Cree, the landscape was transformed as well through a naming process. kistapinânihk became Prince Albert. Regina, named for the Queen, is known as oskana kâ-asastêki (pile of bones) in Cree; instead of celebrating the empire, the name was a marker for the retreat of the buffalo from the land. Today, the road maps of western Canada show little evidence that Indigenous people dwell in the territory, or that we have marked the place with our memory.”

72 Kâ-Nipitêhtêw, Jim, kâtâayuk: Saskatchewan Indian Elders, as referenced in McLeod, p. 6.
“Cree narrative memory is more than simply storytelling. A skilled storyteller strings narratives together to suit a particular audience. Some details may be downplayed or accentuated, depending on what the occasion calls for. As the storyteller weaves his tale, there are elements of description and analysis: the storyteller describes events and experiences, but also analyzes this experience. The stories are reflected upon and critically examined, and they are brought to life by being integrated into the experience of the storyteller and the audience.”

“Cree narrative memory is a large, intergenerational, collective memory. Cree narratives form part of a larger, collective memory. In Louise Halfe’s poetry collection, Blue Marrow, there are many insights regarding memory. The opening poem begins: “The walk began before I was a seed. / My mother strung my umbilical cord in my moccasins.” This is a Cree practice, but it also metaphorically describes how she carries the memory of the Ancient Ones with her. The walk is the return home through memory after her “memory went to sleep”: the place of storytelling wherein the old people rest. She depicts the collective memory of Cree people as food, essential for the soul:

“Grandmothers hold me. I must pass all that I possess,
Every morsel to my children. These small gifts
To see them through life. Raise my fist. Tell the story.
Tear down barbed-wire fences.”

She sees collective memory as a gift and a responsibility, an intergenerational process. The stories found in memory help people find their way out of colonialism.

Halfe uses another metaphor for memory: “Oh nôhkomak [grandmothers], / your Bundles I carry inside.” Comprehension of Cree philosophy and worldview is necessary for understanding Cree historical experience. Often, stories are removed from this context. Winona Stevenson uses the metaphor of the “bundle” to describe stories: “The bundle is plundered, the voice silenced, bits are extracted to meet empirical academic needs, and the story dies. In the process, the teachings and responsibilities deriving from the social relations inherent in student-teacher relations are forgotten.” A bundle is nayahcikan, which means “something you put on your back, something you carry.” A bundle is a spiritual embodiment of collective memory and is added to and subtracted from as time goes on. Songs are associated with bundles, and the combination of bundles and songs are passed on within families.

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74 McLeod, pp. 7-8
75 Louise Bernice Half, Blue Marrow, p. 1, as referenced in McLeod, p. 8.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid, p. 7.
79 Winona Stevenson, Decolonizing Tribal Histories, p. 79, as referenced in McLeod, p. 9.
Much of collective memory passes through us through song and prayer."\(^{80}\)

"Part of decolonizing Cree consciousness is for collective narrative memory to be awakened. As Halfe writes, \textquote[81,82]{nôhkomak are waking up, / the drum vibrates, / lifts the mass of dawn.}"

"During the 1970s, elders workshops at the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College, Eli Bear from Little Pine reserve noted the importance of the return of Cree memory: We are trying to tell people of what was given to us as an Indian nation. We are trying to wake people up, to have respect for our ceremonies and all the Indian ways of life. Because nowadays we seem to hear the elders from a distance; it is as if they are fading away. These elders knew about these medicines and they die without leaving us the way to make these, or where to get them. All these things we don’t know about now. But the elders they tried to tell us about these but we didn’t listen very hard to them.\(^{83}\)

Since the 1870s, the Cree people have experienced a great deal of change, often traumatic. It is to these elders of the Cree-speaking people that we owe the survival of our collective soul. In a small way I have tried to document some of the stories that made my grandparents and other grandparents the people they were. Their passage through the world is a rich pathway that we can all learn from."\(^{84}\)

"The old people at the time of treaties were thinking ahead to the future, ôtê nîkân. They were thinking about how their children would live in the future. Some like mistahi-maskwa, [Big Bear], raised the questions that Chipmunk raised about whether what the Queen was offering could replace kâ-miyikowisiyahk (what the Creator has given us). They thought ahead and wanted to make sure their descendents would have a way of making a living. kawâhkatos also pointed to this general concern.

Great stories challenge the status quo. They challenge the social space around us, and the way society structures the world. Great stories urge us to rethink that social space. Great storytellers are embodiments of the social climate around them. Through storytelling, they are able to question the world around us. They are able to question the injustices that are often inflicted on them. Storytelling is a subversive act that causes people to question the society around them. Storytellers hold the core of a counter memory, and offer another political possibility.

\(^{82}\) McLeod, pp. 8-9.
\(^{81}\) Halfe, p. 27, as referenced in MacLeod, p. 9.
\(^{83}\) McLeod, p. 9.
\(^{83}\) Eli Bear, "Cree/Assiniboine Elders’ Workshop," Jan. 29, 1974, as referenced in McLeod p. 10.
\(^{84}\) McLeod, p. 10.
Storytellers have to remember the past, and they have to remember the language. They have to remember the stories that made their ancestors the people they were. Their bodies become houses of ancient sound. But storytellers also have a responsibility to the future. They have a responsibility to imagine a different world, where Cree stories will thrive, but also wherein the social space will be just. One of the central tasks of great storytellers is what I call narrative imagination.”

85 McLeod, pp. 99-100.
My English name is Mary Lee. I am from Pelican Lake, in northern Saskatchewan. I have five children, three girls and two boys. Together those children have given me twenty-three grandchildren and four great grandchildren, two boys and two girls.

There are women older than me who are sometimes made to feel that, because they don’t have the English language or education, they don’t have a right to speak. But those are the powerful ones, the sacred ones, because they were not disrupted in their journey. My mother was one of those women. Her knowledge was pure, uninterrupted by residential school. It wasn’t written knowledge; it was a life she lived.

My mother spoke only Cree. From a very early age, she instilled in her children the value of our culture and language. She had two daughters and five sons. All of us speak Cree and have gone to ceremonies like the Sun Dance and the Sweat Lodge since we were little children. She shared with us the teachings and meanings of these ceremonies. And she also shared her teachings with women in the community, because she was given the gift of helping women in their journey to becoming mothers. In English, you would call her a midwife. Many of her teachings to me were about the sacredness of motherhood and how to help women raise healthy children in the world. She retained these teachings because her life was not interrupted by residential school. So she was able to parent differently, with the knowledge that was given to her as a child. That is why I say all of my teachings, everything I know, that it came from her.

Everything my mother learned came from her grandmother, who raised her when both of her parents died. So she learned everything from two generations before her. I am fortunate; because of my great grandmother and mother. I can share the teachings that at one time were known to all Cree women, like the teepee teachings and teachings on the value of women.

So in honor of Cree women everywhere I will share these teachings with you.

Community Background

I work in an Aboriginal high school as an Elder Counselor. The youth I work with struggle with their identity and sense of culture. I try to instill in them the teachings that I have learned, especially with the young women. I talk about teachings, not to alter or change them, but to inspire the youth to seek out more information. I can only talk about the teachings as they were told to me. If people want to learn more, then it’s up to them to journey forth and look for elders that can continue to advise. The expectation is that people have to go on to seek it out on their own. This is how teachings are shared and acquired.

In addition to my work at the high school, I also work in the provincial women’s jail, Pine Grove. It is the only women’s prison in the province. There are kookums (grandmothers) in there, and mothers in their thirties, and also very young adults, nineteen and twenty, that shouldn’t be in there. I often think there should be other ways of dealing with criminal activities besides housing people behind bars.

I go there to help the women remember who they are - that they are more than their classification as offenders. For some of them, that is all they know - they’ve been told they’ve broken the law and that’s their record. When I visit with them, I see them as women. I look at them as I would any other woman: that sacred being that was given that responsibility to bring life, and to bring about warmth and comfort in their communities and families. I don’t look at them as what they’ve done. Some of them have done awful things. But I like to believe that their spirit hasn’t been completely broken.

So I spend time with them, to talk about the teepee teachings. And some of the teachings I go into in depth - because I know by looking at them what they need the most out of the fifteen teachings of the teepee that I talk about. I’ll go into those teachings in depth with them, because I hope that there is a healing process beginning to happen.

In this way I practice traditional counseling. I don’t rely on the book learned counseling methods, sociology and all that stuff. I use it when I have to, but I prefer to use the counseling methods that the old people used. They believed you never trick the brain or work with the head to make that person think they’re okay. You work with the spirit because the healing of the spirit will carry that person longer.
Diagram for Cree Curriculum

Diagram for CREE Curriculum

1. INTRODUCTION
2. CENTRE
3. CEREMONY
4. STRUCTURE
5. TIPI POLES
8. THE WEST
9. THE NORTH
7. THE SOUTH
6. THE EAST
10. THE DRUM

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Cree (Nehiyawak) Teaching

By Elder Mary Lee

**Introduction**

As Cree people, we were given the gift of being named for the four parts of human beings. *Nehiyawak*, we were called.

It means being balanced in the four parts that are found in the four directions of the Medicine Wheel. These four parts for human beings are the spiritual, physical, emotional and mental aspects of the self. We need to try and balance these four parts that were given to us, to function as people.

The fire is in the centre of the Medicine Wheel. That is where the meaning of the teachings comes from. For me this fire is also the self. When you look at the Medicine Wheel, you start from self. And as you look out, you make your circle.

This is how the Medicine Wheel represents the life journey of people.

The old people will tell you it is life itself. Look at the four seasons and follow the sun. Spring in the east, summer in the south, fall in the west and winter in the north. It tells the whole story of how all life came into being abundantly bright, rising in the east and then fading away as it moves west and north. All life rises and sets like the sun.

What we do in between is our journey. This is where the gifts of the four directions are needed - the gifts of the spirit, physical body, emotions and mind - and where we need to find balance within these four realms. Today, many people are out of balance because they tend to only favour two realms of self, the mental and the physical. They forget to look after their spiritual side, and often don’t know how to express and deal with their emotions.

People think that by showing anger they are expressing their emotions. But that is not what it means to be emotional. Anger is a defense mechanism that protects the emotional part of us. The sensitive part of us is our emotional realm, the part that feels the truth about what’s around us. But we’ll show anger before we’ll show that true part of ourselves because we have learned to be embarrassed by it. We’ll get angry because that’s accepted. Sadly, some people even think it is respected. But we won’t show our true emotions, our vulnerability and sensitivity, because that is not accepted. So we have learned to replace those things with anger.

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88 Ibid.
As for the spirit, there never seems to be enough time. People think you have to make a commitment of time through long periods of devotion to be spiritual. But being spiritual is remembering. It is remembering that the first thing that was gifted to you when you came into being was the spirit. Sadly, we tend to forget that and then we neglect our spirit and take it for granted. So we need to remember where we came from and the gifts that were given to us as human beings.

This way of being in the world was taught to me by my mother through the teachings of making a tipi. The tipi teachings, as I call them today, relate to nurturing the four aspects of the self, the spiritual, physical, emotional and mental, which are rooted in the four directions. The tipi is also a symbol of the women, so in honour of my mother and great grandmother and Cree women everywhere, I will share some of these tipi teachings with you.
The tipi teachings are passed on. When I talk about the teachings, it’s not to alter or change them; I can only share how it was told to me. There are many, many teachings that belong here with the tipi. I won’t be able to share all of them with you. But in sharing a little bit of the meaning it is hoped that you will continue on your journey to seek the teachings that you require. You’re never done learning.

For us, the word tipi doesn’t mean anything. There is a Cree word we use today; we say migawap. But traditionally, when my mother was teaching me about the tipi, she would say Kitche Migawap.

In the beginning, it didn’t come in the shape of a tipi. It came in the shape of a dome, which we still use today. It’s known as a Sweat Lodge. When that lodge came to us, you couldn’t make a fire in there. The people would gather the rocks outside, heat them up, and then bring them into a pit in the middle. This would keep them warm during the night. But they couldn’t make a fire in there to cook. They had to do all their cooking outside.

So when the lodge became bigger through the structure of the tipi, they could make a fire inside. My mother said that the women were named after that fire in the centre of the tipi, which brought that warmth and comfort. In the Cree language, the centre, the fire, is iskwuptew. “Woman” in our language is iskwew, more than one woman, iskwewuk. We were named after that fire, iskwuptew, and that is very powerful, because it honours the sacredness of that fire.

In our language, for old woman, we say, Notegweu. Years ago we used the term Notaygeu, meaning when an old lady covers herself with a shawl. A tipi cover is like that old woman with a shawl. As it comes around the tipi, it embraces all those teachings, the values of community that the women hold. No matter how many children and great grandchildren come into that circle of hers, she always still has room. And if you put it up right, the poles never show on the bottom, and that tipi stands with
dignity, just as, years ago, women always covered their legs with the skirt, which also represents the sacred circle of life. And when you put the flaps up, it teaches you how we embrace life itself. It’s like a woman standing there with her arms out, saying “Thank you” to everything.

That is what the tipi is - it is the spirit and body of woman, because she represents the foundation of family and community. It is through her that we learn the values that bring balance into our lives. That is why, when you construct a tipi, it involves ceremony: because the ceremony of making a tipi represents the value of women’s teachings.
Tipi Ceremony

When I make something, it’s not just to make it; it’s got meaning to it. It’s like when I pick sweetgrass, and when I braid it, there’s a prayer that goes in there. Whoever I give that sweetgrass to, when they burn it, those prayers come out, and they help that person.

It’s the same with a tipi. When I make a tipi, when it goes up the first time, it has to face the east, because a tipi to me is not just a symbol, it’s a ceremony.

The doorway is very important in ceremony. For ceremonial purposes, the Cree face the doorway east because that represents the beginning of creation.

Today, people forget that. That is why, when I am asked to make a tipi for someone, I take them through the ceremony so that they can embrace the true meaning and teaching of the tipi. I hope that it is a way to touch their spirit and provide guidance for them on their journey.

Before making a tipi, I offer tobacco. I don’t just stand and let that tobacco fall; I sit on the ground with humbleness, because I am offering something for something I will use from Mother Earth. Because it’s not ours; everything we take is borrowed; we’re borrowing time; we’re borrowing all the things we need to make a tipi.

I also ask whoever I am building the tipi with to offer tobacco with humbleness. I usually ask the women in that family to offer the tobacco, because the tipi is a woman’s symbol; and the ceremony is a woman’s teaching. The men can be part of the ceremony and can help to put up a tipi but they can’t hold the teachings, because they are not women. The men need the women to be present during the making of the tipi to take in those teachings and to offer that sacred tobacco to Mother Earth because that is all part of the ceremony.

I learned this through doing it, and through the instruction of my mother, who taught me that tobacco must be given for each stage of the process. So when I go out to the land and cut down the tipi poles, I make offerings of tobacco each time. This is how we honour the resources and gifts of our Mother Earth. She has gifted us for a very long time.

Today, people use tipis more or less for symbolic reasons. But I have made the commitment to share the teachings of the tipi each time I put one up. I do this because the tipi is a ceremony that reminds us of the balance we must bring to our lives and of the powerful teachings that the women have.
Tipi Structure

Today I make tipis that stand twenty-two feet high, but years ago, tipis were maybe twelve or thirteen feet. They didn’t have the material for large structures because they used hide instead of canvas and rocks instead of ground pegs. That is why today you can still find circles of rocks, or tipi rings, on the land. It wouldn’t make sense to have your tipi too high, because the winds and storms would catch it.

As time passed, the rocks were replaced with chokecherry ground pegs because they were one of the harder woods once they were dry. Today I cut and peel spruce for the tipi poles and I use sticks to adjust the front flaps of the tipi entryway. My mother used a bone from the moose leg to close the tipi in the front.

My mother never used a measuring tape, or mapped things out mathematically – she just cut out her tipi and made it. And each time it was perfect.

The Cree people use 15 poles to make the structure of the tipi. For every pole in that tipi, there is a teaching. So there are 15 teachings that hold up the tipi. Other Nations use 16 poles, and maybe more, I don’t know. All I know is what I know I was taught and that is the teachings for 15 poles.

The tipi does not have to face east all the time; it can rotate in any direction. It is only the first time that I request that the tipi face east, because of the opening ceremony.

To start, we take three poles and bind them together to make a tripod. Each pole also has a very specific meaning. These three together fortify the structure. They are obedience, respect and humility. Notice the poles, the way they stand. If they stood straight up and down, they couldn’t support a tipi. But balanced properly together, they are able to reinforce each other. There’s a
teaching in that. In order to make a family, you need three: the two parents and the child, to make that balance.

The tops of the poles have many teachings. Each one points in a different direction. We are like those poles. We all need the strength and support of our families and communities, but we accept that we all have different journeys and point in different directions.

The poles also teach us that no matter what version of the Great Spirit we believe in, we still go to the same Creator from those many directions and belief systems; we just have different journeys to get there. And where the poles come out together at the top, it’s like they’re creating a nest. And they also resemble a bird with its wings up when it comes to land, and that’s another teaching: the spirit coming to land, holding its wings up.

Tipi Poles
We could talk about each of these poles for a long time; each one holds many teachings, and takes a long time and much experience to truly understand. I will give you some words on each pole, to give a beginning idea of what the poles represent.

**Obedience**
Obedience means accepting guidance and wisdom from outside of ourselves, using our ears before our mouth. We learn by listening to traditional stories, by listening to our parents or guardians, our fellow students and our teachers. We learn by their behaviors and reminders, so that we know what is right and what is wrong.

**Respect**
Respect means giving honor to our Elders and fellow students, to the strangers that come to visit our community, and to all of life. We must honor the basic rights of all others.
Humility
We are not above or below others in the circle of life. We feel humbled when we understand our relationship with Creation. We are so small compared to the majestic expanse of Creation, just a “strand in the web of life.” Understanding this helps us to respect and value life.

Happiness
After the tripod is up, the fourth pole completes your doorway. This fourth pole teaches us happiness. We must show some enthusiasm to encourage others. Our good actions will make our ancestors happy in the next world. This is how we share happiness.

Love
If we are to live in harmony we must accept one another as we are, and accept others who are not in our circle. Love means to be good and kind to one another and to our selves.

Faith
We must learn to believe and trust others, to believe in a power greater than ourselves, whom we worship and who gives us strength to be a worthy member of the human race. To sustain our spirituality, we need to walk it every day. Not just sometimes, but every day. It’s not just once a week; it’s your life.

Kinship
Our family is important to us. This includes our parents, brothers and sisters, who love us and give us roots that tie us to the lifeblood of the earth. It also includes extended family: grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, and their in-laws and children. They are also our brothers and sisters and give us a sense of belonging to a community.

Cleanliness
Today when we talk about cleanliness, most people think hygiene, and that’s very important. But years ago, when old people talked about cleanliness, they meant spiritual cleanliness. When I used to sit with the old Kookums in their tipis, spiritually, they were so powerfully clean. Clean thoughts come from a clean mind and this comes from our spirituality. With a clean mind and sense of peace within we learn not to inflict ills on others. Good health habits also reflect a clean mind.

Thankfulness
We learn to give thanks: to always be thankful for the Creator’s bounty, which we are privileged to share with others, and for all the kind things others do for us.
Sharing
We learn to be part of a family and community by helping with the provisions of food and other basic needs. Through the sharing of responsibilities we learn the value of working together and enjoying the fruits of our labor.

Strength
We are not talking about physical strength, but spiritual strength. That was instilled in us when we were young people through fasting. We must learn to be patient in times of trouble and not to complain but to endure and show understanding. We must accept difficulties and tragedies so that we may give others strength to accept their own difficulties and tragedies.

Good Child-rearing
Children are gifts from the Creator. We are responsible for their wellbeing, spiritually, emotionally, physically, and intellectually, since they are blessed with the gift of representing the continuing circle of life, which we perceive to be the Creator’s will.

Hope
We must look forward to moving toward good things. We need to have a sense that the seeds we are planting will bear fruit for our children, families and communities.

Ultimate Protection
This is the ultimate responsibility to achieve the balance and well being of the body, mind, emotions and spirit for the individual, the family, the community and the nation.

Control Flaps
The control flaps on a tipi teach that we are all connected by relationship and that we depend on each other. Having respect for and understanding this connection creates and controls harmony and balance in the circle of life. When we don’t know how to use the flaps, it gets all smoky inside the tipi, and you can’t see, which is like life – because if we can’t live in balance, we can’t see clearly where we’re going.

Conclusion - Poles
For every time that a pole is added, a rope goes around to bind that pole into place. You have to be there and see it to appreciate that teaching. That rope is a sacred bond, binding all the teachings together until they are all connected.

I have shared these teachings with you with the hope that they will help keep the women strong and will help our communities to nurture healthy, balanced people.
East
The woman spirit comes from the east, where the sun rises, where our warmth and vision starts. And the spirit of women brings that warmth into the home.

One of our four sacred medicines, sage, also resides here in the east, because it is women's medicine. It comes from the buffalo plant that was gifted to the women. It is called prairie buffalo sage. There are many sacred teachings about the plants and medicines, and of how they decided to be where they are, but that is another teaching for another time.

Here in the east is the beginning of all life, when the spirit is conceived and gifted to the womb of the mother-to-be. And because that being is identified as a person at conception, the older women taught us how to balance ourselves during that nine-month journey, how to look after ourselves so that journey would not be disrupted. My mother would sit and talk with the young women and the men too, about how to make that connection with that spirit, before the child was even born. Because it hears your voice, has your emotions, feels your spiritual state during that nine-month journey. She used to say, “Your child can hear everything you say, feels all your emotions.”

My mother also taught how human life is conditioned in the first year. She called it Eshkawasis, meaning “new child.” She stressed the importance of this first year - that the new child’s journey in this time should be especially safe. For example, you would always carry your child with two hands, with the greatest respect; you don’t carry such a special gift under one arm.

A newborn is very powerful, the greatest of all teachers. They can sense things that are not the norm, and let you know, protect you spiritually. We call it having a nightmare, but that’s not what it is. And they continue to teach us as they grow. For example, they will crawl, stand, fall down and get up again, and learn to walk. My mother used to say, “That child teaches you what life’s going to be - you
don’t just get up once and walk forever - you will fall, and you will have to get up. Maybe you’ll need to crawl a little bit, but you will get up and walk again.”

She said, “look at that child, how they struggle. They teach us that we don’t give up just because we fell. Even as they get older, they fall by playing. Again, that’s a reminder: we must always persist in getting up and doing things again and again.”

My mother also taught us to give thanks to Mother Earth for accepting our child to walk upon her. When that time comes, a celebration feast happens, and Elders come and pray for that young person on the next stages of their journey.
South
Here in the south all life is active. It’s the time of summer. Our physical aspect is represented here. In this part of our journey, we become young people. The young are very physical beings, very active, continuously moving, changing themselves, even their moods. We have good energy at this time of our journey.

A lot of people today are scared of youth; we don’t quite understand or trust them. But there’s a reason why: we’ve kept them apart from that circle of life. We need to respect youth, and accept them into our world. In our Cree language, there’s no word for “teenagers.” They’re young adults. And we need to encourage youth. We don’t need to say, “You’re bad,” because there are no bad people; we only do bad things.

But sometimes youth need to be reminded by the old people. And that’s okay. I notice older people saying, “I can’t tell my grandchildren that, because they don’t believe me, they don’t listen; they think I’m wrong.” Say it anyway. Like my mother used to say, “You don’t hear everything today, but someday you will hear what’s been said. When you need it you will hear it.” So it’s good to take young people to older people, to have them sit there and listen. Because they might be blocking out that day, but their spirit never blocks out; their spirit will take in the information.

And we should take the youth to see different people. My mother used to say, “If you only go to one elder all your life, you will only know what that one elder knows.” So expand your wings and learn. Go and listen. You might not agree, but hear how that person is teaching. Hear the teachings from other nations, and remember yours. But don’t ever contradict or correct them. Only when you’re asked do you share. Young people sometimes disrespect the Elders when they’re talking about stories and teachings; they’re correcting them. But that Elder can only share with you what they’ve heard and what they remember. Maybe you heard it different, but that’s okay. If you listen, you’ll be richer, because now you’ve heard different sides of the story.
Here in the West is the time of adulthood, of responsibility. You’re responsible at that time for other people. It’s also the parenting stage of your life journey when you have that bond with the child in the eastern direction.

And most often we are so touched by our children that we want them to have a better life than we have as adults.

And those children teach us, help us to remember to go back and do things over and over again even when we fall. It’s never a smooth journey when you are an adult because you have a lot of responsibility. You’re responsible for the children that you brought into this world. And once you’re a parent, you’re a parent for life.

So at that time, thinking about those responsibilities, people tend to seek advice from older people and sometimes the emotions and stories from your childhood experience come out at that time.

That’s why that gift of emotion is also in the West with the adult. We can do our own thinking and speak out more as adults we’re stronger, more capable, if we have grown in a good way. And if we know we need to get healthy, that’s usually when we come out and talk about issues that have held us back in our journeys to be good people, to live a good life.

It’s a time to let go of anger and disclose emotion because a lot of times emotion turns to anger and that’s when it’s no good. It can be very harmful. It’s better if the emotion turns into a release through crying, which is a good way. It is a time when you can process your emotions and no longer be afraid or shy, when you are brave enough to tell your story. If there’s anything we need to get rid of most often that’s when we do it on our adult journey because sometimes we keep our mourning, our loses in family and life until that time when we realize we need to let go if we’re going to have a healthy journey.

And it often takes that long until we are adults to finally grow that way, when we are faced with great responsibility.
We started from the east, we went to the south, and in the emotion part we went to the west in our journey. That's like any ceremony we go to. We start our ceremonies in the east, and then we'll finish in the northern direction, which is our life journey. We finish our journeys as older people in that direction - which is the mental part of our journey.
I think the mental part is there because we’re capable then to stop and think, and look at our journeys and foresee the journeys of our people. Because we have the capability to be mentally intact, to know a lot of things that are needed in our communities, in our people. We have time to think; we’re not so rushed, not so physical any more. We went through our emotional stage of life. Now we are sort of the thinking part of the community, of the family. We are the ones that make decisions for families. We’re supposed to be the brain people; if we’ve looked after ourselves, we get to that stage in our journey.

And in this place we also have that relationship with the youth – who are looking to us from the south.

And we’re in that stage for a certain amount of time. Then we go back into infancy. You often see old people starting to forget, starting to act like children. They need help to walk, to be fed. We go back into that spirit world of being an infant one more time. In Aboriginal society that was accepted. When you see old people go into that stage in their journey, beyond their mental capabilities and back into that infancy, spirit, they talk a lot about their childhood, remember it like it happened today, remember those stories so vividly, but they won’t remember much about their adulthood or their youth. They’ll remember, because they’re going back into that journey. My grandmother used to talk about how they played and how they climbed trees. She was 92 years old and she would tell me stories about when she was little, being a child. Because she was going back into being a child one more time.
The Drum

There’s a teaching in the four directions of the Medicine Wheel about responsibility and relationship between the four stages of life. This teaching comes from the teaching of the drum, the circle that is the drum. When you criss-cross the directions as you tie the drum, it shows how adults can parent an infant because the tie goes from the child to the adult. And from there it goes to the elder who is tied to the youth. That’s why it was gifted at the time of creation of human beings that the adults should parent that infant and that’s why Elders can often speak to young people better than an adult that’s parenting that young person because that connection in the wheel is coming from north to the south, from Elder to youth. It’s so so important today and a lot of times when the young person comes along in the southern door, that’s why then grandparents were used to give teachings at that time. Sometimes grandparents only took that child for a year or two, sometimes longer. The dominant society never understood when a young person was moved to the grandparents. It wasn’t because the parents couldn’t parent, they just knew that cycle of teaching in the four directions. It’s in the Medicine Wheel. Our lives are like the Medicine Wheel – all our motion, our life, our journeys are in the Medicine Wheel. That’s how the teachings happened years ago.
Reading 3

Traditional Code of Ethics

Give thanks to the Creator each morning upon rising and each evening before sleeping.

Seek the courage and strength to be a better person.

Show respect. Respect is a basic law of life.

Respect the wisdom of people in council. Once you give an idea it no longer belongs to you; it belongs to everybody.

Be truthful at all times.

Always treat your guests with honour and consideration. Give your best food and comforts to your guests.

The hurt of one is the hurt of all. The honour of one is the honour of all.

Receive strangers and outsiders kindly.

All races are children of the Creator and must be respected.

To serve others, to be of some use to family, community, or nation is one of the main purposes for which people are created. True happiness comes to those who dedicate their lives to the service of others.

Observe moderation and balance in all things.

Know those things that lead to your well-being and those things that lead to your destruction.

Listen to and follow the guidance given to your heart. Expect guidance to come in many forms: in prayer; in dreams; in solitude; and, in the words and actions of Elders and friends.

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89 Saskatchewan Learning, “Aboriginal Themed Lesson Plans – Supplemental Resources”, http://www.saskschools.ca/curr_content/aboriginal_res/supplem.htm#ethics
Activities

Activity 1

Understanding Cultural Practices

Taking part in traditional spiritual practices can be an important part of the healing journey. This involvement in ceremonies is carried out to fulfill spiritual commitments and to benefit others. The book *Cultural Teachings: First Nations Protocols and Methodologies* by Sylvia McAdam, published in 2010 by the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre in Saskatoon, is a tool to be used in understanding cultural practices.

*Cultural Teachings* provides an overview of protocols and methodologies, giving recognition to the differences among the First Nations, and providing examples from different First Nations.

“The Creator gave us ceremonies, rituals and prayers in order to help us connect to or understand the spirit world.” Ceremonies are significant and sacred to all of mankind and, therefore deserving of respect. Part of showing respect is understanding the protocol and the laws of each ceremony as well as recognizing that all of the First Nations have been given a way to pray, each different but similar.

This book explains important information about First Nations history, laws, and the role of culture as a way of life. It talks about the protocols and ways to approach learning about spiritual practices. The meaning and the basics of what occurs is described for practices such as offering tobacco, smudging, fasting, songs and dances, using the sacred pipe, and feasts. It also explains traditional male and female roles and responsibilities, the grandmother time or moon time for women, and the role of elders.

Take the time to look at this book, and use it as a resource to guide you in working with women with a First Nations background. And as others have said and is emphasized in *Cultural Teachings*, the advice of an Elder is the best guidance on the ways for someone to take part in First Nations spiritual practices.

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91 Ibid.
92 McAdam, op. cit., p. 23.
Activity 2

**My Value System**

Your values determine the actions you take, and the goals you set. In each column, place the name of a person who has influenced this value in your life. Each box may contain more than one name.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>Community/ Neighbours</th>
<th>Teachers / Religious Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
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<td>Creativity</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>Kinship</td>
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<td>Forgiveness</td>
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<td>Obedience</td>
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<td>Happiness</td>
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<td>Physical Well-being</td>
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<td>Honesty</td>
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<td>Hope</td>
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<td>Respect</td>
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<td>Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Love</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

93 Adapted from Utah Education Network, http://www.uen.org/.../downloadFile.cgi?...MY_VALUE_SYSTEM...MY_VALUE_SYSTEM
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loyalty</th>
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<td>Good Child</td>
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<td>Rearing</td>
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<td>Patience</td>
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<td>Recognition</td>
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<td>Faith</td>
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<td>Sharing</td>
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<td>Humility</td>
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<td>Thankfulness</td>
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<td>Truth</td>
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<td>Reciprocity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Now go back over the whole list. Pick out the five things that are most important to you and list them here.

My main values are:

1. ____________________________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________________________________________

Who has the most influence on these values? Why?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Whose advice do you follow the most? Why?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

99
Pivotal People

Research has shown that there are as few as five truly pivotal people who have left indelible impressions on your concept of self and, therefore, the life you live. The pivotal people who shaped the self-concept that controls your life today, can be both negative and positive.

List the name of one pivotal person in your life.

______________________________

Write a description of the person’s actions. Write a description of the influence that person has had on you.

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Activity 3

Ethical Dilemmas

Think of some ethical dilemmas which you have faced in your work. Discuss how you responded to the situation. Talk about which tipi teachings traditional ethics, or your own personal values influenced your decision.

Supplementary Discussion Questions

1. How do traditional beliefs and values of Aboriginal cultures influence us today?
2. Think of ways you might use the teachings in this module to assist you in working with women in the shelter?