Cultural Awareness Training Handbook

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre (SICC) mission is to “protect, preserve and promote cultures and languages of the First Nations peoples of Saskatchewan”. The SICC facilitates research, development and publication of education and instructional material consistent with the spirit and intent of Treaties and the inherent right of First Nations people. SICC promotes and enhances First Nations culture, society, traditions, languages, law, politics, economies, values and beliefs.

The SICC is the clearinghouse for advice and guidance based on the knowledge of Elders, cultural activities, linguistic expertise on Saskatchewan First Nation languages and First Nation oral histories and traditions.

SICC strengthens and supports educational and cultural awareness of Saskatchewan First Nations people through the development of language and cultural curriculum and resource materials.

SICC serves as the central cultural, linguistic and historical support for Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) and Saskatchewan First Nations' communities.

The intent of this handbook is to be a resource guide and cultural awareness training handbook. The purpose of the workshop is to:

- Provide an overview of First Nation history;
- Provide an overview First Nation cultures and values;
- Provide an overview of basic cultural teachings;
- Provide an opportunity to discuss contemporary First Nation issues; and,
- Educate participants on the importance of cultural awareness.
2. OVERVIEW ON CULTURE

PART I – CULTURE AND VALUES

Definition of Culture

- Culture can be explained as the accepted way of interacting between homogeneous groups of people. That is, people who share commonalities.
- Culture sets out the boundaries and structure in which the group interacts with one another.
- Culture means how one lives as an individual who is part of a group with which they belong. It includes all aspects of a people's history, traditions, values, social and organizational forms which has been handed down from one generation to the next, through language, imitation or formally.
- Culture involves all human senses, guiding the existence and survival of a people. This is the basis from which people learn to behave, live in various climates (geographic regions) and interact with their environment. The sum of this knowledge and experience is passed to the next generation through language, imitation and formally.

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1 Source: Adapted from MPI Cultural Training Manual and Interlake RHA Aboriginal Workforce Strategy Aboriginal Human Resources Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training
What Can Happen If We Are Not Aware of Culture?²

**Stereotyping**
(Holding preconceived ideas about any culture)
Leads to

↓

**Prejudice**
(Factualizing a stereotype into a belief about a specific person)
Leads to

↓

**Discrimination**
(A negative action directed at a member of a disliked group)

↓

Stereotypes + Prejudice = Ideas
Discrimination = Action

² Source: Adapted from MPI Cultural Training Manual and Interlake RHA Aboriginal Workforce Strategy Aboriginal Human Resources Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training
## Thoughts About Culture

### Differences between cultures can be:

- Sources of learning or points of conflict

### External factors impact culture

- Technology
- Environment
- Geography
- Politics
- Communications
- Group Norms

### Cultures are based on values

- How values are interpreted and expressed may vary between cultures

### Culture

- Adapts
- Changes continuously

### Therefore culture is....

- What is seen and what is not seen
- Learned
- Shared

### We each tend to see

- Our own culture as right and other cultures as wrong

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### Cultural Proficiency Matrix

3 Source: Adapted from MPI Cultural Training Manual and Interlake RHA Aboriginal Workforce Strategy Aboriginal Human Resources Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training
Definition of Values

• A set of personal beliefs and attitudes about the truth, beauty or worth of any thought, object or behaviour.
• Every decision that is made and course of action that is taken is based on consciously or unconsciously held beliefs, attitudes and values.
• Values and the belief system we live by are deeply connected.
• Values influence our perceptions and our actions.
• Values represent an organizing principle of our lives.
• Values are the most powerful motivators of personal action.
• Values are at the root of all learning; they are energizing, inspiring and motivating.
• Values are a set of understandings about how to work together, how to treat people and what is most important.
• Values are the meanings we attach to things.
• Our earliest values revolve around our parents and the people who take care of us. As we grow, we acquire and develop other values – from school, the community at large and work.

Source: Adapted from MPI Cultural Training Manual and Interlake RHA Aboriginal Workforce Strategy Aboriginal Human Resources Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training
Examples of Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improving society</th>
<th>Connection to others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generosity</td>
<td>Love of beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence/control</td>
<td>Pleasure/fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping others</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial security</th>
<th>Recognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Creating justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humility</td>
<td>Power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can you think of other examples of values?

For example: There are many First Nations groups and each have their own unique set of values and their own way of expressing their values, such as having a sense of humour and sharing it with your co-workers.

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5 Source: Adapted from MPI Cultural Training Manual and Interlake RHA Aboriginal Workforce Strategy Aboriginal Human Resources Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training
Individuals as Cultural Beings

- Our values grow from the culture from which we are born into and live with
- Our beliefs and attitudes emerge from our values
- When an event occurs we are influenced by our values, beliefs and attitudes – they colour our perceptions
- What we perceive as we experience a specific event is impacted by our conditioned values, beliefs and attitudes
- We interpret the event within our frame of reference
- We act based on our perceptions of the event
- Our perceptions are influenced by our values, beliefs and attitudes and, there is a response to our action

6 Source: Adapted from MPI Cultural Training Manual and Interlake RHA Aboriginal Workforce Strategy Aboriginal Human Resources Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training
Cultural Safety

Cultural safety takes us beyond cultural awareness and the acknowledgement of difference. It surpasses cultural sensitivity, which recognizes the importance of respecting difference. Cultural safety helps us to understand the limitations of cultural competence, which focuses on the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of practitioners.

Cultural safety is predicted on understanding power differentials and redressing these inequities through educational processes. Addressing inequities, through the lens of cultural safety is to:

- Improve interactions with peers, colleagues and populations;
- Acknowledge that we are all bearers of culture;
- Expose the social, political, and historical contexts of interacting with one another;
- Enable individuals to consider difficult concepts such as racism, discrimination, and prejudice;
- Acknowledge that cultural safety is determined by those to whom we interact;
- Understand the limitations of “culture” in terms of having people access and safely move through interactions and encounters with others; and,
- Challenge unequal power relations.

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Adapted from: Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada, Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety in Nursing Education A FRAMEWORK FOR FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÈTIS NURSING, Ottawa: 2009
Culture Defined

Culture has many definitions; however, there are two primary definitions of culture that will be used for the purposes of this training document. The first definition refers to how the culture of a specific group can be seen or identified through their ideas, views and perceptions of the world and life. Culture within this context is defined as the manifestation of a worldview that has enabled its members to adapt successfully to the cycles of a particular environment. First Nations have traditionally included within the scope of the definition of culture how a group of people have successfully adapted to changes and cycles and tend to stay within a certain territory or geographical area that provides them with the resources they need to survive as individuals and as a people.

Culture reflects the patterns of human activity and the way people live in the geography, climate, and social context of a given area or territory. Cultural activities involve technology, art, science, moral systems and the characteristic behaviours and habits of a given population. The choices people make in the way they live reflect their values and norms. Institutions and artifacts record historical cultural patterns and beliefs. The combination of politics, economy, communication, sociology, literacy, media, film, philosophy, anthropology and art, all define culture. Cultural researchers often concentrate on how a particular phenomenon relates to matters of ideology, nationality, ethnicity, social class and/or gender. Culture does not remain stagnant, it evolves. Culture changes with advances and changes in technology, geopolitics and science.

Culture is the learned set of beliefs, values, norms and material goods shared by group members. Culture consists of everything we learn in groups during the life course - from infancy to old age.

In the past, culture and traditions were the basic pillars of strength for First Nations. However, since first contact, many First Nations have lost pieces of their culture and traditions, especially in the last century.

Some First Nations have cultivated a cultural resurgence and have been able to hold on, and others are working to revive their culture and traditions. The

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8 Definition of Indigenous knowledge by Dr. Marie Battiste
9 Assembly of First Nations, Fred Kelly, Traditional and Contemporary Approaches to Youth and Suicide Prevention AFN: 2007
10 ibid
12 ibid
14 AFN 3rd National First Nations Youth Summit, Rebuilding Our Nations – National Unity, Voices from the Community October 30-November 1, 2007
following are a few areas First Nations have traditionally included within the scope of culture:\footnote{ibid}:

- **Language** – is a key part of culture for many communities. It is part of First Nations’ identity. Most First Nations’ languages are in danger of extinction. Language is embedded in culture, family and everything that we live.

- **Ceremonies** - from a young age and as they grow up, First Nation children, youth, adults and Elders participate in ceremonies. An integral part of First Nations culture, some ceremonies include the Sun Dance/Thirst Dance, Horse Dance, Prairie Chicken Dance, Feasts and Sweats.

- **Creative Expression** – First Nation people also enjoy a number of activities including storytelling, painting, drawing, sculpting, beading and drumming, all of which are an important part of First Nations culture.

- **Games and Social Activities** – Children were introduced to games including hand games, foot games and card games. Communities would gather for social events to provide opportunities to showcase talent, share skills and meet and visit with friends and relatives.

- **The Family Concept** – the First Nations’ traditional concept of family is that we are related to all of creation. The important role of grandparents and extended family is reflective of First Nations’ culture.

- **Traditional Knowledge and Elders’ teachings** - prior to the arrival of European missionaries, First Nation children were taught traditional knowledge through stories, and by listening to the teachings of their Elders and parents. As our Elders are leaving this world, many are taking with them traditional knowledge and teachings that have not yet been passed on to today’s adults and youth because of changes in the family concept.

- **Rites of Access** - protection of all what we do in terms of language and culture. The “door knob” to knowledge. Ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP).

- **Land and environment** - Language is tied to the land and our strength comes from that. First Nations’ traditional knowledge related to the environment is important given First Nations close relationship with the land, nature and its inhabitants. However, along with traditional teachings, environmental traditional knowledge is at risk. Furthermore, climate changes are having a negative impact on the environment, on the migratory patterns of the animals that First Nations hunt and fish and on plants and traditional medicines.\footnote{AFN 3\textsuperscript{rd} National First Nations Youth Summit, Rebuilding Our Nations – National Unity. Voices from the Community October 30-November 1, 2007}
What is Required?

First Nations cultures are alive, dynamic and diverse. Each nation has its own history, tradition, values and language that are the foundations for daily life and knowledge. Geographic location and community demographics amplify the cultural diversity of a region. Many Canadians do not understand the complex diversity of First Nation cultures and societies. Culture is the very source of identity and pride within the First Nations context.\(^\text{17}\)

First Nations’ culture is under threat as Elders pass on to the Spirit World and the history, knowledge and languages pass on with them. Urbanization is also having a profound impact on the ability of First Nations to preserve and transmit culture, cultural kinships and languages across the generations.

For culture to flourish and endure it must be expressed in contemporary behaviour and social interactions within and outside First Nation communities on a daily basis and as a part of daily life. Spirituality is deeply rooted in culture and guides the relationships between individuals, families, communities and nations.

Culture is useful and integral to First Nations in order to ensure and promote\(^\text{18}\):

- Cultural continuity and community renewal;
- The role of culture and learning in a knowledge society;
- Sharing First Nations’ culture in the new economy;
- Making cultural and historical knowledge public;
- Protecting culture and indigenous knowledge; and,
- The relationship of culture to self-determination, self-government and control of knowledge.

Cultural survival is rooted in the capacity and authority of First Nations to act as the stewards and keepers of their indigenous knowledge and languages.

Cultural preservation and continuity is essential because it is the identity of our people and the cohesive glue that enables us to retain and express our cultures. The loss of one’s culture implies the assimilation into another.\(^\text{19}\) There is a direct correlation between a community’s economic and social well being and the cultural identity of its residents. Preserving and rehabilitating cultural well being particularly in the case of endangered cultures has been studied by researchers such as Steven Cornell from Harvard University and Michael Chandler at the University of British Columbia.\(^\text{20}\) They found in their work that the incidence of youth suicides is dramatically reduced in First Nation communities that are

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\(^\text{17}\) Aboriginal Culture in the Digital Age Aboriginal Voice Cultural Working Group Paper, Crossing Boundaries Aboriginal Voice

\(^\text{18}\) Aboriginal Culture in the Digital Age Aboriginal Voice Cultural Working Group Paper, Crossing Boundaries Aboriginal Voice

\(^\text{19}\) ibid

\(^\text{20}\) ibid
empowered with a strong sense of identity, control over decision making and the ability to address community needs. 21

Integral to the articulation of culture, indigenous languages reflect the worldview and connect individuals to a system of values. Language retention and new speakers have decreased dramatically in recent decades and cultural knowledge and traditions have become threatened.22 According to UNESCO (1996) approximately half of Canada’s 50 Aboriginal languages are facing extinction or are endangered. Aboriginal dialects speak to who you are, where you come from and who your kin are. Culture is passed on to younger generations through the Elders.

With the passing of older generations the risk of losing the history and knowledge of Aboriginal peoples makes cultural preservation a critical priority. The early years are particularly important in the formation of values and language development of our children. Intergenerational transfer of culture must start here. Children must grow up in culturally rich environments to ensure that they are exposed to the knowledge and pride of who they are. This understanding and reality must be the driving force in revitalizing and extending the reach of First Nation cultures through the generations. 23

The core elements of cultural protection, promotion, preservation and revitalization are as follows:

- Oral traditions including language as a vehicle to cultural knowledge transmission;
- Ceremonial practices and protocols;
- Performing arts: traditional dance, music and theatre;
- Social practices, rituals and cultural events;
- Knowledge about nature and the universe; and
- Traditional craftsmanship. 24

Safeguarding culture requires ensuring its viability within communities and groups through continued enactment and transmission of knowledge. It also involves awareness raising, sharing and celebrating culture. Dialogue and respect for cultural diversity is required along with national and international cooperation and assistance. 25

**Definitions of Intercultural Communication**26

21 ibid  
22 ibid  
23 Aboriginal Culture in the Digital Age Aboriginal Voice Cultural Working Group Paper, Crossing Boundaries Aboriginal Voice  
24 UNESCO Presentation Towards the Implementation of the convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible cultural Heritage 2006 UNESCO  
25 ibid  
26 Source: Adapted from MPI Cultural Training Manual and Interlake RHA Aboriginal Workforce Strategy Aboriginal Human Resources Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training
Intercultural communication is communication between members of different cultures. This definition is simple, but the process is complex.

Intercultural communication involves differing perceptions, attitudes and interpretations. We know that even two people from the same culture may have communication problems.

Some misunderstandings are insignificant in that they can be easily remedied or ignored. Other conflicts are more serious in that they can cause misinterpretations and create persistent negative attitudes towards others.

Source: Beyond Language, Levine, D. and Adelman. M.
Five Facts on Intercultural Communication

- WE PERCEIVE DIFFERENTLY
- WE DO NOT SEE THINGS WHICH EXIST
- WE SEE THINGS WHICH DO NOT EXIST
- WE COMMUNICATE ALL THE TIME
- PURE COMMUNICATION IS IMPOSSIBLE

Source: Adapted from MPI Cultural Training Manual and Interlake RHA Aboriginal Workforce Strategy Aboriginal Human Resources Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training
PART II – TRADITIONAL TEACHINGS

Sharing Circles/Talking Circles

Sharing Circles or Talking Circles have been used for discussion and exploration of many topics and issues. First Nation people have used Sharing Circles for many, many generations. Usually, the nature of topics or issues is those where there is no right or wrong answer or when people need to share feelings. Issues of a moral or ethical nature may also be discussed in this forum, as this is a way in which offending anyone can be avoided.

The purpose of Sharing Circles or Talking Circles is to provide a safe and neutral environment for people to share their point of view or understanding of issues with others. The Sharing Circles or Talking Circles process help to create trust with and among participants. Participants come to accept and believe that what they say will be done without criticism or judgment. Participants are also able to understand and respect the views and opinions of others.

Sharing Circles or Talking Circles have also been used to teach important lessons about the sacredness of all life; the trees, water, the sky, plants, animals, and all the races around the world. The Circle allows a participant to internalize and verbalize the learning. This understanding then becomes a part of spirituality, which is important in order to maintain the balance of life.

It is not intended that a decision or consensus of any kind be reached. It is to create a safe environment for people to share their opinions or point of view with others. Participants are allowed the opportunity to react to a situation which has prompted the need to express feelings or ideas in any manner that falls within the set guidelines and understandings.

Differences between Linear Structure vs. a Circle, working as a group of people:

- **Linear Structure**: A room of people all lined up in rows and facing a presenter situated at the front of the room. All attention is on the person at the front. This person has an automatic position of authority. All interactions go through this individual. You cannot see the face of the person(s) directly in front of you. There is a disconnect with your fellow participants.
- **Circle Structure**: A room of people sitting in a circle facing the centre. The presenter sits in the circle as a participant that initiates the circle. All

Source: Adapted from MPI Cultural Training Manual and Interlake RHA Aboriginal Workforce Strategy Aboriginal Human Resources Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training
people can see everyone; there is a sense of equality.
Smudging

Smudging is a protocol that has long been observed and performed by many First Nations. When First Nations gather for meetings, ceremonies or for personal prayer, smudging is conducted. First Nations in Saskatchewan generally use sweetgrass, sages, cedars and other plants for smudging. When preparations are made to smudge, the sweetgrass, sages, cedars and other plants are lit with matches or hot coals. The smoke is then used with the person’s hands in a ‘washing’ manner by pushing or cupping the smoke towards them.

First Nations in Saskatchewan generally use sweetgrass as the primary and pre-eminent plant for smudging. Sweetgrass is often braided because it signifies the hair of Mother Earth. The importance of sweetgrass at every level of ceremonial life has long made it a valued item. At times, braids of sweetgrass are carried for protection.

The sweetgrass, sages, cedars and other sacred plants are from Mother Earth. Tobacco is placed on the ground as an offering and permission is asked from Mother Earth before gathering these items.

To smudge is an act of purifying the mind and physical surroundings. As well, smudging can be a ceremony as described in the following statement:

The burning of various medicine plants to make a smudge or cleansing smoke is used by the majority of Native North American peoples. It is a ritual cleansing. As the smoke rises, our prayers rise to the Spirit World where the Grandfathers and our Creator reside. Negative energy, feelings, and emotions are lifted away. It is also used for healing of mind, body and spirit, as well as balancing energies.
The Role of Elders

An Elder is a person recognized by a First Nations’ community as having knowledge and understanding of the traditional culture of the community, including the physical manifestations of the culture of the people and their spiritual and social traditions. Knowledge and wisdom, coupled with the recognition and respect of the people of the community, are the essential defining characteristics of an Elder. Some Elders have additional attributes, such as those of traditional healer.

In addition to having led an exceptional life based on the traditions, customs and culture of First Nations, an Elder is expected to have qualities such as:

- Will be knowledgeable of First Nations’ heritage and history;
- Will be knowledgeable and supportive of traditional First Nations’ ceremonies, protocols and songs;
- Possess fluency and competence in a First Nations’ language;
- Will be an advocate of traditional leadership, traditional governance and traditional law;
- Will be aware and supportive of Treaty rights and history;
- Will acknowledge the diversity of First Nations’ cultures, languages and traditions in Saskatchewan;
- Will work to ensure the intergenerational transfer of traditional First Nations’ knowledge, history, culture, language and practices to the youth;
- Will support and observe the sacredness of First Nations’ traditions, ceremonies, sites and practices;
- Will have an understanding, be supportive and play a leading role in their kinship ties; and,
- Will have a knowledge of First Nations’ traditional healing that may include the use of traditional plants used for healing.

This list is a starting point towards answering the question: Who is an Elder? Each First Nation has a term that defines these wisdom keepers, knowledge keepers, medicine people, healers and ceremonial persons. The term ‘Elder’ is a contemporary English word commonly used for these individuals. Many of these individuals are not comfortable with this term, as it does not adequately describe their role. Today many First Nations are reverting to the traditional term in their own languages for ‘Elder’.
Tobacco

For many First Nations’ people, tobacco has been used traditionally in ceremonies, rituals, and prayer for thousands of years. Tobacco was one of the sacred gifts the Creator gave to First Nations’ people. Tobacco is used for a variety of medicinal purposes and its ceremonial use has powerful spiritual meaning. Tobacco establishes a direct communication link between the person and the spiritual world. The most powerful way of communicating with the spirits is to smoke tobacco in a Sacred Pipe. Even before the tobacco is put into the pipe the prayers have already begun.

When used in a Sacred Pipe ceremony, the smoke from the tobacco carries the prayers to the Creator. This creates an avenue for dialogue between the human world and spirit world. Through offerings and burning of these plants, First Nations’ people established a ceremonial dialogue with the various keepers and with the Creator. This dialogue is symbolic of the understanding that the physical and spirit worlds are not separate but interdependent.

Tobacco is used by First Nations’ people as an offering to the Creator in ceremonies. In addition, to access traditional teachings, it is customary to offer tobacco to the Elder or knowledge keeper. Tobacco is the key to the vehicle of traditional knowledge. Before all First Nations’ ceremonies, tobacco is offered to the spirits. Tobacco symbolizes the pipe and the prayers that are involved. The universal method of inviting people to feasts or notifying them of ceremonies has always been through the offering of tobacco. A helper or server usually delivers this tobacco on behalf of the sponsors of the ceremony.

Tobacco is also offered when a First Nations’ person takes medicines, plants, stones or other such items from the earth. Every time you pull a plant from Mother Earth, she feels that pull, and you must always make the proper offerings of tobacco and prayers. By offering tobacco in gratitude and thankfulness, you are ensuring that this pulling of Mother Earth’s hair will not hurt her too much. She must understand that you comprehend your relationship to her and that you know what she is giving you is one of the parts of her body. Through honouring and understanding that relationship to Mother Earth, you also honour and understand your reciprocal relationship to all of life and creation.
There is sacred knowledge relating to the tipi teachings and its’ construction along with all the various elements. The following is a summary of those teachings as described in the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre Cultural Teachings: First Nations Protocols and Methodologies:

“Each First Nation has their understanding of the tipi poles and what each pole represents as it is raised to stand for the people. There are three significant poles that are the strength of the lodge that form the initial tripod. For the nēhiyaw, these poles are called kakanatisichik – the clean, kakisewatisichik – the kind, loving and protective ones and kakatawasisichik – the sacred. The other poles signify the months.”

The tipi is the domain of women and is a gift from the Creator. This gift has numerous teachings associated with child rearing and parenting to benefit First Nations. Specifically, the tipi symbolizes the bond between mother and child. Women bring life into this world and they have an important role and responsibility to nurture that gift of life. The women are the primary caregivers for the children. The governance of the tipi is within the power and authority of women. The men had their own roles and responsibilities which included being the providers of food and the protectors of the community.

The women were responsible for decorating and arranging the interior of the tipi and to decide on the placement of articles or items. Women were responsible for selection of the lodge poles, as well at the tanning and sewing of the hide tipi covering. The tipi was the lodge, home or house that the family resided in. Today’s family homes retain the same values, meaning and protocols. The home is always the responsibility and authority of the women to maintain, nurture and cherish by following First Nations’ laws, values and traditions as much as possible.

The tipi was an ideal dwelling for the Plains First Nations’ people. Like the buffalo they hunted, they were constantly on the move. Their dwellings, therefore, had to be portable and the tipi was ideally designed for easy transport. To move it, the ends of two of the tipi supporting poles were lashed to a horse. The other ends dragged along the ground forming a roughly triangular frame or travois on which the buffalo covering and the family’s other possessions were tied. When the horse was introduced the tipis became larger and more elaborate, and the numbers of supporting poles became more consistent.

At a new campsite three long poles were bound together near their tops. These poles were then stood up to form a tripod. Other poles were leaned against this framework to strength it, and a buffalo-hide covering, usually of 8 – 20 skins, was draped over this frame. This would form the outline of a conical shape. There would be a seam where the hide covering would join running from the top to the ground. This seam was joined near the top with wooden or bone lodge pins. An opening was left at the very top as a smoke hole. The entrance at the lower part of this seam was also closed with lodge pins.

In hot weather, the flaps were left open and the lower part of the tipi covering was rolled up, permitting the cooling breezes to circulate freely. In winter, an additional skin lining was added to the tipi covering that provided insulation.

30 SICC, Cultural Teachings: First Nations Protocols and Methodologies, Saskatoon, SK, 2009
The fire that burned in the center of the floor kept the tipi warm as well as furnishing heat for cooking. Because of the strong winds that swept across the Plains predominantly from the west, a tipi was generally set up with the entrance facing east. Often the entire shelter was tilted slightly toward the east to lessen the wind pressure on the rear.

A typical tipi would contain hide bedding, willow-rod backrests, cradleboards and rugs for babies, a suspended cooking bag, a supply of fuel, parfleches (strong hide bags) containing food, medicines and other necessities, and similar household gear. On the interior lining of the tipi sacred objects, weapons, shields and other items were hung. The exterior of the tipi was often painted with brilliantly coloured designs that recalled past events in the lives of those who inhabited the tipi. The Plains First Nations had a deep appreciation for the tipi. Secure, mobile and comfortable, it was looked upon by the First Nations as a good mother who sheltered and protected her children.

**SICC Elders Advisory Council Teaching – the Tipi**

Each pole of the tipi represents a First Nations’ law and teaching. The following diagram illustrates the teachings that were provided by the SICC Elders Advisory Council in 1988:

- **Obedience**: We learn by listening to traditional stories; by listening to our parents or guardians, our fellow students and our teachers. We learn by their behaviours and reminders so that we know what is right and wrong.
- **Respect**: We must give honour to our Elders and fellow students and the strangers that come to visit our community. We must honour other people’s basic rights.
- **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, “we are just a strand in the web of life,” and we respect and value life.
- **Happiness**: We must show enthusiasm to encourage others at social functions. Our actions will make our ancestors happy in the next world.
- **Love**: If we are to live in harmony we must accept one another as we are and to accept others who are not in our circle. Love means to be kind and good to one another.
• **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 worthy member of the human race.

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

• **Cleanliness:** We must learn not to inflict ills on others, for we do it to ourselves. Clean thoughts come from a clean mind, and this comes from Indian Spirituality. Good health habits also reflect a clean mind.

• **Thankfulness:** We learn to give thanks for all the kind things others do for us and for the Creator’s bounty, that we are privileged to share with others in the spirit of love.

• **Sharing:** We learn to be part of the family by helping in providing food or other basic needs. This is sharing responsibilities in order to enjoy them.

**Exercise:**

Describe your understanding of these teachings and how they apply to your family and daily life.
PART III – FIRST NATION HISTORY

First Nation History\(^\text{31}\)

First Nations’ history extends back to time immemorial, long before the arrival of the newcomers to their territories. When people from other continents arrived on the shores of North America, First Nations’ laws, protocols and procedures set the framework for the first treaties among Aboriginal peoples. First Nations lived in diverse, vibrant and structured societies. All the First Nations had their own laws and legal traditions that guided and directed the people in their daily interactions with each other, their families, their communities, and other nations.

The *Indian Act*, which was enacted in 1876, clearly violated the spirit and intent of the Treaties that First Nations had signed with the Crown. This act imposed the banning of cultural, ceremonial and traditional activities of First Nations’ people.

This resulted in the diminishment and loss of language, culture and understanding of First Nations’ laws, traditional knowledge, ceremony and songs. The Indian Act outlawed and prohibited the use of ceremonies, therefore outlawing the traditional ‘education’ system or way of knowing of the First Nations’ peoples. Despite being outlawed, First Nations’ ceremonies were still held, very often in seclusion.

The intent of the government acting in the name of the Crown was to impose colonization on First Nations. Colonization refers to:

> “…both the formal and informal methods (behaviours, ideologies, institutions, policies, and economies) that maintain the subjection or exploitation of Indigenous peoples, lands and resources. Colonizers engage in this process because it allows them to maintain and/or expand their social, political, and economic power. Colonization is detrimental to us because the Colonizers’ power comes at the expense of Indigenous lands, resources, lives, and self determination.”

The government activities to impose colonization were systemic and persisted for many generations. This colonization of First Nations’ people largely violated the Indian Treaties, which are nation to nation agreements signed with the Crown. Colonization was enforced through the Indian Act and other legislation that often had no basis in law:

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\(^{31}\) Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre Cultural Teachings: First Nations Protocols and Methodologies
Finally, the tone and goals of the *Gradual Civilization Act*, especially the enfranchisement provisions, which asserted the superiority of colonial culture and values, also set in motion a process of devaluing and undermining Indian cultural identity. Only Indians who renounced their communities, cultures and languages could gain the respect of colonial and later Canadian society. In this respect it was the beginning of a psychological assault on Indian identity that would be escalated by the later *Indian Act* prohibitions on other cultural practices such as traditional dances and costumes and by the residential school policy.

A key part of the colonization effort was the Indian residential school system. These schools assaulted First Nations’ culture by endeavouring to ensure that, “the savage child would surely be re-made into the civilized adult” and “Children throughout the history of the system were beaten for speaking their language.” As a result, many First Nations’ children left the residential schools unable to speak their languages or had only a limited understanding. Today, some First Nations’ languages are on the brink of extinction as more and more fluent speakers pass on into the Spirit World.

In 1885, a pass system was implemented by the Indian Act to control and restrict movements of First Nations’ people. This system required all First Nations to acquire a pass before permission was granted to leave the reserve for any reason. If caught off reserve without a pass, it was likely that a First Nations’ person would be arrested. In fact, some First Nations’ people were fined and incarcerated for participating and ‘permitting’ ceremonies. As well, the pass system contributed greatly to the segregation of First Nations’ people from Canadian society. Furthermore, the pass system restricted and limited contact with relatives who lived off reserve or on different reserves. This often adversely impacted close kinship ties.

In the 1890s, there were further restrictions on farming and new powers accorded for agents and resident instructors on the reserves. The most significant restriction on First Nations’ farmers was the permit system. These permits were required by First Nations’ farmers in order to buy or sell their crops, livestock and implements. This restriction prevented First Nations’ farmers from participating and competing in the Canadian economy. As well, the permit system did not allow First Nations to gather willows for ceremonial purposes, unless permission was granted by the Indian Agent.

As a result of all these restrictions and various other legislative acts, changes to First Nations’ cultures were inevitable. For example, prior to these restrictions, offerings for prayers and healing were carefully prepared willow sticks. Often these days, the prepared willow sticks have now been replaced with broadcloth of varying sizes and colours. Other offerings such as buffalo hides are now replaced with blankets, clothing, and various other contemporary items.
The colonization process has led directly to poverty, family and spousal violence, drug, chemical and alcohol addictions for indigenous peoples all over the world. Colonialism introduced the concept of the superiority of men and the second class status of women. In Canada, the Indian Act and the Euro-Western perspective imposed this concept on First Nations. This concept was alien to First Nations‘ peoples who had made no such distinction between men and women. As well, this concept was in direct contradiction to the important roles women play in First Nations‘ societies and ceremonies.

This subordinate role of women was eventually internalized and adopted by some First Nations‘ governments, institutions and communities. Today, most First Nations‘ communities are experiencing an epidemic of violence against women, which in part, results from the devalued status of First Nations‘ women in society. Compassion, respect and kinship must be re-established to counter the past and present oppressive legislative acts and practices.

First Nations‘ people have faced many challenges since the arrival of the newcomers. Colonization at the physical, psychological and social levels has done significant damage to First Nations‘ cultures and languages. Our challenge today is to begin the process of decolonization. Decolonization means to question and defy the legitimacy of the colonizers‘ continued role as master within our First Nations‘ communities and all of society. Decolonization should become a standard part of First Nations‘ vocabulary, especially among the young. Questioning and defying colonialism is a part of working towards First Nations‘ freedom, from subjugated human beings to liberated human beings and reasserting First Nations‘ sovereignty.

Giving a name to the First Nations‘ experience will add to the empowerment. The recovery of our languages is one of the most powerful forms of self-determination and is necessary to reverse the effects of colonization. With language revitalization comes the profound understanding of the cultures, traditions and the teachings of First Nations‘ Elders.
Indian Act

Early government policy for First Nations in Saskatchewan was administered under the Indian Act, with the goal of training First Nations people to become farmers and assimilating them into the greater Canadian society. Through the Indian Act and an assimilationist policy based on social Darwinism, attempts were made to dispossess First Nations of their land and identity: the rationale behind the reserve system was to place them on pieces of land isolated from white settlement, where policies could be more easily applied and monitored. Once reserves had been selected and surveyed, Indian agents were sent to administer them; they had sweeping powers ranging from control of First Nations' movement to control of agricultural equipment and expenditures by the band.

In early 1886, books of passes were issued to Indian agents, and subsequently First Nations people could not leave their reserve unless they had a pass signed by the Indian agent and describing when they could leave, where they could go, and when they had to return. The pass system, however, was never passed into legislation and as a result was never legal - although it was enforced well into the 1940s.

The permit system was instituted to control the selling and buying of goods by First Nations people. If a First Nations farmer wanted to sell any produce, he had to secure a permit signed by the Indian agent. In a similar fashion, if non-First Nations people wanted to come onto the reserve to sell goods, they also had to obtain a permit from the agent.

A cattle loan program called the Birtle system was instituted whereby a First Nations farmer would be given a cow. At the end of a year, he had to return either the cow or its offspring. The belief was that if an Indian person had a vested interest in an animal, success would be more likely; however, the system failed, owing to the lack of any real control by First Nations over their stock.

The severalty or subdivision of reserve land was also central to the peasant farming policy. Beginning in 1889, Indian reserves were to be divided approximately in two: one-half would be surveyed into 40-acre lots upon which individual families were to farm; the other half was to be held in common as hay and timber land. Reed’s belief was that an Indian farmer was to become self-sufficient, but was not to compete in the marketplace. The pass and permit systems, as well as severalty, restricted how successful Indian farmers could be and ultimately contributed to the failure of agriculture on First Nations reserves.

32 http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/indian_policy_and_the_early_reserve_period.html
Residential Schools\textsuperscript{33}

The sole purpose of the residential schools was the education, integration, assimilation and “Christianization” of Aboriginal children into mainstream Canadian society. The government removed Aboriginal children from their homes and home communities, and transported them to residential schools which were often long distances away. The residential school system predates Confederation and in part, grew out of Canada’s missionary experience with various religious organizations.

The federal government began to play a role in the development and administration of this school system as early as 1874, mainly to meet its obligation, under the Indian Act, to provide an education to Aboriginal peoples. Residential schools were established by the churches in 1820 and by the government in 1874.

The government controlled all aspects of the admission of Aboriginal people to the schools, including arrangements for the care of such persons over holiday periods as well, as the methods of transporting children to and from residential schools. Aboriginal children were often taken from their families without the consent of their parents or guardians.

It is estimated that there were in excess of 100 residential schools in operation throughout Canadian history in every province and territory except New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, with a peak of seventy-four schools in operation in 1920. There were twenty residential schools in Saskatchewan operated under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, and the Presbyterian Church.

The federal government operated nearly every school in partnership with various religious organizations until April 01, 1969, when it assumed full responsibility for the school system. The last federally run residential school in Saskatchewan closed in 1983. Most residential schools ceased to operate by the mid-1970s, with only seven remaining open through the 1980s.

In recent years, individuals have come forward with personal and painful stories of the abuses that took place in the residential schools. The hearings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples uncovered many of these personal accounts.

On January 07, 1998, the government of Canada announced Gathering Strength - Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan, which calls for: a renewed partnership with Aboriginal peoples, based on recognizing past mistakes and injustices; the

\textsuperscript{33} http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/residential_schools.html
advancement of reconciliation; healing and renewal; and the building of a joint plan for the future. The federal government offered a Statement of Reconciliation, which acknowledged its role in the development and administration of the residential schools and offered an apology to survivors of residential schools:

“Sadly, our history with respect to the treatment of Aboriginal people is not something in which we can take pride. Attitudes of racial and cultural superiority led to a suppression of Aboriginal culture and values. As a country, we are burdened by past actions that resulted in weakening the identity of Aboriginal peoples, suppressing their languages and cultures, and outlawing spiritual practices. We must recognize the impact of these actions on the once self-sustaining nations that were disaggregated, disrupted, limited or even destroyed by the dispossession of traditional territory, by the relocation of Aboriginal people, and by some provisions of the Indian Act. We must acknowledge that the result of these actions was the erosion of the political, economic and social systems of Aboriginal people and nations.

One aspect of our relationship with Aboriginal people over this period that requires particular attention is the Residential School system. This system separated many children from their families and communities and prevented them from speaking their own languages and from learning about their heritage and cultures. In the worst cases, it left legacies of personal pain and distress that continue to reverberate in Aboriginal communities to this day. Tragically, some children were the victims of physical and sexual abuse.

The Government of Canada acknowledges the role it played in the development and administration of these schools. Particularly to those individuals who experienced the tragedy of sexual and physical abuse at residential schools, and who have carried this burden believing that in some way they must be responsible, we wish to emphasize that what you experienced was not your fault and should never have happened. To those of you who suffered this tragedy at residential schools, we are deeply sorry.”
Adapted from 1986 Cultural Calendar, Health and Welfare Canada, Medical Services Branch, Saskatchewan Region

http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/aboriginal_peoplesof_saskatchewan.html
Aboriginal Demographics\textsuperscript{35}

The Aboriginal population is growing at a higher rate than the general population of the province, and demographic projections indicate that the Aboriginal proportion will grow to 32.5\% by 2045.

Today, Aboriginal people occupy an increasingly important role in the province, with 2001 census figures indicating 83,745 Status Indians, 43,695 Métis, and 190 Inuit - together amounting to 13.6\% of the population.

The total number of Registered Indians on the lists of the 74 Saskatchewan First Nations in 2003 was 114,248.

Saskatchewan’s 2006 census population of self-identified people was 141,890 which is a 9\% increase over the 2001 census and 28\% from the 1996 census. The largest component in this group are First Nations members; with 91,300 people. First Nations compose 64\% of the Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan.\textsuperscript{36} There are 47,765 First Nations individuals living on reserve and 35,465 living in urban areas in Saskatchewan.

\textsuperscript{35} \texttt{http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/aboriginal_peoplesof_saskatchewan.html}
\textsuperscript{36} Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, \textit{Saskatchewan’s Aboriginal People}
National Aboriginal Political Structure

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) – [www.afn.ca](http://www.afn.ca)

Native Women’ Association of Canada (NWAC) – [www.nwac.ca](http://www.nwac.ca)

National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) - [www.nafc.ca](http://www.nafc.ca)

Metis National Council (MNC) - [www.metisnation.ca](http://www.metisnation.ca)

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) – [www.itk.ca](http://www.itk.ca)

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) - [www.abo-peoples.org/](http://www.abo-peoples.org/)
Provincial Political Structures\textsuperscript{37}

Tribal Councils

Agency Chiefs Tribal Council
Battlefords Agency Tribal Chiefs
Battlefords Tribal Council
File Hills Qu’Appelle Tribal Council
Meadow Lake Tribal Council
Prince Albert Grand Council
Saskatoon Tribal Council
Southwest Treaty #4 Tribal Council
Touchwood Agency Tribal Council
Yorkton Tribal Administration

Provincial Organizations

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations

\textsuperscript{37} http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/scr/sk/index-eng.asp
## Cultural Knowledge Transmission

The following key partners are required to ensure the intergenerational transmission of traditions, culture and language. Their roles are:

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<tr>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Key Role In Nurturing and Passing On Cultural Heritage</th>
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| ELDERS            | • Utilizing traditional ways of knowing, teaching, listening and learning in passing on the culture and helping others understand that language is integrated with culture, especially spiritual traditions and living life in a traditional way. Elders have a responsibility to mentor and apprentice younger adults and children. Teaching rites of access.  
• Being a role model for all generations by practicing and reinforcing traditional values and by using First Nation languages to maintain spiritual traditions and convey the history of the community.  
• Support the use of traditional practices and help children and parents understand the significance of the names they are given, including the kinship relationships of the family.  
• Make traditional cultural values explicit and incorporate them in all aspects of life in the community, especially those involving First Nations languages.  
• Using traditional practices of recognition, welcoming, kinship and respect when greeting and addressing others, in the home, as well as, in the community.  
• Assist young community members to speak their mother tongue and to expand their fluency by passing the culture and language on to other members of the community. |
| PARENTS           | • Take a proactive role in promoting and using cultural knowledge throughout the home, school and community (including language). Parents have chosen a spiritual role whether as mother or father. Father - creator, Mother - mother earth. Children - gifts of the Creator.  
• Making sure children have a supportive home environment in order that they learn, hear, speak their First Nation language and practice their culture as part of a natural process of growing up.  
• Volunteer, assist, support and encourage cultural programming in the school and community.  
• Help children to understand their family history and heritage as a form of their identity and who they are.  
• Use local rituals and ceremonies to reinforce culture and critical events in children’s lives.  
• Read materials and share stories, songs, family history, literature and knowledge whenever possible. |
| STUDENTS AND LEARNERS | • Take the initiative and create opportunities to learn about culture and listen to and speak First Nations languages.  
• Take advantage of places and times where cultural events and ceremonies are scheduled particularly where First Nations languages are spoken.  
• Learn the rites of access  
• Seek out Elders, male or female and other holders of cultural knowledge who are willing to serve as a mentor on a continuing basis.  
• Use available media to record and listen to songs, stories, dances, music, arts and practices, learning these and sharing with others.  
• Participate in and attend cultural activities by participating respectfully and appropriately at all times.  
• Be persistent in the practice of First Nations’ knowledge whenever possible. Spend time with Elders by practicing proper protocols and speaking First Nation languages.  
• Learn the origins and meanings of cultural practices and knowledge within a traditional context. |
<p>| COMMUNITIES       | • Encourage all community members to use their First Nation’s language on a daily basis and to |</p>
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| AND ORGANIZATION  | assist others interested in learning the language, especially children.\(^\text{39}\)  
|                   | • Incorporate traditional culture, language and protocols in all aspects of community life and organizational practices.  
|                   | • Begin and close all community events and gatherings with presentations in the First Nation language offered by an Elder along with an aspiring learner of the language.  
|                   | • Support the establishment of cultural mentor/apprentice programs in the community and region.  
|                   | • Disseminate information on funding programs that support culture and language programs and offer assistance for communities to access the resources available.  
|                   | • Promote traditional story telling gatherings, songs, dances, art and theatre that help community members experience their cultural heritage and gain a deeper understanding of the ceremonies and traditional world view associated with their culture.  
|                   | • Promote regular culture and language programming on all radio and television outlets in the region including local news and events, call in programs, Elder storytelling and translations of print materials related to life in the community and region.  
|                   | • Publish posters on culturally relevant themes presented in the First Nation language including statements of First Nation’s philosophy and values that can be promoted in the school and community.  
|                   | • Promote public awareness of culture and language issues in the community and region and monitor implementation of this strategy to measure progress and success.  
|                   | • Provide translation and services at all meetings to ensure use of the First Nation languages as much as possible.  
| FIRST NATIONS GOVERNMENTS | • If we don’t practice culture and language it may impact treaty and Aboriginal rights.  
| LEADERSHIP       | • Uphold and promote First Nations’ culture and language  
|                   | • Understanding traditional governance  
|                   | • Responsibilities of being a leader  
|                   | • Different from First Nation government  
| EDUCATORS        | • Effectively use local expertise, especially Elders, as transmitters of the culture as part of the school curriculum (including First Nation languages).  
|                   | • Use wherever possible locally relevant curriculum materials which students can identify with including materials written by First Nation authors.  
|                   | • Participate in culture camps for students to learn cultural ways and languages within the context of contemporary life.  
|                   | • Implement culturally appropriate approaches to language teaching using qualified language instructors in accordance with the history and aspirations of the local community.  
|                   | • Assist students in their ongoing quest for cultural and personal affirmation.  
|                   | • Create an environment that promotes cultural activity and learning of First Nation languages.  
| SCHOOLS           | • Ensure cultural policies and practices in the school are consistent with the aspirations of the parents and community.  
|                   | • Offer incentives for students to participate in cultural and language programs that are offered.  
|                   | • Establish a cultural repository of resource materials and knowledgeable expertise from the community.  
|                   | • Set aside cultural time for students to practice their cultural activities and speak their First Nation language in an immersion environment.  
|                   | • Utilize cultural values and beliefs in all teaching.  
|                   | • Provide in-depth cultural orientations for all new teachers and administrators including participation with Elders.  
|                   | • Make use of locally produced cultural resource materials especially in the First Nation  

\(^{39}\) Important to have a First Nations name – re different kinds
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| **EDUCATION AGENCIES** | • Provide opportunities for personnel to participate in regional and national cultural and language education conferences, workshops and other events for sharing of expertise around cultural issues.  
• Provide funding and administrative support for local schools, colleges and cultural programs aimed at immersing students in the culture and language.  
• Provide support for curriculum development for cultural and language programs including computer assisted capabilities and literacy support.  
• Implement long term processes to ensure sustainability of cultural and First Nations’ language programming. |
| **MEDIA PRODUCERS AND LINGUISTS** | • Facilitate the use of culture and local First Nations’ language in ways that provide appropriate context in story construction and delivery.  
• Utilize local Elders to share their First Nations’ knowledge in multimedia materials.  
• Ensure curricula materials draw upon local cultural experts and are prepared in First Nation languages.  
• Contribute linguistic expertise in culture, language, learning, policies and planning to enhance the quality of cultural and linguistic data to provide encouragement and support for students interested in teaching, learning their culture and language or becoming linguists.  
• Help prepare linguistic materials and templates of basic planning documents that direct First Nation people in their cultural and linguistic efforts.  
• Assist in the conservation and preservation of cultural and linguistic materials including appropriate media and storage facilities. |

As a group exercise can you find someone who can help you learn more about parenting skills to help you with your children? Who can you think of personally that you can talk to about language and culture?

### 4. CANADIAN FIRST NATIONS HISTORICAL TIMELINE
Canadian First Nations Historical Timeline\textsuperscript{40}

The first - and most important - step towards understanding First Nation history is to recognize that indigenous people are strong people and survivors. In spite of the severity of the many issues that individuals, families and communities face, First Nations’ people are demonstrating their resiliency and emergence to equal standing within the Canadian Society.

The shared history between indigenous people and European settlers is one of cultural disruption. Generations of indigenous people experienced profound, unsought and irreversible changes in their cultural and family life as a result. Many indigenous people are working to change the cycles of abuse, the social and economic disruption, and the loss of languages and the assimilation of their cultures.

Education is key to this change. Aboriginal people are building bridges and working to create educational communities where their children are respected and their cultures are reflected. They are rebuilding their Aboriginal cultures and hope to right the relations of the past.

**Key Historical Events for First Nation People**

Prior to first contact with the explorer Christopher Columbus, it’s been estimated that the Indian population was around 50 million. In Canada today, the Indian population is roughly 700,000\textsuperscript{41}. There are a number of key events in the last two hundred years that affect Aboriginal people in Canada today.

1492 - The word 'Indian' comes from Columbus's description of the people he found here. He was an Italian, and did not speak or write very good Spanish, so in his written accounts he called the Indians, 'una gente in Dios' or, 'a people in God'. At the time of contact, Europeans had doubts as to whether Indian people in the Americas were human -- only Christians were considered human. European arrival in the "New World" changed First Nation societies forever.

1493 - In 1493, at the request of the King and Queen of Spain, Pope Alexander issued the following papal bull, the Doctrine of Discovery. According to the Doctrine of Discovery, non-Christian nations were to no longer own land in the face of claims made by the Christian sovereigns. The indigenous people of these lands were then to be placed under the tutelage and guardianship of those Christian nations that 'discovered' their lands. Terra Nullius – The Doctrine of Terra Nullius, which in Latin means 'empty land' – gave a colonial nation the right to absorb any barren or uninhabitable territory encountered by explorers. In other

\textsuperscript{40} Excerpted and adapted from MPI Cultural Training Manual and Interlake RHA Aboriginal Workforce Strategy Aboriginal Human Resources Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training

\textsuperscript{41} 2006 Census, Statistics Canada.
words, if the land was deemed ‘empty’, then it was considered subject to the Doctrine of Discovery and could be claimed by the European explorers. Over time, this concept was conveniently expanded to include lands not occupied by 'civilized' people, or those not being put to 'civilized' use.

1497 - John Cabot explores, for England, present-day Nova Scotia, Canada.

1512 - Pope Julius II declared that: "Indians are truly men...they may and should freely and legitimately enjoy their liberty and possession of their property; nor should they be in any way enslaved."

1534 - Jacques Cartier for France explores Kanata. Kanata is a Mohawk word, meaning "village" or "settlement." Until the mid-20th century, this word was thought to have been the origin of Canada's name. But, as evidenced by the journal of Jacques Cartier about his voyage to present-day Quebec, Canada, in the early 16th century, Canada's name stems from the Saint-Lawrence Iroquoian word "canada, which holds the same meaning. This Iroquoian language was spoken by the inhabitants of Stadacona and the neighbouring region near present-day Quebec City in the 16th century, with words having similarities to those in related Iroquoian languages, most notably in Mohawk and Oneida.

1610 - The Concordat Wampum Belt is with the Vatican in Nova Scotia.

1670 - In the early 19th century, fur-trading was the main industry of Western Canada. Two companies had an intense competition over the trade. The first, the Hudson's Bay Company was a London, England-based organization. The second, the North West Company was based in Montreal. Hudson's Bay Company was distinctly English in its culture and flavour while the North West Company was a mix of French, Scottish and First Nations’ cultures.

The voyageurs of the North West Company were a highly mobile group of fur traders. They established temporary encampments in the forks region that later became Winnipeg.

Initially the Fur Trade was mutually beneficial. The Europeans depended upon Indian and Métis knowledge of the land and their labour; and provided manufactured goods to them. For over 200 years the result was balanced trade relations.

The Métis had a good command of European and Indian languages and became intermediaries in the fur trade economy.

The fur trade brought many changes:

- Diseases such as small pox, tuberculosis and measles;
- Missionaries brought Christianity; and
- Many Indian and Métis people were faced with starvation due to overhunting of their resources by the European settlers.

1701 - The **Great Peace of Montreal** was a peace treaty between New France and 40 First Nations of North America. It was signed on August 4, 1701, by Louis-Hector de Callière, governor of New France, and 1200 representatives of 40 aboriginal nations of the North East of North America. Over 70 historical treaties were negotiated with First Nations between 1701 and 1923 in Canada.

1734 - La Verendryes's son Pierre, explorer and fur trader, established Fort Maurepas on a site approximately 12 -14 miles upstream from the mouth of the Red River. Fort Maurepas is important historically as being the first post in that area trying to capture the fur trade and make allies of the First Nation people which included Ojibway, Cree, Assiniboine, Métis, and other traders.

1759 - September 13, 1759, following a three-month siege of Québec, General James Wolfe defeated the French forces at the Plains of Abraham outside the city. The French staged a counter offensive in the spring of 1760 with some success, but failed to retake Québec due to a lack of naval support. French forces retreated to Montréal, where on September 8, they surrendered in the face of an overwhelming amount of British soldiers. The British Crown now controlled all of eastern North America. This defeat had serious ramifications in Canada, even to this day, as the Quebec sovereignty movement continues to see this as their "nation's" defining moment. The tribes of the Great Lakes region, the Ottawas, Ojibways, Potawatomis and Hurons, had long been allied with French *habitants*, with whom they lived, traded, and intermarried. The First Nation people of the Great Lakes region were alarmed to learn they were under British sovereignty after the French loss of North America. When a British garrison took possession of Fort Detroit from the French in 1760, local First Nation people cautioned them that "this country was given by God to the Indians".

1763 - **Pontiac's Rebellion** was a war launched in 1763 by some Native American tribes primarily from the Great Lakes region, the Illinois Country, and Ohio Country who were dissatisfied with British policies in the Great Lakes region after the British victory in the French and Indian War (1754–1763). Warriors from numerous tribes joined the uprising in an effort to drive British soldiers and settlers out of the region. The war is named after the Ottawa leader **Pontiac**, the most prominent of many First Nation leaders in the conflict. The war began in May 1763, when Native Americans, offended by the policies of British General Jeffrey Amherst, attacked a number of British forts and settlements. Eight forts were destroyed, and hundreds of colonists were killed or captured, with many more injured.

**The Royal Proclamation of 1763** - was issued by King George III of Britain. This document sought to prevent further racial violence and explicitly recognized Aboriginal title; Aboriginal land ownership and authority as recognized by the
Crown and continuing under British sovereignty. It states that only the Crown could acquire lands from First Nations and only by treaty with the Crown. The Proclamation established British protection over unsettled land belonging to Indian tribes and recognized Indian title to lands not already colonized.

The Proclamation is considered to be one of the strongest guarantees of First Nations' land rights. Pre-existing land ownership was acknowledged and is a very important legal concept today. As such, it is often referred to as an "Indian Magna Carta" or an "Indian Bill of Rights".

By forbidding colonists from trespassing on First Nation lands, the British government hoped to avoid more conflicts like Pontiac's Rebellion. "The Royal Proclamation", writes historian Colin Calloway, "reflected the notion that segregation not interaction should characterize Indian-white relations."

British Lord, Jeffrey Amherst secured his place in history with the deliberate introduction of the first act of modern germ warfare in North America on First Nation peoples, including against his allies, "You will do well to inoculate the Indians by means of blankets, as well as every other method that can serve to extirpate this execrable race."

1770's - Smallpox and other diseases had a devastating toll on the First Nation population. Waves of epidemics decimated First Nation populations to an estimated 90% of the original population. In 1910, at its lowest point, there were only 103,661 First Nation people in Canada.

1810 - The North West Company (NWC) finished building Fort Gibraltar at the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. It proved an irritant to the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) for ten years. There were many conflicts between the mostly Scottish employees of the HBC and the NWC employees, who were mostly French-Canadians and Métis. On March 17, 1816, Fort Gibraltar was captured and destroyed by Colin Robertson, a former NWC employee who became a leader of the Selkirk Colony. The capture was ruled illegal by British authorities and the NWC was given permission to rebuild the fort in 1817.

1812 - Fort Douglas was a fort of the HBC that was built by Scottish and Irish settlers. It was down river of the NWC establishment of Fort Gibraltar. During the conflict between the HBC and the NWC, the fort was burned by the Métis and employees of the NWC. The fort was soon rebuilt and there was a short period of relative peace. After the Battle of Seven Oaks in 1816, the fort was again destroyed, and the settlers were removed from their land. It was used as a trading post.

War of 1812 - Tecumseh (1768-1813), a Shawnee chief, had no love for the British and despised the Americans. As a war leader, he convinced other First Nations to join the British in order to combat American territorial ambitions more
effectively. He was instrumental in taking Forts Michilimackinac, Brownstone and Detroit. He safeguarded Canada from the Americans.

1817 - The Earl of Selkirk, who lead the Red River Colony, signed an agreement to share the land with the Cree and Ojibway. The First Nations agreed to share land in return for an annual supply of 100 pounds (45 kilos) of good quality tobacco.

1818 - The 49\textsuperscript{th} parallel (Medicine Line) becomes accepted as the border between the U.S. & Canada from Lake of the Woods to the Rockies.

1820 - An Anglican clergyman, John West, arrived in the Red River Colony. He opened a school in which he hoped to convert and civilize “Indians”.

1821 – the Hudson Bay Company and North West Company were amalgamated. The NWC had 97 trading posts compared to the 84 in Manitoba that flew the HBC standard.

1822 - The HBC established a third trading post at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers near the site of the NWC’s Fort Gibraltar. It served as the centre of fur trade within the Red River Settlement. Unfortunately in 1826, a severe flood destroyed the fort. It was rebuilt in 1837 by the HBC and named Upper Fort Garry to differentiate it from the Lower Fort Garry”.

1830 - The HBC began construction of the Lower Fort Garry, also known as the Stone Fort, 20 miles down river, to be one that would stand on higher ground and be situated north of the gruelling St. Andrews rapids. Lower Fort Garry’s main buildings were completed by the early 1840s, using limestone and wood from the surrounding area.

1857 - The Gradual Civilization Act and The Enfranchisement Act - The colonial government passed these two Acts to assimilate Aboriginal people into Canadian society. By giving up his First Nation’s heritage, any Aboriginal male over the age of 21, literate in English or French, "of good moral character" and free of debt, could be "no longer deemed an Indian”. He could then enjoy the rights and privileges of non-Aboriginal citizens. In 1933, an amendment to The Indian Act enforced assimilation even further. That amendment empowered the government to order the enfranchisement of First Nations members who met the qualifications set out in the Act, even when they had not requested this.

1862 - One of the worst smallpox epidemics sweeps Western North America.

1867 - The Dominion of Canada is created under the terms of the British North America Act. Canada's original constitution was the charter to Confederation. Section 91(24) of the BNA Act established Federal jurisdiction over “Indians, and lands reserved for the Indians”. The federal government implemented their
responsibility through the *Indian Act*. The *BNA Act* was drafted in part to provide policy for Sir John A. MacDonald's new Indian policy. The *Act* specified how First Nation peoples were put 'under the protection' of the Crown. It provided the legal base for the treaties, and it emphasized the government's central priorities of assimilation, enfranchisement, and civilization.

1869 - Red River Resistance to Canada was led by Louis Riel in Red River which led to the creation of a provisional government.

1870 - Manitoba joins Confederation. Manitoba’s population was made up of a majority of First Nations people but they were given no role in the decision making process of the province.

1871 – Canada’s Western Treaties. There were eleven numbered Treaties signed between the Crown and First Nations from 1871 to 1921. First Nation people maintain that all agreements were made in good faith during these negotiations and were binding. Treaty Commissioners during the course of negotiations made verbal agreements that were not incorporated into the written text of the Treaty.

Sacred Pipe ceremonies at the beginning of negotiations were statements of faith by First Nation people. Government participation in these ceremonies was taken as acceptance of the significance of this practice. Indian people believe that the Treaties are binding agreements that are to last forever:

“For as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the water flows”.

Present day interpretation of the Treaties continues to be defined by the courts and more recently, at treaty tables established between Canada and First Nations.

1872 - After some contact with Europeans, education became the primary instrument to assimilate First Nation people. The Indian Residential and Industrial Schools were established following the signing of the numbered Treaties. The main objective was “to kill the Indian in the child”. How?

- to Christianize and “civilize”;
- to teach reading & writing; and,
- to develop children into farmers and housekeepers.

Indian Residential Schools also began a legacy of despair for First Nation people. Government and religious orders made all decisions about the education of First Nation children. Children were removed from their homes with or without parental consent. Later, it became mandatory for children from the age of 5 to the age of 17. The use of First Nation languages in school was prohibited; children were punished severely for speaking their language, even if they did not speak
English or French. Over 75% of the First Nation population attended these schools in Canada.

- Many children died as a result of health conditions at the schools.
- Many other children ran away from school. If caught, upon their return, they were severely punished. Others died while trying to reach home.
- Many encountered sexual abuse by people in authority.
- Many suffered severe psychological harm as a result of physical abuse.
- Many lost their identity through loss of language and culture.
- Many were not taught traditional parenting practices because they were not exposed to a parent’s love and guidance and thus intergenerational transmission could and did not occur.

After a century of operation, the Indian Residential Schools had nearly destroyed First Nations communities by suppressing their language, culture, and spirituality which led to the loss of healthy First Nation identities and communities. The oppression and abuse endured at these schools carried over into First Nation communities, families and future generations. The last Indian Residential School closed on George Gordon First Nation, Saskatchewan in 1996.

1873 - North West Mounted Police was stationed at Lower Fort Garry as their training grounds before moving westward in 1874.

1876 - The Indian Act is established. It influences all aspect of a First Nation person’s life from birth to death. Indian Bands were created and Indian Agents became the intermediaries between First Nation people and the rest of the country. Throughout its history, the Indian Act has three main principles:

- to “civilize” Indian people;
- to manage Indian people and their lands; and,
- to define who is and is not an “Indian”.

**Philosophy of the Indian Act**

The first Indian Act adopted an explicit vision of assimilation, in which “Indians” would be encouraged to leave behind their Indian status and traditional cultures and become full members of the broader Canadian society. In this context, “Indians” were viewed as children or wards of the state, to which the government had a paternalistic duty to protect and “civilize”. This underlying philosophy was clearly expressed by the Canadian Department of the Interior in its 1876 annual report:

Our Indian legislation generally rests on the principle, that the aborigines are to be kept in a condition of tutelage and treated as wards or children of the State. …the true interests of the aborigines and of the State alike require that every effort should be made to aid the Red man in lifting himself out of his
condition of tutelage and dependence, and that is clearly our wisdom and our
duty, through education and every other means, to prepare him for a higher
civilization by encouraging him to assume the privileges and responsibilities
of full citizenship.

It is important to note the change in “Indian” policy from the Royal Proclamation
of 1763 to the first Indian Act. The first Indian Act maintained the Crown’s role as
trustee of Indian interests, but had a very different view of that relationship. No
longer were First Nation groups viewed as autonomous quasi-nations within the
broader Canadian political system to which the Crown had an obligation to
protect from abuse and encroachment from European colonial society. Moreover,
many of the changes to the Act granted the government greater powers to move
Indians onto Reserves and expropriate their lands for the purpose of non-Indian
use.

The effect of the Indian Act on First Nation people was to transform independent
First Nations into physically marginalized and economically impoverished bands
and individuals into wards of the state. Through the Indian Act, the federal
government denied First Nation people the basic rights that most Canadians take
for granted.

1876 - Medicine Chest clause - the only Treaty which specifically mentions
medical care is Treaty Six, which contains two clauses:

- that in the events hereafter of the Indians comprised within this treaty
  being overtaken by any pestilence or by a general famine, the Queen, on
  being satisfied and certified thereof, by her Indian Agent or Agents, will
  grant to the Indians, assistance of such character as to extent as here
  chief Superintendent of Indian affairs shall deem necessary and sufficient
  to relieve the Indians of the calamity that shall have befallen them; and,
- that a medicine chest shall be kept at the house of the Indian agent for
  the use and benefit of the Indians at the discretion of the Agent.

1880 - Tuberculosis epidemics sweep across North America.

1884 - Anti-Potlatch and Sun Dance laws were enacted under the Indian Act.
Responsibility for the education of children was given in large part to church-run
residential schools. Christianity was imposed on First Nation people as a means
of "civilizing" them. There was resistance to the aggressive policies of the federal
government. The people retained a profound conviction that their hereditary title
still existed.

1885 - Louis Riel and the Métis clash with the Northwest Mounted Police at Duck
Lake and are defeated at Batoche. Riel, along with nine First Nation warriors
were executed in Regina.
A permit system was established for First Nation people living on reserves. First Nation people had to pay a fee to the Indian Agent and get permission to leave the reserve and travel to another reserve.

1887 - Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, is recorded as saying, “... the great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and to assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion, as speedily as they are fit for the change”.

1893 - Duncan Campbell Scott becomes Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs. His stated objective was assimilation. At the turn of the century it was widely assumed by the Dominion government that the "Indian problem" would soon solve itself as First Nation people died off from diseases. The survivors would be absorbed into the larger society. He ruled the Department until 1932.

1894 - Removal of band control over non-First Nation people living on reserves. This power was transferred to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.

1896 - An immigration policy is developed to help bring farmers from Europe to settle on the Prairies by giving them land and financial support.

1905 - Power to remove First Nation people from reserves near towns with more than 8,000 people.

1909 - Within 15 years of the signing of Treaty 1, both the federal and provincial government began restricting Treaty and Aboriginal rights to hunting and fishing, as the result of bribery and corrupt practices by government officials, the Peguis/Henry Prince band was forced to surrender their reserve in Selkirk (for which they received insufficient compensation for lands) and move to a new reserve some 100 miles north, close to the mouth of the Fisher River at the Interlake.

1911 - Power to expropriate portions of reserves for roads, railways and other public works, as well as to move an entire reserve away from a municipality if it was deemed expedient.

1914 - Requirement that western First Nation people seek official permission before appearing in “Indian” ceremonial dress in any public dance, show, exhibition, stampede or pageant.

1918 - Influenza epidemics sweeps across North America.

1918 - Power to lease out uncultivated reserve lands to non-First Nations people if the new leaseholder would use it for farming or pasture.
1919 - First Congress of the League of Indians meets in Sault Ste Marie.

1920 - No Indians Left Policy, Indian Act Amended. Special Committee of the House of Commons examining the Indian Act considers new legislative measures for compulsory enfranchisement of Indians. Deputy Superintendent General Duncan Campbell Scott said, "Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department. That is the object of this Bill". The government asserted that assimilation was the only possible policy.

1927 - Prohibition of anyone (First Nations or otherwise) from soliciting funds or retaining a lawyer for First Nations legal claims without special license from the Superintendent General. This amendment granted the government control over the ability of Indians to pursue land claims, and effectively blocked any chance of political or court action.

1930 - Prohibition of pool hall owners from allowing entrance of a First Nation person who by inordinate frequenting of a pool room, either on or off an Indian reserve, misspends or wastes his time or means to the detriment of himself, his family or household.

1934 - The Federal government through the Natural Resources Transfer Act (NRTA) transfers responsibility of Natural Resources over to the Provinces. The start of jurisdictional squabbles between governments when dealing with First Nations and Treaties begins. First Nations maintain that the ownership of natural resources goes beyond the "depth of a plow" when the government's stance is that the Treaty agreement is only to the "depth of a plow" in the sharing of natural resources.

1945 - The Indian Act is revised to limit coverage of First Nation people, excluding First Nation women who married non-First Nation men (rescinded in 1985).

1945 - Aboriginal War Veterans - Aboriginal Canadians enlisted in proportionately higher numbers during World War II than did any other segment of the general population. First Nation people had to choose between maintaining treaty status under the Indian Act or status as veterans. Most Aboriginal veterans were excluded from the standard veterans' benefits that should have been their right, such as the right to purchase or lease land under the Veterans’ Land Act and a grant or loan to start farming or a small business. Aboriginal veterans, including Métis and non-status Indians, had great difficulty obtaining the same rights and benefits.

1951 - Parliament repeals Indian Act provisions of anti-potlatch and land claims activity.
1959 - Only one percent of children in the care of Social Services were of Aboriginal ancestry. By the end of the 1960s, 30 to 40 percent of children in care were Aboriginal, even though they only constituted four percent of Canada’s population. In what is called the “Sixties Scoop” (which continued into the 1980s), these children were fostered or adopted out to predominantly white families. Many times, culturally valued ways of raising children were misinterpreted by social workers and this resulted in apprehension of the children. Often moved from home to home, children in foster care suffered great losses, including loss of birth names and First Nation identity, cultural identity and, for First Nation children, loss of Indian status.

1960 - First Nation people in Canada win the right to vote in federal elections. A First Nation person could now be both First Nation and a Canadian citizen at the same time.

1961 - Compulsory enfranchisement provisions were removed from the Indian Act, meaning that First Nation people could no longer be forced to give up their Indian status.

The National Indian Council is founded. (First Nations National Political Body)

1962 - The courts decided that Section 94 of The Indian Act, which prohibited First Nation people from possessing liquor outside a reserve, did not violate the Canadian Bill of Rights.

1968 - Formation of Métis Society and the National Indian Brotherhood.

1969 – The Nisga’a people go to court with the Calder case.

The Federal government, under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and Minister of Indian Affairs, Jean Chretien, issues its White Paper, advocating policies which promote the assimilation of First Nation people, including the abolition of the Indian Act and the transfer of responsibility for First Nation people to the provinces. There is nation-wide political activity to counter the White Paper.

1970 - Red Paper (Citizen Plus) presented to the government proposing that First Nation governments be responsible for First Nation people.

1971 - Section 94 of The Indian Act restricting the possession of intoxicants by First Nation people is repealed.

1972 - Indian Control of Indian Education policy document written by National Indian Brotherhood advocating parental responsibility and local control over First Nations’ education. This policy is accepted by the federal government a year later.
1973 - In the Calder Case, the Supreme Court rules that the Nisga'a people did hold title to their traditional lands before B.C. was created. The Court splits evenly on whether Nisga'a still has title. The federal government adopts a comprehensive land claims policy. B.C. refuses to participate.

1979 – Aboriginal leaders travel to Britain to oppose the repatriation of the Constitution and to call for Canada to honour commitments made to First Nation, Métis and Inuit people.

1982 - Canada repatriates its Constitution from Britain. Canada’s Constitutional Act, Section 35, recognizes and affirms existing Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.

Métis people are recognized as a distinct people with their own history, language and culture. The right to pursue a Métis way of life has been a long struggle. Throughout their history, Métis people endured repression, restrictions on trading, fraudulent schemes to dishonour Métis land entitlements, and marginalization of their culture and rights.

The Indian Act often disregarded Métis heritage in its registration process. It was not until 1982 that Métis people were recognized in Section 35.2 of the Canadian Constitution, with Aboriginal people of Canada defined as including the ‘Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada’.

1984 - Guerin Case, the Musqueam Indian Band (Vancouver, B.C.) sued the Crown for breach of trust concerning 162 acres of the Band’s reserve land that had been leased to a golf club in the late 1950s. Subsequent to the lease, the band discovered that Department of Indian and Northern Affairs officials withheld vital information about the value of the property and failed to follow the Band’s instructions as set out in the surrender process of reserved lands. In the present case, the Court found that the Crown had failed to meet its duties and was therefore liable to the band for loss of potential revenues.

1985 - Sections of the Indian Act are declared to be in violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Bill C-31 amends the Act to allow Indians who had been enfranchised or lost their status as band members (e.g. women who married non-Indians, Indians who served in the Armed Forces) to regain their status as Indians. The bill is controversial because it retains the federal government’s right to decide who is and who is not a band member.

1990 - Failure of the Meech Lake Accord as Elijah Harper says, “No”, creating a greater national awareness on First Nation issues.

Oka Crisis receives national attention when Mohawk warriors in an armed stand-off with the Quebec police and Canadian army over the land at Oka. First Nations
across the country rally to support the Mohawks and to emphasize their demands for recognition of inherent Aboriginal title and rights.

Sparrow Supreme Court decision concludes that the Musqueam people’s Aboriginal right to fish for food and ceremonial purpose has not been extinguished.

British Columbia agreed to join First Nations and Canada in treaty negotiations.

First Nations, B.C. and Canada agree to establish a task force to develop a process for land claim negotiations in B.C.

1991 - Chief Justice McEachern dismisses the Gitxsan-Wet'suwet'en Chiefs' claim in the case of Delgamuukw v. Her Majesty the Queen.

The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba issued a report on the state of Aboriginal justice in Manitoba, in response to concerns about the quality of policing and of investigations into matters concerning Aboriginal people.

1993 – B.C. Court of Appeal’s five judges unanimously ruled in the appeal of the 1991 Delgamuukw case, that First Nations’ rights were never extinguished by the colonial government before confederation and that the rights are protected in the constitution. This ruling is known as Delgamuukw 2.


1995 - Gustafson Lake Standoff - a major military operation was directed at a small group of protesters.

1996 – Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples - The Commission releases its report and calls for sweeping changes to heal a broken relationship between First Nation people and the rest of Canadian society. The federal government recognizes that First Nation people must have a significant input into how the Indian Act will be changed.

1997 - Supreme Court hands down its unanimous decision on the Delgamuukw 3 Case. The court ruled that Aboriginal title to the land had never been extinguished. The previous trial judge had erred by not accepting oral history as evidence in the case. The claim was sent back to trial, suggesting that negotiations were the best way to resolve outstanding claims.
1998 - The Government of Canada announces an action plan to restructure its relationship with Aboriginal peoples (Gathering Strength - Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan), and affirms that both historic and modern-day treaties will continue to be key elements in the future relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown. Since that time, the Government of Canada has begun negotiating agreements with treaty First Nations to put self-government in place. These agreements will build on the relationship already established by the treaties.


The Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission is established in Manitoba to develop an action plan to improve Aboriginal justice as recommended by the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry.

Supreme Court overturns Donald Marshall Jr.'s conviction for illegal fishing, recognizing an East Coast Aboriginal treaty right to a commercial fishery.

There are approximately 800 outstanding Land Claims that still remain unresolved and new claims are added each year.

2000 - The Indian Act was amended to allow band members living off-reserve to vote in band elections and referenda. This amendment was in response to a 1999 Supreme Court of Canada decision which concluded that the denial of voting rights for off-reserve band members violated their right to equality under Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

2003 - Powley Decision - Steve and Roddy, two Ontario Métis from the Sault Ste. Marie area, were charged in 1993 with unlawfully hunting moose and possessing game contrary to sections 46 and 47(1) of the Ontario Game and Fish Act. The central issue was whether these individuals from the Sault Ste. Marie area, who self-identify as Métis, can establish Métis Aboriginal rights to hunt that are protected by section 35 of The Constitution Act, 1982. The Supreme Court of Canada held that the impugned legislation had no force or effect with respect to the accused on the basis that, as members of the Métis community in and around Sault Ste. Marie, the accused have an Aboriginal right to hunt for food. The legislation infringed the Métis Aboriginal right and conservation concerns did not justify the infringement. The Court held that, to support a site-specific Aboriginal rights claim, the claimant must demonstrate membership in an identified Métis community with some degree of continuity and stability as established through evidence of shared customs, traditions and collective identity, as well as demographic evidence.

The test for Métis rights should focus on identifying those practices, customs and traditions that are integral to the Métis community’s distinctive existence and relationship to the land after a particular Métis community arose but before it
came under the effective control of European laws and customs. The Court found that the term “Métis” in Section 35 does not encompass all individuals with mixed Indian and European heritage; rather, it refers to distinctive peoples who, in addition to their mixed ancestry, developed their own customs, and recognizable group identity separate from their First Nation or Inuit and European forebears. While not setting down a comprehensive definition of who is Métis for the purpose of asserting a claim under section 35, the Court cited three broad factors as indicative of Métis identity; self-identification, ancestral connection and community acceptance.

2004 - Haida Decision - In *Haida Nation v British Columbia (Minister of Forests)* the Supreme Court of Canada recognised that the duty of governments to consult with, and to accommodate the interests of, Aboriginal peoples can arise before claims of Aboriginal rights and title are determined. The Court identified that observance of this duty is essential to upholding the honour of the Crown.

Taku River Tlingit Decision - a dispute centred on the British Columbia Government's approval of a Project Approval Certificate for Redfern Resources Ltd. who sought to reopen a mine in British Columbia. The controversial aspect of the project centred on their plan to build a 160 km access road to the mine site, which would cut across land claimed by the Taku River Tlingit First Nation as their traditional territory and the subject of on-going treaty negotiations. The Supreme Court of Canada, applying its analysis in Haida Nation, released concurrently with this decision, allowed the Province's appeal and held that the process engaged in by the Province under the *Environment Assessment Act* fulfilled the requirements of the Crown's duty to consult with the First Nation and accommodate its concerns.

At issue was whether the Crown had a duty to consult prior to approving the re-opening of a mine and the construction of an access road to the mine through territory over which the First Nation claimed, but had not yet proven Aboriginal rights and title. In Haida, the Court confirmed the existence of the Crown’s duty to consult Aboriginal peoples prior to proof of rights or title claims. The Court found that the Crown’s duty to consult was engaged in this case because the Province was aware of the First Nation’s claims through its involvement in the treaty negotiations process and knew that the decision to reopen the mine and to build the access road had the potential to adversely affect the substance of the rights and title claims. The Court concluded that the Crown had fulfilled its duty to consult on the basis that the First Nation was part of the project committee, participating fully in the environmental review process; its views were put before the appropriate Ministers and the final project approval contained measures designed to address both immediate and long-term concerns of the First Nation. The Court also stated that the Province was not under a duty to reach an agreement with the First Nation and its failure to do so did not breach its duty of good faith consultations.
Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Round Table is held in Ottawa to discuss future directions in economic development, education, health, and well-being of First Nations peoples and communities in Canada.

2005 - Mikisew Cree - the case came about because of a proposal to establish a winter road through Wood Buffalo National Park for access from four communities in the Northwest Territories to the highway system in Alberta. The Mikisew Cree First Nation, a Treaty 8 signatory, challenged the approval of the road proposal by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada on the grounds that the building of the road would infringe on their hunting and trapping rights. Treaty 8 confirms the right to hunt, trap and fish for members of First Nations that signed the treaty, but it also provided that land may be required or taken up from time to time for settlement, mining, lumbering, trading and other purposes. In its decision, the Supreme Court confirmed that, while the Crown can exercise its Treaty 8 right to take up land, its duty to act honourably dictates the content of the process. The question in each case is to determine the degree to which conduct contemplated by the Crown would adversely affect the rights of the First Nation people to hunt, fish and trap as to trigger the duty to consult. In this case, the Supreme Court found that Parks Canada had not consulted enough with the Mikisew Cree First Nation before making its decision.

2008 - Government of Canada recognizes and apologizes to those who attended Indian Residential Schools and acknowledged its role in the establishment and administration of these schools. The Government of Canada provided financial compensation to living students that attended Indian Residential Schools. However, there are still a number of Indian Residential Schools that have not been accepted under the Common Experience Payment whose students have not received any compensation.

2008 - The Manitoba court decision upholding Métis hunting rights on the Goodon Case began in October 2004 when Will Goodon shot a duck near Turtle Mountain in south western Manitoba. He had not obtained a provincial license, but was harvesting under the authority of a Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) Harvesters Card. He was charged by provincial wildlife officers for unlawful possession of wildlife. The MMF defended Goodon based on the Métis right to harvest, which is protected in Canada’s Constitution, as first confirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada in the Powley Case in Ontario, and subsequently confirmed by court decisions in Alberta and Saskatchewan. In a written ruling released in early January, Justice Combs of the Provincial Court of Manitoba dismissed the charge against Goodon.

The trial spanned more than a year and included testimony from Métis community witnesses, experts and historians. He ruled that Goodon had a constitutionally protected Métis right to hunt and that Manitoba’s Wildlife Act is of no force and effect in its application to Goodon and other Métis harvesters because the province’s regulatory regime unjustifiably infringes upon the Métis
right to hunt and fails to recognize or accommodate the Métis right. In dismissing the charge against Goodon, Justice Combs ruled that the Métis community of Western Canada has its own distinctive identity and that within Manitoba there is a regional rights-bearing Métis community that includes all of the areas within the present boundaries of southern Manitoba from the present day city of Winnipeg and extending south to the United States and northwest to the province of Saskatchewan, including the area of present day Russell, Manitoba. The court also acknowledged that this rights-bearing Métis community in historic and contemporary times extends well outside of Manitoba.


*To this day, the provisions of the Indian Act that allow for the administration of Indians on Reserves in areas such as: education, taxation, management of land, and membership remains under federal government control.*
5. LITERATURE SOURCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note to the Reader

This document is a summary of literature sources that were consulted to develop the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre Cultural Awareness Workshop Handbook. It is designed, therefore, to be a supplementary compendium of resources and background information related to cultural awareness and as such is not completely exhaustive.

A bibliography is provided which lists several resources and examples of cultural awareness training that can be accessed via workshop or in some cases through purchase.
The following table summarizes some of the research data that was reviewed in preparation of the SICC cultural awareness workshop handbook (adapted from Hill, 2009 literature synopsis)\(^{42}\):

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<th>Publication</th>
<th>Colonization example</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fighting Firewater Fictions, Moving beyond the Disease Model of Alcoholism in First Nations (2004)</td>
<td>A study on the addictions facing indigenous communities.</td>
<td>Colonization spread and took away the spiritual connection in many indigenous communities – and is seen as a precursor to the poor coping skills seen due to drug and alcohol abuse.</td>
<td>Traditional knowledge needs to be restored to create effectiveness in interventions for substance abusers. Healing must involve providing people with skills to heal from historical trauma.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substance use among American Indian and Alaska natives: incorporating culture in an “indigenist” stress-coping paradigm (2002)</td>
<td>Proposal of a new stress coping model – a new way in how health is viewed.</td>
<td>Through colonization, assimilation and the residential school system much has been lost: languages, spiritual practices etc. As such, cultural belief systems and knowledge has been destroyed.</td>
<td>Cultural identity is a mandatory component of traditional healing – in fact many indigenous people in the current generation have not been exposed to traditional practices and don’t connect with historical belief structures. Some of these healing practices include: sweat lodges, false face healing rituals and other indigenous ways of healing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indigenous Children’s Education and Indigenous Languages (n.d.)</td>
<td>United Nations paper concludes that language is a key success factor for educational achievement for indigenous people.</td>
<td>Dominant language is frequently from the colonizing perspective: indigenous languages were displaced, rather than viewing languages all as valuable. Children were taught to view their language as being inferior – resulting in poor self esteem, diminishing</td>
<td>Research shows that the length of exposure to one’s primary language in education is actually more important than any other factor in predicting the “educational success of bilingual students”.</td>
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\(^{42}\) Ibid pg: 29-33.
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<tr>
<td>Access to Traditional Medicine in a Western Canadian City (1990)</td>
<td>Research from Saskatoon that involved 147 indigenous people and examined individual choice and use of traditional medicine.</td>
<td>With colonialism, western belief systems collided with indigenous systems. Examples of worldviews colliding include spiritual views and western models of medicine versus indigenous traditional medicine.</td>
<td>No conclusions drawn in the way of healing. The study simply points out that views are diverse – some indigenous people have adopted western ways of medicine and spirituality and have rejected traditional ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfinished Dreams: Community Healing and the Reality of Unfinished Dreams (2000)</td>
<td>An analysis of services in Aboriginal communities.</td>
<td>Communities are in crisis: a return to self-governance and empowerment is crucial.</td>
<td>Required to help communities facing crisis is effective training and skill development to help identify suicidal behaviour, communications and the facilitating of traditional healing approaches coupled with western specialized approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Return to the Sacred Path: Healing the Historical Trauma and Historical Unresolved Grief Response Among the Lakota Through A Psycho Educational Group Intervention (1998)</td>
<td>Integrative approach of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and psychic trauma with traditional healing methods.</td>
<td>Historical trauma is viewed as unresolved grief, the behaviours exhibited being withdrawal, anxiety, guilt, identification with ancestral pain and death, and chronic sadness and depression. This deep grief finds its roots in the residential school experiences and other assimilationist policy experiences and is referred to as collective grief in a community.</td>
<td>The recommendation is for training for service providers and strategies that use traditional healing methods to help communities recover from historical trauma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing the generations: Post traumatic stress and the health status of Aboriginal populations in Canada (2005)</td>
<td>Research on the historical trauma and makes the case to develop a particular model for mental health services for indigenous populations.</td>
<td>Criteria that needs to be addressed in such a model includes acknowledging the socio/historical context; reframing stress responses; focusing on holistic health and cultural renewal; psycho educational and therapy driven response; and a communal/cultural model for healing.</td>
<td>Healing should take place at the community level and involves four phases: a core group meeting to address healing needs; recognizing root causes of addictions or social problems; building capacity by providing training opportunities; and shifting from fixing problems to transforming systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health and Well-being of Aboriginal children and Youth: Guidance for New Approaches and Services (2004)</td>
<td>A summary of the condition of Aboriginal children and youth health.</td>
<td>Reiterates the impacts of residential school experiences on family functioning; the multigenerational losses experienced by indigenous people; the change from collective worldviews to individualistic perspectives on education and health imposed by the western ways.</td>
<td>Key items identified to building capacity in communities include: • Note the role culture plays in health and wellness • Implement ecological, community level interventions • Develop local leaders and high quality training • Offer mentoring and support systems • Nurture links between communities</td>
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| **Indigenous Helping and Healing in Counsellor Training (2007)** | High rates of mental health issues among indigenous populations contributes to the rate of suicide and number of mental health services under used by First Nations. | Psychological distress and behavioural deviance are directly related to colonialism. | Indigenous approaches to healing are critical to helping the mental health crisis. Some of the models and practices of helping include:  
• Storytelling  
• Advice from Elders  
• Interconnectedness of family and community  
• Healing circles  
• ceremony |
<p>| <strong>Native American Post Colonial Psychology (1995)</strong> | Observes that western models of mental health are not necessarily positive for indigenous groups. | Western models are imposed on indigenous cultures. Research shows that cultural bias and at times racist practices are tools that are still used to evaluate the psyche of indigenous peoples. | Current tools in evaluation do not take into account the colonial context or Euro-cultural bias on assessment instruments. There is a need to design culturally appropriate assessment tools and intervention strategies. |
| <strong>Revision and Resistance, The Politics of Native Women’s Motherwork (2001)</strong> | Study that looks at the social and cultural participation of men and women in tribal life. | Asserts that cultural networks of men and women have been destroyed because of colonialism – the result being children and the victims. Traditionally indigenous women were highly regarded as “givers of life” through their ability to have children and foster the development of future generations. Women were the primary bearers of wisdom and culture passed on through a rich oral set of traditions. The authority and the esteemed positions women held were severely diminished by federal policies that changed women’s roles. | Find new ways to improve the quality of life including the recovery of traditional practices in contemporary settings. |
| <strong>Identity, Recovery and Religious Imperialism: Native American Women in the New Age (1995)</strong> | Article states that indigenous women lack the economic means to access traditional medicine. | As a result of colonialism, poverty and low cultural identity became the norm. Women have been marginalized in all ways in the community: legal, social and economic marginalization in the family and the community. | No conclusions were provided in the study. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Colonization example</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Finding</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A Recognition of Being (2000)</strong></td>
<td>Discussion on the role of indigenous women and how colonialism removed Aboriginal women from their positions within their own societies.</td>
<td>Aboriginal women societal positioning and authority were diminished by missionaries and the government. As a result social and economic autonomy was lost – lending to a loss or displacement of indigenous women identity.</td>
<td>Most western literature concerns itself with a response to legal and social policies as part of colonialism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black eyes all of the Time; intimate Violence, Aboriginal Women and the Justice System (1999)</strong></td>
<td>Research into the socialization effects of colonization.</td>
<td>Socialization through years of colonization has changed the view aboriginal society has on women – violence against women is no longer seen as a deviant behaviour.</td>
<td>No conclusions were provided in the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aboriginal Single Mothers in Canada: An Invisible Minority (1996)</strong></td>
<td>Explores the challenges facing indigenous mothers in Canada.</td>
<td>Some of the variables effecting Aboriginal women today include poverty, violence and high rates of suicide.</td>
<td>Empowerment and raising consciousness for Aboriginal women is critical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity Formation and Cultural Resilience in Aboriginal Communities (2005)</strong></td>
<td>An examination of suicide rates among Aboriginal communities.</td>
<td>Researchers found that the communities that sustained “cultural continuity” experienced the lowest suicide rates.</td>
<td>Success involves the following: • cross community sharing of indigenous knowledge • restoration of cultural sovereignty to “expand the indigenous knowledge that has allowed First Nations peoples to overcome historical and present adversity.”</td>
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REDEFINING HOW SUCCESS IS MEASURED IN FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND METIS LEARNING

http://www.ccl-cca.ca/pdfs/RedefiningSuccess/Summary_Redefining_How_Success_Is_Measured_En.pdf

Overview:

First Nations, Inuit and Métis have long advocated learning that affirms their own ways of knowing, cultural traditions and values. However, Aboriginal Peoples also desire Western education that can equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to participate in Canadian society. First Nations, Inuit and Métis recognize that “two ways of knowing” will foster the necessary conditions for nurturing healthy, sustainable communities. Over the last four decades, the importance of Aboriginal learning to community well-being has become a critical issue as First Nations, Inuit and Métis people continue to experience poorer health and higher rates of unemployment, incarceration, and youth suicide than non-Aboriginal people. Increasingly, Aboriginal communities are administering educational programs and services formerly delivered by non-Aboriginal governments. They are developing culturally relevant curricula and community-based language and culture programs, and creating their own educational institutions. Yet as Aboriginal people work to improve community wellbeing through lifelong learning, they recognize the need to identify appropriate measurement tools that will help them assess what is working and what is not.

The following diagrams are holistic lifelong learning models that are living documents that will be revised and adapted as First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, institutions, researchers and governments continue to explore the models’ efficacy as tools for positive change.

Each models uses a stylized graphic to convey the relationships between learning purposes, processes and outcomes across the lifespan. The three images attest to the cyclical, regenerative power of holistic lifelong learning and its relationship to community well being.
For First Nations people, the purpose of learning is to honour and protect the earth and ensure the long-term sustainability of life. To illustrate the organic and self-regenerative nature of First Nations learning, the Holistic Lifelong Learning Model uses a stylistic graphic of a living tree. The tree depicts the cycles of learning for an individual and identifies the influences that affect individual learning and collective well-being. A full description of the First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model is available at: www.ccic.ca.
The Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model uses a stylistic graphic of an Inuit blanket toss (a game often played at Inuit celebrations) and a circular path (the “Journey of Lifelong Learning”) to portray the Inuit learning journey and its connection to community well-being. A full description of the Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model is available at: www.ccl-cca.ca
The Métis understand learning in the context of the "Sacred Act of Living a Good Life," a perspective that incorporates learning experienced in the physical world and acquired by "doing," and a distinct form of knowledge—sacred laws governing relationships within the community and the world at large—that comes from the Creator. To symbolize these forms of knowledge and their dynamic processes, the Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model uses a stylized graphic of a living tree. A full description of the Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model is available at www.col-oca.ca.
AN OVERVIEW OF THE CORE COMPETENCIES EXCERPTED FROM THE CULTURAL COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR NURSES AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada, Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety in Nursing Education

1. **Postcolonial understanding**: Postcolonial theory accounts for health disparities and health inequities among First Nations, Inuit and Métis. It is the examination of colonization and its affect on the lives of Aboriginal peoples, and includes examining the relationship between residential schools and historic trauma transmission.

2. **Communication**: This concept entails effective and culturally safe communication among students and faculty within the teaching/learning contexts; it also applies to nursing interactions with the First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

3. **Inclusivity**: This concept evokes action where increased awareness and insights are required as part of the engagement process and relationship building with First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples.

4. **Respect**: Respect for First Nation, Inuit and Métis cultural integrity is one of the guiding principles originating from the perspectives of Aboriginal communities. Respect is the show of consideration for First Nation, Inuit and Métis students, their families, and communities for who they are, their uniqueness, and diversity. This concept entails effective communication and collaboration with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal health care professionals, traditional / medicine peoples / healers in providing effective health care for First Nation, Inuit, and Métis clients, families, and communities. It also includes working with First Nation, Inuit and Métis groups and communities when conducting research to improve the health of the Aboriginal population.

5. **Indigenous knowledge**: This concept is the acknowledgement of traditional knowledge, oral knowledge, and Indigenous knowledge as having a place in higher learning along with literate knowledge. It also includes understanding First Nations, Inuit and Métis ontology, epistemology, and explanatory models related to health and healing; and, First Nations, Inuit and Métis cosmologies (spirituality, range of religious beliefs, etc).

6. **Mentoring and supporting students for success**: Students are presented with the opportunity to articulate how their mentor(s) assisted them in becoming registered nurses. They also have the opportunity to describe the supportive processes and structures, including role models, which foster their success in obtaining their degrees.
Sample checklist for organizations taking actions to develop relationships and for opportunities to respect Aboriginal people in Australia as a result of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Source: Reconciliation Australia Reconciliation Action Plans 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>SELF REFLECTION</th>
<th>What could this mean for your RAP?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What does reconciliation mean to you? What does it mean for your organisation?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Do you know why there is still a 17-year life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Can you name some programs and/or organisations (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) that are helping to close this life expectancy gap?</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Can you give some examples of Indigenous leadership and success?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>What relationships does your organisation have with Indigenous people, organisations and communities in your local area or sphere of influence? Are they formal or informal? How do you both benefit from this?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>How would you rate your organisation’s current understanding and knowledge of Indigenous people and culture?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Is respect for and understanding of Indigenous culture and people developed and demonstrated in all levels of your organisation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Does your organisation proudly celebrate and acknowledge Indigenous people and culture?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Does your organisation value and develop Indigenous staff and actively seek more Indigenous people in all levels of the organisation? How?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Do your organisation’s business values and goals contribute to closing the life expectancy gap? If so how?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>What specifically does your organisation have to offer to reconciliation?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>What actions could set you apart from other organisations?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>How can you show leadership and best practice?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cross-cultural awareness courses and related resources are available, often at the community level, and should be considered an essential part of preparing to communicate with people of other cultures.

Time and resources devoted to increasing cross cultural awareness will help you reduce the possibility of miscommunication and help you avoid embarrassing yourself or offending the people with whom you are trying to build a relationship. There is considerable diversity in Aboriginal cultures, but there are also some commonalities. These are only a few examples of cultural differences that may emerge in your work with Aboriginal individuals and communities.

- Conventions regarding eye contact, touching, seating arrangements, initiating or ending conversations may differ from what you have come to expect in dealing with non-Aboriginal people.
- Some Aboriginal people are quite comfortable with periods of silence during conversation, which can be unsettling for some non-Aboriginal people. Similarly, some Aboriginal people may tend to be less open during a brief encounter than is often customary among non-Aboriginal people.
- Whereas non-Aboriginal people tend to make decisions based on majority rule, many Aboriginal communities are inclined to seek consensus in which all members agree to accept a decision. In communities that follow this practice, allot enough time for discussion, so that everyone feels comfortable with the decision.
- Time may be perceived differently in non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal cultures. While non-Aboriginal cultures tend to operate by the clock, some Aboriginal cultures are less concerned about meeting deadlines than about fulfilling the purpose of a gathering. As a result, meetings may not start precisely at the scheduled time and may go on until everyone present has had an opportunity to express a view or participate in some other way.

Culture is not simply a matter of customs or traditions. It is also a way of looking at life, a set of shared beliefs and values, a vehicle for understanding the world and one's place in it. Cultural differences may therefore be apparent in many areas in addition to those just listed, including family relationships, attitudes about the place of seniors and children in society, views on traditional (that is,
Aboriginal) and non-Aboriginal ways of doing things, perceptions of authority and hierarchy, and so on. The list is virtually endless, making it important to consider cultural factors very carefully in the choice of messages, media and style of communicating with Aboriginal seniors.

Do your homework before visiting an Aboriginal community. Find out about local culture and practices (for example, the traditional sequence of events for a meeting or other gathering, and practices such as presenting gifts to elders for saying the opening and closing prayer at a gathering). for direction and assistance from community helpers (see Community Helpers, page 14) and others knowledgeable about local customs, personalities and channels of communication.

Elders, Old Ones, Grandfathers and Grandmothers don't preserve the ancestral knowledge. They live it.

ABORIGINAL CULTURAL AWARENESS PINE CREE SCHOOL DISTRICT, MANITOBA

Government Documents:


Text Resources:


**CD- Roms:**

*Our Spirit Soar: Aboriginal Heroes and Heroines.* Teck Plus Interactive

*The Metis: Our People, Our Story.* Gabrise Dumont Institute, Arnold Media, Department of Canadian Heritage, 2000.

**Video Resources:**

*Forgotten Warriors: The Story of Canada's Aboriginal War Veterans* Fiddle About: Performances of traditional Metis Songs and Dances

*Spirit Rider.* Owl Television and Credo Group

*Steps in Time: Metis Dancers*

*The Gift of the Grandfathers: First Nations Rodeo Circuit*

*First Nations: The Circle Unbroken (Volumes 1 – 7).* National Film Board of Canada.

**Other:**

World Wide Web

Winnipeg Free Press

*SAY: Spirit of Aboriginal Youth Magazine*

Various Television / News Resources
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ACT Council of Social Service Inc. Cultural Awareness Self-Assessment Toolkit, Good Practice Standards for Culturally Appropriate Community Services, Australia: 2009


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Elk Island Retreat, Aboriginal Cultural Programs, Alberta: 2011

Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, Aboriginal Peoples of Saskatchewan, Regina: 2010

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Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, Indian Policy and Early Reserve Period, Regina: 2011

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Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, Cultural Teachings: First Nations Protocols and Methodologies, Saskatoon: 2009

South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team, Natural Resource Management Cross-Cultural Awareness Training Framework, Australia: 2005
Aboriginal Peoples of Saskatchewan

Excerpted from
http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/aboriginal_peoplesof_saskatchewan.html

By: Blair Stonechild

The Aboriginal peoples of Saskatchewan have inhabited this region for approximately 11,000 years, during which time they established self-sustaining societies. Contact with Europeans brought with it external cultural and economic forces that would dramatically affect the lives of Aboriginal people; their story has been one of adaptation and survival. During the 235 years of fur trade contact (1670–1905), challenges included devastating epidemics and depletion of wildlife resources; after Canadian annexation of the North-West Territories, Aboriginal people were subjected to government policies that sought to erode their identity and rights. Today, they are recovering many of their rights, rebuilding their societies, and seeking to play a meaningful role in contemporary Canada. European contact resulted in the common use of First Nations names that were different from the way they referred to themselves. The proper self-ascribed names of the First Nations of Saskatchewan are as follows: Nêhiyawak (Plains Cree), Nahkawininiwak (Saulteaux), Nakota (Assiniboine), Dakota and Lakota (Sioux), and Denesuline (Dene/Chipewyan). The term “First Nations” is preferred to the misnomer “Indian,” and is generally used except where the latter is required in an historical context.

The First Peoples

Aboriginal hunter-gatherers are believed to have entered the northern plains following the retreat of the last glacier, approximately 11,000 years ago. Around 9000 BC, there is archaeological evidence of the spread of hunters using fluted spear points to hunt bison. Archaeologist James V. Wright theorizes that eastern Early Archaic peoples migrated to the western plains around 6000 BC, where they came into contact with the Plano peoples. By 3000 BC, there is evidence of organized bison hunts on the northern plains, using more advanced spear points with distinctive rippled flaking. These ancestral peoples laid the basis of the tribal cultures that were found at the time of European contact.

First Nations traditional cultures were based upon ideologies in which humans formed a part of, but were not necessarily central to, creation: humans existed within a web of life in which all entities, be they inanimate, plant, animal or natural, possessed a spiritual dimension of their own. Life was a process of developing relationships and striving for well-being within this “Circle of Life.” Ceremonies reflected this worldview: for example, the burning of sweetgrass represented communication with the spirit world; the vision quest a connection with protector spirits; the sweat lodge a spiritual cleansing; and the thirst (or rain) dance symbolized the process of renewal of life. Closeness to the land and
natural environment was central to such a belief system. In terms of social organization, families, clans and tribes were founded upon a system of kinship and intermarriage that emphasized extended families. Political decisions tended to be based upon the reaching of consensus among families, and it was imperative to share food and other necessities. The buffalo provided virtually all of the daily needs of the plains First Nations, including food, shelter, clothing, and tools. In the parklands and further north, fishing and gathering were important sources of nourishment, as was the hunting of large animals such as moose, elk, and caribou.

The original tribal distributions were significantly different from the pattern of Aboriginal occupation of the region today. The first White man to reach the interior of the northern plains, Henry Kelsey, led by Nakota and Nêhiyawak guides in 1690, reported that much of present-day southern Saskatchewan area was occupied by the Atsina, (also called Gros Ventres), as well as the Nakota and Hidatsa to the southeast and the Shoshone (also called Snake) in the southwest. To the north, the area between the forks of the North and South Saskatchewan rivers and to the west was occupied by the Blackfoot. The Chipewyan, a branch of the Dene, occupied areas of the northern boreal forest. The advent of the fur trade brought about dramatic changes in territorial distributions as these First Nations groups entered into competition and conflict over fur resources.

Relations during the Fur Trade

The Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) established its first fur trade post at York Factory on the shores of Hudson Bay in 1670 and named its trading territory, all of the lands draining into Hudson Bay, Rupert’s Land. A typical First Nation trader could bring in a hundred beaver pelts, with which he could purchase necessities such as a gun and ammunition, kettles, knives, traps, and blankets. Once the necessities were purchased, he could buy luxury goods such as tobacco, beads or liquor. The introduction of iron trade goods dramatically affected Aboriginal lifestyles, diverting much of their efforts from traditional seasonal activities to an economy based upon the harvesting of furs and bartering of trade goods to First Nations in the interior. The Nakota, whose prior habitation on the prairies eased territorial access for their Nêhiyawak trading allies, acted with the latter as middlemen who bartered trade goods for furs. The Blackfoot became early beneficiaries of trade, and with the acquisition of guns were able to drive away their adversaries, including the Shoshone and Kootenay. During this period, changes in lifestyle and intertribal relations occurred as First Nations sought to use newly introduced technologies to their advantage; First Nations and fur traders also developed a relatively peaceful relationship based on reciprocal dependence, in which each side would come to the other’s aid in times of need.
By the 1730s, the Cree were beginning to reside permanently on the plains, and this led to the development of a distinct tribal entity: the Nêhiyawak (Plains Cree). The Blackfoot had a valuable commodity to trade to the Nakota and Nêhiyawak: horses, which had been spreading northward after being first introduced to Central America by the Spanish. Despite limited equipment, First Nations became highly skilled horse riders: this, combined with the use of guns, enabled them to wield unprecedented influence. By 1787, the ruthless trading practices used by the Nakota and Nêhiyawak contributed to the breakdown of friendly relations with the Blackfoot. The vanquishing of their mutual enemies, the Shoshone, Gros Ventres and Kootenay, not only removed a common foe but deprived these tribes of a vital social function: the opportunity for young warriors to go on raiding parties in order to prove their valour. In this changed cultural landscape former allies became rivals, and over the next century the raiding between Nakota-Nêhiyawak and Blackfoot became legendary.

With the end of their alliance with the Blackfoot in 1787, the Nakota-Nêhiyawak alliance turned to the Mandan Nation’s trading centre, located on the upper Missouri River, for horses. With no other providers of guns and other trade goods to compete with, the Nakota and Nêhiyawak enjoyed a tremendously strong trading position, which was further strengthened when the Nahkawininiwak (Saulteaux or Plains Ojibway), who traded goods originating from Montreal via the Great Lakes, joined the Nakota and Nêhiyawak. This came to be known as the Iron Alliance, the term reflecting the trade in iron goods upon which their power was built. The Alliance’s influence at the Mandan trading centre waned after American sources of trade goods became available around 1805. The Métis, mixed-blood descendants of marriages between French fur traders and First Nations women, had come to play an important role in the trading network of the North West Company (NWC), which was established in 1779 and threatened the Hudson’s Bay Company’s trade monopoly. Increasingly hostile relations between these two companies would eventually lead to their forced merger in 1821. When the HBC established the Selkirk Colony, consisting of Scottish farmers, to introduce agriculture to Rupert’s Land, this was viewed as a threat to the NWC supply route: the Métis confronted the settlers at Seven Oaks in 1816 and killed twenty, an event that has been heralded as the birth of Métis nationalism. Over the next five decades, the Métis increased in numbers, becoming the dominant population of Red River and enjoying an economic power based upon the trade of buffalo products to the United States market. Almost two centuries of fur trade, however, were beginning to take their toll on the land and the people. Epidemics, in particular smallpox, were the greatest single killer of First Nations: the major epidemics, recorded in 1780, 1819, 1838 and 1869, carried away over half of the population each time, the Métis being affected to a lesser degree. The effects of such events on the social, political and economic well-being were traumatic. Fur trade resources began to decline noticeably, first on the eastern prairies with the beaver by the 1820s and the buffalo by the 1850s. In the 1820s, missionaries began to appear in Rupert’s Land, and First Nations youths such as Charles Pratt were recruited to attend the
first mission school at Red River. Other leaders such as Ahtahakakoop welcomed missionaries—not only for their new religious ideas, but also because of the reading, writing and arithmetic skills they could impart. Missions were established earlier in the north: for example the church at Stanley Mission, constructed in 1854, is the oldest existing building in the province.

As the fur trade declined, interest in the agricultural potential of the northern prairies began to be explored by the Palliser and Hind expeditions of 1859. First Nations faced increasing hardship due to the decline of their middleman role in the fur trade and to increasing intertribal conflict over dwindling herds of buffalo. However, as the fur trade drew to a close, the First Nations retained a strong sense of their own cultural identity, as well as a firm attachment to the land which had often been acquired through protracted intertribal struggle. The Nakota, Nêhiyawak and Nahkawininiwak of the Iron Alliance, and to a lesser extent the Métis, were forming through intermarriage a new hybrid culture loosely based upon Nakota material culture, Nêhiyawak language, and Nahkawininiwak spirituality. This legacy can be seen in the mixed tribal compositions that are found in today’s First Nations.

The Numbered Treaties with Canada

One of the earliest initiatives of the fledgling nation of Canada was the acquisition of Rupert’s Land in 1870 (see Rupert’s land purchase). This move to expand the country west to the Pacific Ocean was sanctioned by Great Britain on the condition that treaties be negotiated with the First Nations, pursuant to the British policy enunciated in the Royal Proclamation of 1763. The Proclamation attempted to bring peace to the frontier and to secure First Nations allegiance to Britain by addressing the primary source of Aboriginal discontent: the forced loss of traditional land occupancy. It empowered government authorities to enter into negotiations with First Nations on behalf of the British Crown: at a public meeting, both sides had to agree to the terms upon which First Nation territory would be made accessible to settlers, and what benefits the Aboriginals would receive in return.

The treaty negotiations began with the Ojibway of the Lake of the Woods region in 1869, but a treaty in that area was not concluded until 1873 owing to stiff Indian demands. The first successfully negotiated agreements were Treaty 1 at Fort Garry in 1871, and Treaty 2, essentially a repetition of the terms of the earlier treaty, at Manitoba Post that same year. The Nahkawininiwak of these areas drew upon the experience of their eastern brethren, the Ojibway. A prominent chief, Pontiac, had led the uprising that precipitated the issuance of the Proclamation in 1763, and the Ojibway had since negotiated numerous treaties with the British authorities.
However, evidence of discontent over the process of acquiring Rupert’s Land occurred first with the Métis of Red River: led by Louis Riel, they protested the lack of consultation and asserted their political and land rights, ultimately establishing a Provisional Government in 1870. The forcible quelling of the Métis movement and the partial settlement of grievances under the Manitoba Act (1870) proved insufficient to meet the aspirations of the Métis Nation, especially in terms of creating a land base. Many migrated further west to the Batoche and Qu’Appelle areas of the North-West Territories. Continuing dissatisfaction over the failure to address their issues led to the North-West Resistance in 1885, again led by Riel.

Canada’s strategy in approaching treaty negotiations had been to attempt to arrange a straight land transaction modeled on the 1850 Robinson Treaties negotiated by the British, as this would involve minimal costs or ongoing commitments. The First Nations strategy was to retain as much territory as possible, their initial request amounting to keeping two-thirds of the “postage stamp” province of Manitoba as Indian land. Treaty Commissioner Weymss Simpson conceded to his superiors that major concessions would need to be made in order to conclude an agreement: “It was obvious therefore that we must yield something, or we must be prepared to people the country, with hostile Indians hovering on our settlements, and an Indian war in the background…” To persuade them to drop their position on land, the Saulteaux were accorded a wide variety of concessions including agricultural assistance, education, and medical benefits. The vision for such a treaty relationship mirrored the relationship of mutual dependence that had previously existed between First Nations and the fur traders. The Crown’s negotiators had been forced to make concessions far beyond what had been initially intended, and when some oral promises were omitted in the written text of Treaties 1 and 2, First Nations threatened to disrupt White settlement; as a consequence, Treaties 1 and 2 were revised in 1875.

First Nations’ retention of land would continue to be a central issue for negotiation, and larger reserve sizes were conceded in Treaty 3. The slaughter of approximately twenty Assiniboine in the Cypress Hills in 1873 hastened the organizing and dispatching to the west of the North-West Mounted Police. The dispute over perceived land ownership claims by the Hudson’s Bay Company dominated Treaty 4 talks. Treaty 5, concluded in 1875, primarily involved land in northern Manitoba but included three Saskatchewan First Nations. Treaty 6 focused primarily on broadening the scope of treaty benefits, which in 1876 expanded to include medical aid, taxation exemptions, and assistance in the event of famine.

The treaties had come at a crucial time: the buffalo disappeared from the prairies around 1880, and the next few years would be devastating as widespread starvation set in and First Nations struggled to survive. The response of the Canadian government, hampered by disorganization and lack of infrastructure,
was woefully inadequate in addressing the rapidly deteriorating conditions. This situation was complicated by the arrival of Sioux Chief Sitting Bull, who sought refuge in Canada in 1876 following the defeat of General Custer and his troops at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in the United States. Reserve agriculture was slow to evolve: growing crops proved virtually impossible, as they succumbed to early frosts, grasshoppers, and prairie fires. The primitive form of agriculture practiced used the tools provided under treaty, and resulted in a labour-intensive and time-consuming process that was simply not viable. Treaty 8, signed in 1899, occurred in response to pressure for mining and affirmed the First Nations’ rights to hunt and fish. Treaty 10, whose terms resembled those of Treaty 8 signed in 1906–07, was intended to cover areas of Saskatchewan not covered by other treaties.

The First Nations’ oral understanding of the Numbered Treaties varies significantly from that of the written text. First Nation elders assert that only the topsoil was surrendered for agricultural purposes, and that ownership was retained not only over their reserve land (in Cree called *iskunikan*, i.e., “land that was kept”), but also over the wildlife upon which they relied as well as all other resources including minerals. While the presence of the North-West Mounted Police is sometimes cited as proof of coercion in the making of the treaties, in fact the First Nations were the dominant party who tended to view the police as potential allies rather than enemies.

First Nations responded to the emerging starvation crisis of the 1880s by organizing political meetings. Piapot, one of the principal leaders of Treaty 4, organized a meeting at Pasqua Reserve, and Treaty 6 chiefs Big Bear and Poundmaker organized gatherings to air Treaty grievances in 1884. The federal government, believing that such activities were worthless and only led to trouble, used North-West Mounted Police intervention and deprivation of rations to disrupt these activities; such responses resulted in near-violent confrontations on the Sakimay and Poundmaker reserves in 1884. The First Nations’ political strategy sought to avoid violence, opting instead to organize a broad-based political movement in Treaties 4, 6 and 7, which would present a unified voice to Ottawa.

**North-West Resistance of 1885**

Frustrated by the lack of progress in addressing their concerns, the Métis of the Batoche area, supported by local settlers, approached Louis Riel, then living in Montana, to lead their cause. Riel, having had some success in forcing the federal government to meet Métis demands in 1870, declared again the establishment of a Provisional Government on March 19, 1885. The only group that had not provided political support for his plans, which by this time radically called for the establishment of a New Papacy, were the First Nations. However, due to a series of circumstances beyond their control, First Nations quickly became mired in the events of the North-West Resistance of 1885.
After the Resistance was quelled through the use of military force, the federal government quickly convicted 19 Métis and 33 Indians of offenses related to the uprising. Cree chiefs Big Bear, Poundmaker and One Arrow were each found guilty of treason-felony and sentenced to three years in Stony Mountain Penitentiary. A fourth chief, the Dakota leader White Cap, was acquitted of charges despite being a member of Riel’s Exovedate Council when a Saskatoon merchant testified on his behalf. Some leaders including Métis commander Gabriel Dumont evaded capture by fleeing to the United States. In the aftermath of the Resistance, the federal government instituted a series of repressive policies that enabled it to gain a firm grip over First Nations. These measures, which went against the spirit of the treaties signed a decade earlier, included forcible confinement to Indian reserves, dismantling of Aboriginal culture, and removing of children to residential schools for assimilation. A final sad note to the suppression of First Nations was when Almighty Voice, who was reduced to illegally killing a cow for food, died in a barrage of police cannon fire in 1897; his fate seemed to represent that of a once-proud and independent people. In the aftermath of the 1885 Resistance the dream of a Métis homeland again suffered a blow, but such an aspiration has provided a foundation for grievances that persist into modern times.

**Policy of Assimilation**

Residential schools, which were not mentioned during treaty discussions, became the federal government’s primary tool with respect to the assimilation of Aboriginal people. The Social Darwinist belief popularly held by Canadians at the time was that Indian cultures were inferior and therefore should be replaced by British culture. First Nations children, who were the most vulnerable to influence, were removed from contact with their parents and communities to the greatest extent possible. As Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, then Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, explained:

> When the school is on the reserve, the child lives with its parents, who are savages, and though he may learn to read and write, his habits and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. It has been strongly impressed upon myself, as head of the Department, that Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men. Indian industrial schools were initially established in 1883 at Lebret, Battleford, and High River. Other schools, such as the Regina Indian Industrial School in 1890, were established at the initiative of religious denominations. More common were less costly boarding schools, which offered less in the way of training programs and were closer to their communities, but still isolated the children from their families.
Residential schools soon proved to be expensive and ineffective. Zealous religious denominations, competing for converts, built too many schools. Meanwhile enrollments were falling due to high student mortality rates caused by tuberculosis and other diseases. The denigration of their culture, homesickness, and an unimaginative curriculum resulted in a deplorable education experience, and some tried to escape. Children who finally returned to their communities found themselves alienated from both Indian and White societies. Altogether, fourteen residential schools were built in Saskatchewan.\(^{38}\)

The creation in 1905 of the province of Saskatchewan, named after the Cree term for “fast flowing river,” led to a boom in land speculation. A policy emerged around this time aimed at the erosion of First Nations land through the securing of Indian reserve land surrenders. While First Nations viewed their reserves as permanent homelands for their descendents, surrenders became very appealing to land speculators and government officials, who believed that the Indian population would continue to decline. Reserve lands could only be lost through a majority vote in favour of the surrender taken under the Indian Act, a piece of legislation intended to manage every aspect of First Nations life. First Nation reluctance was overcome through fraudulent dealings often involving bureaucrats at the highest levels, and by the use of coercion such as cutting off rations and offering inducements of immediate large cash payments. As a result of these actions, close to half of Indian Reserve lands in southern Saskatchewan were surrendered between 1896 and 1920.\(^{39}\)

The influence of Indian agents over Indian reserves was pervasive: these individuals held total control and their authority displaced that of chiefs, many of whom had been deposed by the federal government. The agents controlled the ability of Indians to travel out of the reserve, and nothing could be bought or sold without their permission. Under the Indian Act, agents possessed broad judicial powers enabling them to lay and adjudicate charges without recourse to appeal. First Nations resistance attempted to organize politically: at a meeting on the Thunderchild Reserve in 1921, the League of Indians of Western Canada was formed, led by John Tootoosis.\(^{40}\) Other organizations, such as the Allied Tribes representing Qu’Appelle area bands, were also formed.

**Post-War Period**

Uncertainty set in during the 1930s and 1940s as Indian policy was generally viewed as being a failure and no new directions were emerging. Following the end of World War II, pressure came from Aboriginal veterans, who had volunteered in higher proportion than the general population and become sensitized to the need to be freed from oppression.\(^{41}\) In 1951, the Indian Act was revised, removing some of the most archaic aspects of the old regime such as employing Indian agents. First Nations individuals were allowed to leave the reserve, although it was not until 1960 that they were granted the right to vote federally by the Diefenbaker government and could begin to enjoy the privileges
of ordinary citizenship. The Hawthorne Report, a national survey of the social conditions of Indians conducted in 1963, revealed that Saskatchewan Indians were among the most poverty-stricken in Canada.  

The holding of provincial consultations by the CCF government under T.C. Douglas made possible the formation of the first provincial organization, the Union of Saskatchewan Indians in 1946, with John Tootoosis elected as first president; this was the forerunner of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians (later Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations). Others, including Joseph Larocque, Clarence Trotchie, James Brady and Malcolm Norris, worked to organize the Métis politically. The Saskatchewan CCF government finally extended the provincial vote to Indians in 1960.

Contemporary Aboriginal Peoples of Saskatchewan

Category Definitions

According to the current Canadian constitution, “Aboriginal Peoples” includes “Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.” Treaty Indians are listed as members of First Nations who are descendants of the signatories to one of the Numbered Treaties. Non-Treaty Indians are members of First Nations, primarily the Dakota, who have reserves and are recognized as having Indian Status under the Indian Act, but were not signatories to treaties. The term “First Nations” has become commonplace following the assertion of Aboriginal political rights in the 1980s. Non-Status Indians are those First Nations who for varying reasons never signed treaties nor fell under the jurisdiction of the Indian Act. The Métis are descendants of French fathers who participated in the fur trade and of First Nation mothers, and are generally identified with origins in the Red River area. The descendants of British fathers and Aboriginal mothers have historically been referred to as half-breeds.

Of the Aboriginal languages, Nêhiyawêwin (Cree language), part of the Algonquian language group, is the most commonly spoken in Saskatchewan, with about 20,000 speakers. Nahkawêwin (Saulteaux language), primarily spoken on eleven First Nations mainly in southeastern Saskatchewan, is the westernmost dialect of the Ojibway language. Nakota, Dakota and Lakota are dialects of the Siouan language found mainly in the United States, but only a few fluent speakers of the latter two languages remain in Saskatchewan. There are approximately 5,100 speakers of Dene, most of whom are found in northern Saskatchewan. Michif is the unique language of the Métis, created through the blending of French and Cree words. The teaching of Aboriginal languages in First Nations and provincial schools is becoming commonplace.
Aboriginal Demographics

The Aboriginal population is growing at a higher rate than the general population of the province, and demographic projections indicate that the Aboriginal proportion will grow to 32.5% by 2045. Today, Aboriginal peoples occupy an increasingly important role in the province, with 2001 census figures indicating 83,745 Status Indians, 43,695 Métis, and 190 Inuit—together amounting to 13.6% of the population. The total number of Registered Indians on the lists of the 74 Saskatchewan First Nations in 2003 was 114,248. As for the Métis Nation, it is believed to comprise close to 80,000 individuals.

Politics and Governance

The announcement of the Trudeau government’s Indian Policy of 1969, which advocated termination of Indian treaties, rights and reserves, galvanized the First Nations of Canada to organize nationally under the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB). The rejection of the Canadian government’s assimilation policy signaled the first major shift in Indian policy since Confederation and ushered in the contemporary period, marked by the recovery of culture, rights, and self-determination. The NIB’s first president was Walter Deiter of the Peepeekisis Reserve. Other national leaders of the NIB from Saskatchewan included David Ahenakew and Noel Starblanket. Following the rejection of the 1969 policy, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians turned its efforts toward the recovery of Treaty Rights, including redress of Indian land claims. Leaders of the provincial political organization have included Sol Sanderson, Roland Crowe, and Perry Bellegarde.

In 1982, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians entered into a political convention that acknowledged the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations as representing the collective interests of the province’s First Nations, each of which continued to retain its inherent sovereignty. This transformation was consistent with the enhanced recognition of Aboriginal rights entrenched in the Canada Act of 1982. The First Nations governance structure includes Tribal Councils—regional groupings of First Nations set up for advisory and program delivery purposes.

The focus of First Nations political activity, apart from the reclamation and protection of rights, has been the building of capacities for self-determination: for example, an agreement signed by the Meadow Lake Tribal Council with the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan acknowledges the First Nations’ inherent right to self-government. While First Nations are still heavily dependent on government transfer agreements, increasing emphasis is being placed on facilitating the creation of band and individual enterprises, as well as promoting greater involvement in the mainstream economy through post-secondary training and creation of employment opportunities. The Department of Indian Affairs
allocates annually about $600 million for First Nations programs and services such as governance, education, housing, and economic development.

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC), created in 1989, is a unique approach devised in Saskatchewan to resolve issues surrounding Treaty Land Entitlement. The OTC was given a new mandate in 1996 to educate the general public about why treaty rights exist, and how those rights affect the general public. The Office convenes discussion tables to bring First Nations and the federal government to consider Treaty implementation measures in areas such as education, health, and justice. The province participates as an observer.

**Métis and Non-Status Indians**

The first provincial organization to unite the Métis of northern and southern Saskatchewan was the Métis Society of Saskatchewan, formed in 1967. Under the leadership of Jim Sinclair, Non-Status Indian issues came to be included in 1975 under the umbrella of the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan (see Non-Status indians). Following the recognition of the Métis as an Aboriginal people under the Canadian Constitution in 1982, focus returned to the Métis achieving rights and self-determination; the new political organization was named the Métis Nation–Saskatchewan.

While most continue to live in historical Métis communities such as Lebret, Willow Bunch, Duck Lake, St. Louis, Green Lake and Buffalo Narrows, where some Métis Farms are located, the Métis are becoming an increasingly urbanized people. Métis and Non-Status Indian legal issues have received greater attention, particularly since the inclusion of the former as an “Aboriginal people” in Canada’s 1982 Constitution; of special concern are hunting and fishing rights, and setting aside a dedicated land base. The lack of a distinct Métis land base, apart from Métis farms, has presented great challenges to the preservation of a sense of community, as individuals commonly assimilate into the mainstream. Enumeration of the Métis population is a central issue, since no official lists have been kept historically. Mixed-blood peoples other than the Métis, such as those descended from Scottish fathers and Aboriginal mothers and historically referred to as half-breeds, as well as Non-Status Indians, who are culturally Aboriginal but are not recognized by the federal government, are represented by the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.

Political pressure for recognition of Métis rights, applied by individuals such as Harry Daniels and Clément Chartier, resulted in their recognition as an Aboriginal people under the Constitution Act of 1982: there is now a Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, whose role is to help to reaffirm the unique position of these peoples in Canada.
Aboriginal-Provincial Relations

Treaty Indians were initially hesitant to engage in provincial politics, fearing that it would lead to loss of treaty rights and assimilation; however, they received some reassurance when the CCF government of T.C. Douglas granted them the provincial vote in 1960.\(^{54}\) Presently, First Nations intergovernmental relations exist primarily with the federal government; the latter provided all entitlements, including those traditionally under provincial jurisdiction such as education and health. Saskatchewan played a key role in Indian policy with the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (1930), in which the province was obligated to respect Indian hunting and fishing rights, and to provide provincial Crown lands if required for the creation of Indian reserve lands.

Provinces have hesitated to become involved in Indian policy because of the enormous costs involved in dealing with Aboriginal needs, which have become increasingly focused on urban issues of poverty, crime, adoptions, and family services. In Saskatchewan, the Department of First Nations and Métis Relations coordinates the province’s dealings with Aboriginal issues and programs. Increasingly, Aboriginal people such as former Cabinet Minister Keith Goulet are becoming involved in provincial politics.

Education

Residential schools began to be phased out in 1965 and were replaced by an imposed Joint School Agreements system, under which seats were purchased in local mainstream schools; but this policy failed because of racism and an inappropriate curriculum, and was discontinued.\(^{55}\) The adoption by the federal government of the Indian Control of Indian Education policy in 1973 led to the construction of First Nations-controlled education facilities on the reserves. There was, up until the time of the CCF government in the 1940s, uncertainty about the administration of Métis affairs: the federal government had left the issue to the provinces, while the provinces expected the federal government to become involved.\(^{56}\) This was particularly true in education, as both the provincial and federal governments rejected responsibility for Métis issues such as education, which resulted in phenomena such as the “road allowance people.”

Responding to the high Aboriginal dropout rates, the Saskatchewan Education Department began to develop and institute an accredited Kindergarten to Grade 12 Native Studies curriculum that respects Aboriginal cultures, heritage, and rights.\(^{57}\) Such changes are designed to eradicate the ignorance that underpins much of the racism that exists today. Reforms to the provincial curriculum in the mid-1980s have helped to provide, for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, accurate and culturally reaffirming portrayals of Aboriginal conditions and aspirations. Today, First Nations children have the choice of attending one of approximately 100 elementary and high schools located on reserves, or to attend a local provincial school. Given the expansion of reserve youth numbers and the
decline of rural populations, non-Aboriginal students sometimes attend reserve schools, a startling reversal from a few decades ago.

In the area of post-secondary education, the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre (originally the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College), founded in 1972, was mandated to promote the preservation of Indian culture through the production of curriculum as well as other activities. Based in Regina, with sub-campuses in Saskatoon and Prince Albert, the First Nations University of Canada (formerly the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College), founded in 1976, has a provincial, national and international mandate to meet the higher-education needs of Indigenous peoples. Traditional Ecological Knowledge is an example of a unique subject being taught that is relevant to modern issues—in this case the environment. As of 2004, the institution had graduated over 2,500 students. The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (formerly the Saskatchewan Indian Community College), founded in 1976, has the mandate of providing post-secondary education in areas other than academic.

Similarly, the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan has established institutions such as the Gabriel Dumont Institute, which mounts higher education programs such as the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teachers Education Program (SUNTEP) and offers post-secondary training of a technical nature.

Health Issues

In the recent past, treatment for diseases such as tuberculosis has been instrumental in improving Aboriginal health. The nature of illness among Aboriginal peoples has been changing: diabetes and AIDS have emerged as major contemporary challenges. The well-being of Aboriginal people lags behind mainstream society, with infant mortality nearly twice and diabetes four times the national rate. The First Nations and Inuit Branch of Health Canada funds community health clinics on reserves, as well as at Indian Hospitals such as those at Fort Qu’Appelle and Battleford.

Land Management and Claims

Challenges faced include finding improved ways to manage land and capital, strengthening of human resource capabilities, and diversification of the economy including greater integration with the surrounding areas. Reserve lands are held communally by the First Nations, although individual families have occupancy rights to use specific areas. The fact that lands cannot be sold places obstacles to raising capital, which may require land as collateral; under the Indian Act property is not taxable, and First Nations members cannot be sued.

There are different categories of First Nations land claims. Land surrenders denote the removal of portions of land from reserves that already existed. Although First Nations viewed reserve lands as iskunikan, homelands for future
generations, land speculators actively pursued surrenders during the period of land settlement between 1896 and 1913. Surrenders were secured using tactics such as deprivation of rations, suspension of privileges, offering inducements of large amounts of money, and outright fraud: all this resulted in 576,781 acres of Indian Reserve land being surrendered on the prairies. Investigations of improprieties in these land dealings have resulted in the awarding of substantial monetary settlements.  

Land entitlement is lands to which First Nations were entitled under the original treaties, but which were never allocated for reasons such as punishment for alleged involvement in the North-West Resistance. Under the Land Entitlement “Saskatchewan Formula” reached in 1976, reserve land allotment would be based upon band populations as of December 1, 1976; however, only three claims were settled under this process. A more effective solution was the Saskatchewan Land Entitlement Framework Agreement in 1993, which provided $539 million for the settlement of Indian Land Entitlements to purchase lands that were still owed to First Nations under the treaty terms.  

Economic Development

The lack of an adequate economic base has been one of the most serious problems facing Saskatchewan First Nations. Indian agriculture has historically been a failure because of defects in government policies involving inadequate land management approaches and insufficient support for modernization of technology; as a result, agriculture has not proven to be the economic salvation that was promised under the treaties. Today, the economy of the reserves remains largely dependent on government transfer payments: opportunities remain few and unemployment remains high.

Successful First Nations economic development today is increasingly globalized; examples are the Kitsaki Development Corporation, as well as various Indian urban satellite reserves such as the McKnight Commercial Centre in Saskatoon. Some First Nations have funded entities such as the Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation, and the First Nations Bank of Canada provides targeted funding for economic development ventures. As regards the Métis, Sasknative Economic Development Corporation (SNEDCO) provides loans for small business development.

Today Aboriginal business is one of the most rapidly expanding sectors of the provincial economy: over 1,000 band and privately owned businesses are in existence. Gaming has become an important aspect of the Saskatchewan First Nations economy. The first casino was launched by the Whitebear First Nations in defiance of provincial wishes, and a First Nations Gaming Agreement was arrived at in 1995, leading to the creation of four First Nations-controlled casinos operated by the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority. In 2002, a 25-year Gaming Framework Agreement was signed. Of $29.4 million in profits in 2003,
37.5% went to the provincial government, 37.5% to the First Nations Trust Fund, and 25% to community development corporations.\textsuperscript{64}

**Urbanization**

Since the 1960s, there has been a general trend, encouraged originally by government assimilation policies, for First Nations individuals and families to move to urban centres in pursuit of education and job opportunities. Today, 47% of the First Nations population resides in urban centres; owing to problems of racism and lack of training, large areas of urban poverty have sprung up in Regina and Saskatoon. This phenomenon is accompanied by a high crime rate, the formation of gangs, and a high incarceration rate.\textsuperscript{65} Indian and Métis Friendship Centres (see aboriginal friendship centres of saskatchewan) started to come into existence in the 1960s to ease the transition of Aboriginal Peoples into urban areas, and began to receive federal funding under the Migrating Aboriginal Peoples program in 1972. Today, thirteen centres continue to offer social and program supports in Saskatchewan.

One of the innovations providing hope for the future is the creation of urban reserves\textsuperscript{66}: there are now over twenty urban satellite reserves, in and around the major urban centres of Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert. Urban reserves provide a unique opportunity for First Nations to participate in the larger economy, and greater employment opportunities for urban Aboriginal residents.

**Socio-Economic Conditions**

As a group, the Aboriginal population continues to be youthful, with a large though diminishing birthrate: 49.9% of the Aboriginal population is below the age of 20, compared to 26.5% for the general provincial population. In terms of well-being, Aboriginal people remain among the most impoverished, disadvantaged, and undereducated in society. The Aboriginal labour force unemployment is 23%, five times that of 4.8% for the non-Aboriginal population.\textsuperscript{67} Aboriginal people continue to be severely underrepresented in professional occupations such as the medical and justice systems. In Saskatoon, 64% of the Aboriginal population falls under the Low Income Cutoff Poverty Line, compared to 18% in the non-Aboriginal population of the city. Housing is a reflection of this situation, along with crime and incarceration statistics. Mortality rates are high; adoptions and effective provision of social services are issues of concern. Disparities continue to exist in rural areas, where First Nations youth who lack employment opportunities and access to recreational facilities tend to become involved in crime. first nations women have also faced unique social challenges. Indian women had lost Indian Status under previous provisions of the Indian Act, but they and their children have been able to apply for reinstatement under Bill C-31 (1985). The association representing First Nations women is the Saskatchewan Indian Womens’ Association.
Law and Justice Issues

Aboriginal hunting and fishing rights have been a long-standing source of dispute, as the implementation of federally protected treaty rights comes into conflict with provincial wildlife enforcement management; one compromise is to involve First Nations in their own enforcement, licensing and conservation initiatives. Water rights are another controversial area, with provincial water management often impinging on Indian lands. The justice system faces challenges when dealing with Aboriginal people, as they constitute over 70% of inmates held in provincial correctional institutions. The investigation of the freezing deaths of Aboriginals outside of Saskatoon, such as the Commission of Inquiry into the death of Neil Stonechild, placed a focus on relations with the police. The Saskatchewan Justice Reform Commission, established in 2001 to carry out investigations, has made recommendations including the creation of an independent complaints investigation agency.

One of the solutions being pursued is the development of Aboriginal policing services, with emphasis on recruitment into mainstream agencies such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and agreements to create reserve-based First Nations police forces. Courts are beginning to provide greater clarity about Métis and Non-Status Indian legal issues, hunting and fishing, and restorative justice.

Contemporary Aboriginal Arts

Traditional Aboriginal art forms such as beading and hide work continue to thrive while contemporary Aboriginal artists such as Allen Sapp and Gerald McMaster explore new avenues within which to interpret Aboriginal experience (see aboriginal artists, contemporary and aboriginal artists, traditional). The Saskatchewan First Nations artistic community is the birthplace of internationally acclaimed singers Buffy Sainte-Marie and Tom Jackson, and of actors such as Gordon Tootooosis. There is a growing interest in Aboriginal theatre: for example, the Saskatchewan Native Theatre, founded in 1999 by Aboriginal cultural leaders in Saskatoon, has generated a great deal of community interest and support.

Aboriginal media began to emerge in the 1960s with the establishment of news magazines such as The Saskatchewan Indian and The New Breed. There now exist radio stations and television programs dedicated to Aboriginal audiences. There is also a burgeoning community of Aboriginal writers, one of the best-known being Métis writer Maria Campbell.

Aboriginal cultural tourism is attracting increasing numbers of international visitors, who can witness any one of a number of regional powwows or experience cultural settings such as Wanuskewin Heritage Park, located on the outskirts of Saskatoon. Back to Batoche Days, held each July at the National Historic Site of Batoche, represent the central annual cultural and social gathering of the Métis.
The North

Over 80% of the approximately 40,000 inhabitants of northern Saskatchewan are Aboriginal. While the peoples of the north face unique challenges because of geographical isolation and small populations, Aboriginal peoples have the opportunity to become major players in areas such as resource management and environmental protection. The Prince Albert Grand Council’s investment in a variety of economic ventures including hotels and office buildings, as well as corporations such as Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership owned by the La Ronge Band have made the First Nations of the north among the most prosperous and progressive in the province. Other economic activities include guiding, fishing, and harvesting of wild rice and berries. The Métis Nation–Saskatchewan’s ongoing effort to create a Métis homeland is focused on an area of northwestern Saskatchewan.

Towards a Shared Future

Observers sometimes refer to “two solitudes” when discussing Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relations in the province. However, when considering the degree of segregation that existed prior to the 1960s under the federal policy of isolating Indians on reserves, the changes that have occurred since then are dramatic. With improved access to health care, First Nations have made great strides in terms of overcoming health challenges, and instead of being a “dying race” are now the most rapidly expanding portion of the provincial population. Currently, close to half of children entering school age have Aboriginal heritage, and it is anticipated that by the end of the 21st century persons having some Aboriginal ancestry will be a majority.

Aboriginal peoples are in the process of successfully defending and securing their rights, an arrangement that brings hundreds of millions of federal dollars into the province. While unemployment rates remain high, educational participation has greatly increased, particularly at the post-secondary level. Other challenges, such as finding ways to vitalize rural First Nations reserve economies, will involve much imagination, commitment, and developmental support. Life has changed dramatically for Aboriginal peoples in this province—beginning with the fur trade, then moving into the reserve period, and now largely in urban centres—but the story has been one of survival, adaptation, and versatility. One hopes for a future in which, as the treaty signatories originally envisioned, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies can co-exist while respecting each other’s cultures and rights. Despite the challenges facing them, Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan are undergoing a social and cultural renaissance. Such a society can only become richer in heritage as well as more prosperous overall when Aboriginal peoples regain control over their destinies and once again become a vital force in the lands that they rightly call their home.
Notes

1. The term for Cree varies according to dialect. Plains Cree are *Nêhiyawak*, Woodland Cree are *Nêhíthawak* and Swampy Cree are *Nêhinawak*.
10. Ibid., 32.
12. Ibid., 50.
19. Ibid., 203–212.
26. Ibid., 178.
33. Ibid., 151.
38. Ibid., xiv.
44. Ibid., 134.
63. Ibid., 174.
70. Commission on First Nations and Métis Peoples Justice Reform.
71. Campbell is author of the award-winning autobiography, *Half-Breed*.

**Further Reading**

McIntyre.

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