Decolonizing Education & Indigenous Cultural Safety in Classrooms

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Main conversation ideas

1. Why decolonize education?

2. Cultural appropriation vs. appreciation

3. Indigenous Cultural Safety strategies for schools and classrooms

Terminology

- **<u>Indigenous & Aboriginal Peoples</u>** in the Canadian context are both used to describe the original peoples before the colonial country was formed

- **<u>First Nations</u>** peoples is a term that eventually replaced the term "Indian" in the 1970's. First Nations peoples are land-based nations that trace their heritage back to their traditional territory

- **<u>Metis</u>** Nation is made up of the descendants of Indigenous women and Euro-Settler men. The Métis are a distinct Indigenous nation with their own history, culture, languages and territories with deep historical roots in the three Prairie provinces

- **<u>Inuit</u>** live in communities across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (northern Quebec), and Nunatsiavut (northern Labrador). The Inuit call this vast region Nunangat.

Semi-retired terms: Native, Indian, Ndn (used within the culture by those who identify)
**Retired terms:** Eskimo.

Tools for safer terminology use

1. Avoid possessive terminology like "our Indigenous students/families" or "Canada's Indigenous peoples".

2. Always capitalize the "i" in Indigenous and the "a" in Aboriginal.

3. Follow the lead of the person and how they choose to be identified.

4. Understand all these terms are still colonial in nature.

5. Avoid using "pan-Indigenous" approaches if you have the opportunity to be distinct.
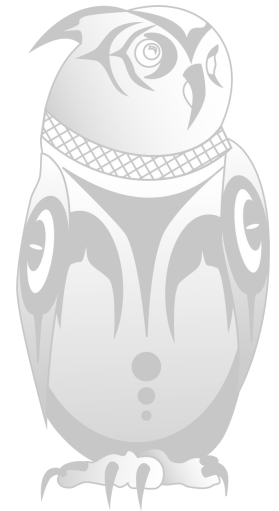
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PART 1
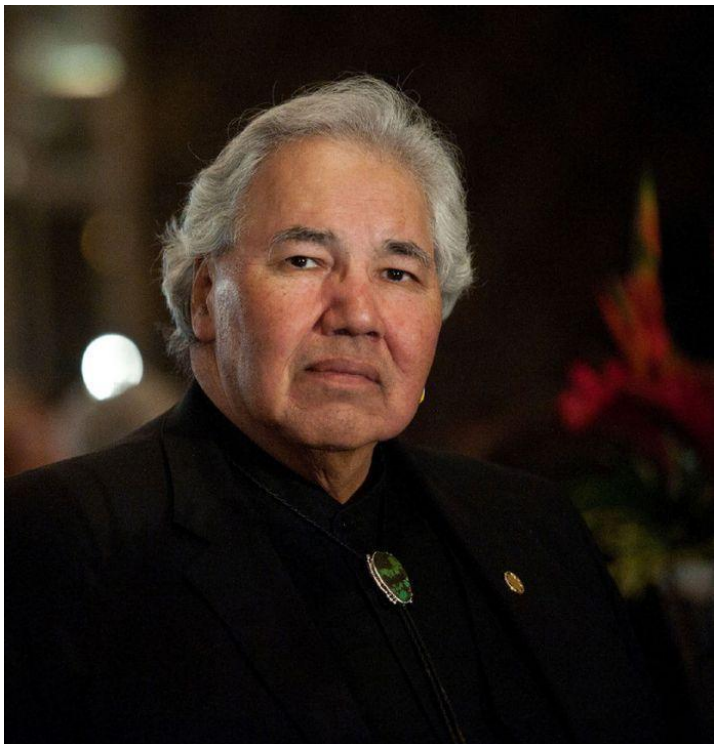## Why Decolonize Education?
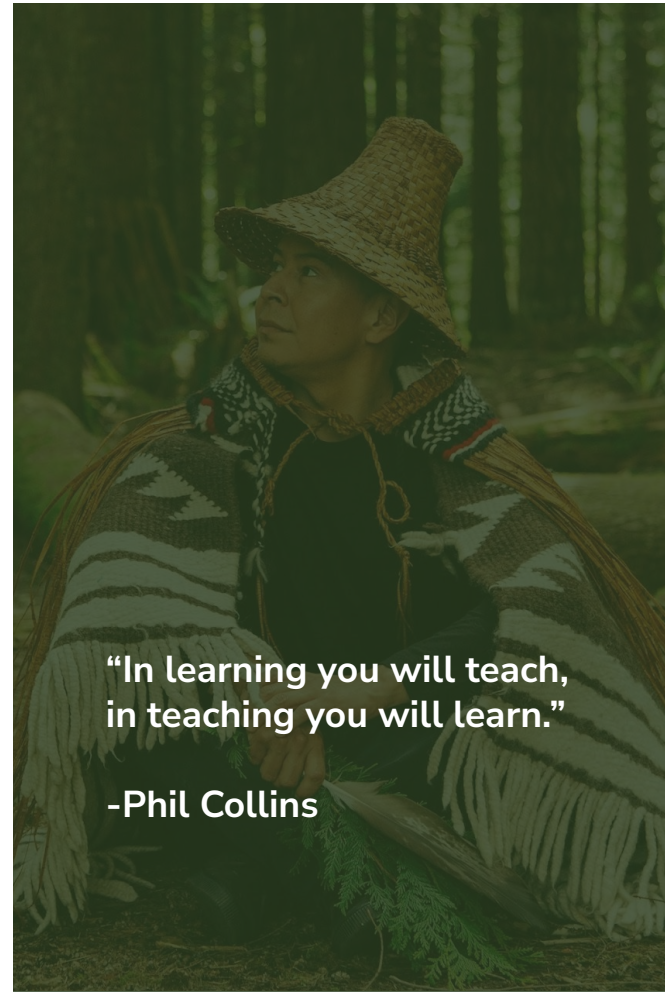
"In learning you will teach, in teaching you will learn."

-Phil Collins

Understanding Canadian Socialization

"While Indigenous children were being mistreated in residential schools by being told they were heathen, savages and pagans and inferior people -- that same message was being delivered in the public schools of this country."

-Justice Murray Sinclair

This image from *Breastplate and Buckskin*, a Canadian history textbook used for several decades from the 1950s on, depicts Indian "warriors" "dressed as devils" who "pranced about" trying to scare Cartier. In response, the text claimed, "The Frenchman smiled."

Illustration: Vernon Mould, Upper Canada College

THE SAVAGE

COLOR BY TECHNICOLOR

CHARLTON HESTON

SUSAN MORROW   PETER HANSON   JOAN TAYLOR

Other forms of socialization

Canadian Socialization:
- School
- Peers
- Friends
- Media: news & TV
- Social media
- Myths
- Family narratives
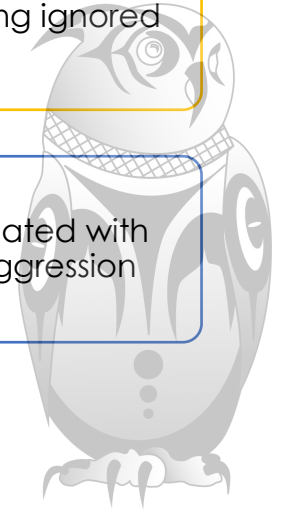- Segregation
- Erasure of Indigenous peoples
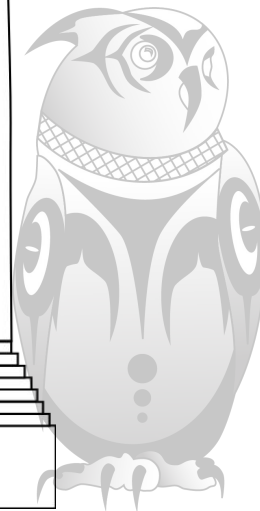
Prejudice
- Fear of Indigenous peoples
- Disgust towards Indigenous peoples

Discrimination
- Being ignored
- Treated with aggression

COLONIAL IDEOLOGY

HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Male Supremacy

White Supremacy

Paternalism

Systemic Racism

Exploitation

Assimilation

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Capitalism

Disease

Cognitive Imperialism

Parochial

Conformity

Saviourism

Ageism

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Hetero-Normativity

Gender Violence

Destabilization

Marginalization

Genocide

SOCIAL SERVICES SYSTEM

COLONIALISM

COLONIAL IDEOLOGY

HEALTHCARE SYSTEM	EDUCATION SYSTEM	JUSTICE SYSTEM	SOCIAL SERVICES SYSTEM
Male Supremacy	Capitalism		Hetero-Normativity
White Supremacy	Disease		Gender Violence
Paternalism	Cognitive Imperialism		Destabilization
Systemic Racism	Parochial		Marginalization
Exploitation	Conformity		Genocide
Assimilation	Saviourism		
	Ageism		

COLONIALISM

The Indian Act	The Civilization Act	The Bill of Rights
The Residential Schools	The 60's Scoop	Land Theft
The Electoral Franchise Act	Beast of the Land	Prohibition

STATE & STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The pathway to harm

Colonial ideology

"They just need to get over it"

Stereotypes

Low participation
Drop-out
Low achievement
Bad parents
Non-compliant
Poverty
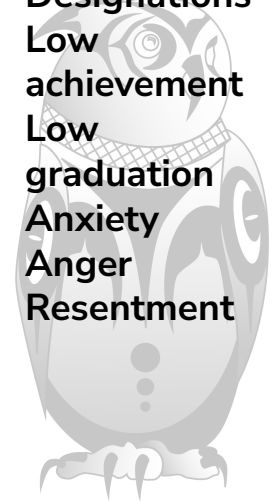Bad behaviours
Truant

Prejudice

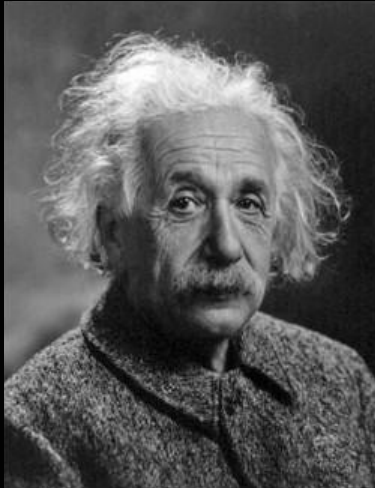Patronizing, pity, anger, resentment, hostility, disgust, contempt

Discrimination

Ignored, labelling, violence, aggression, maltreatment, avoidance, denial of care, misdiagnosis

- **Imposter syndrome**
- **Cultural alienation**
- **Suicide**
- **Learning Designations**
- **Low achievement**
- **Low graduation**
- **Anxiety**
- **Anger**
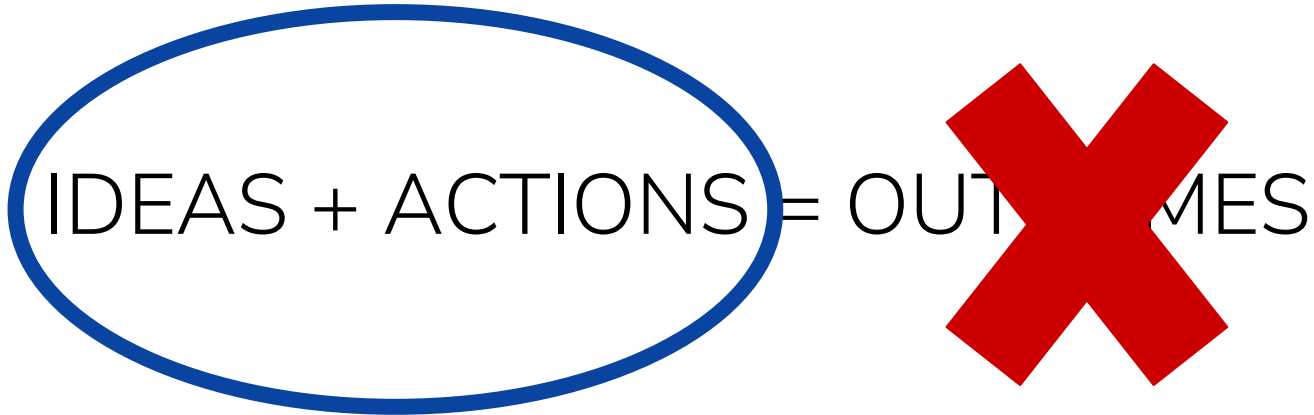- **Resentment**

Why Decolonize Education?

We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.

(Albert Einstein)

Decolonization Misconceptions

IDEAS + ACTIONS = OUTCOMES

- Avoid the tyranny of efficiency
- Decolonization is less of an outcome and more of a reframe
- Hardwire a pause in between the IDEAS and ACTIONS
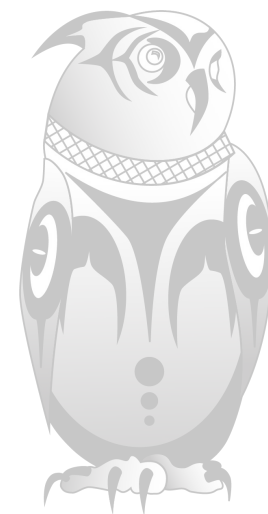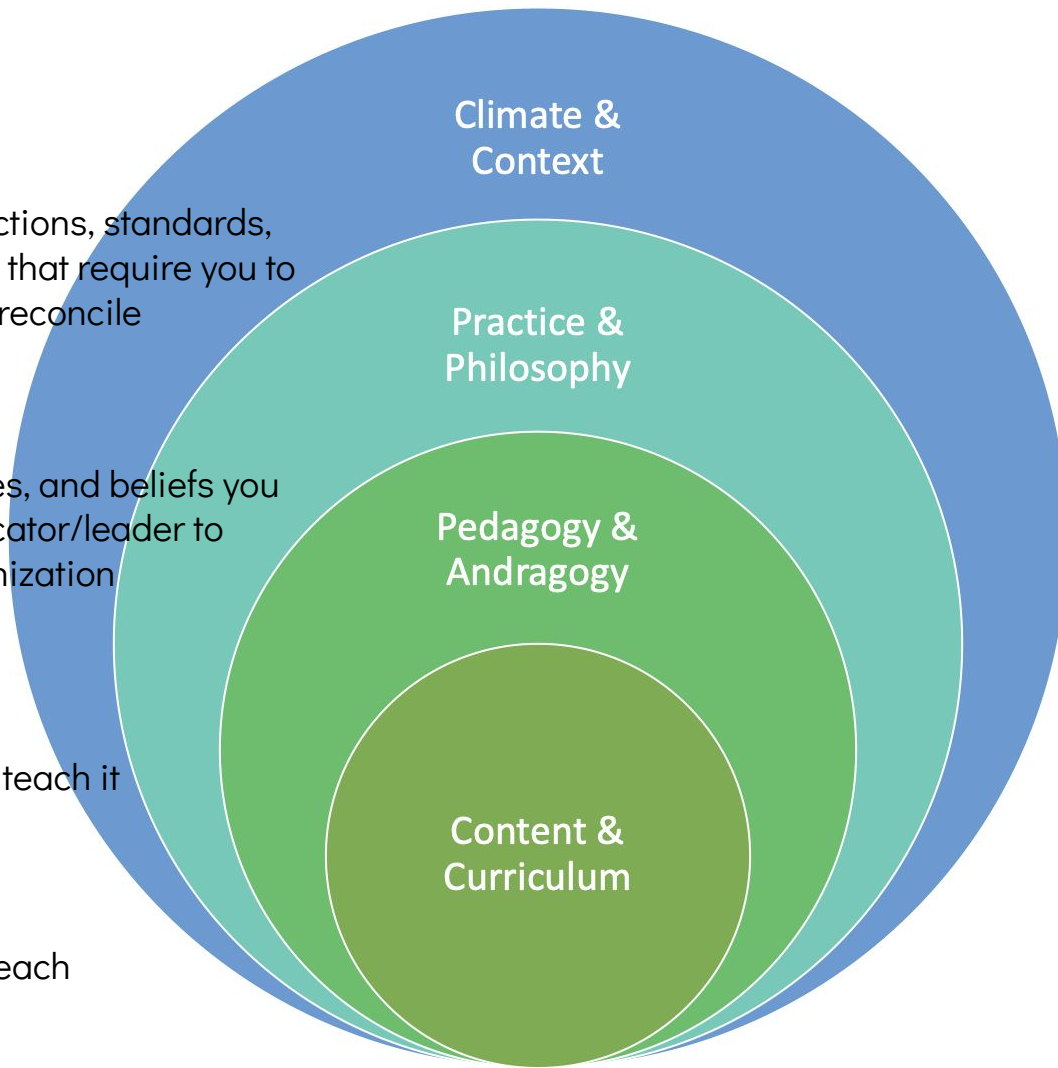
Climate & Context

The attitudes, actions, standards, and legislations that require you to decolonize and reconcile

Practice & Philosophy

The ethics, values, and beliefs you carry as an educator/leader to mobilize decolonization

Pedagogy & Andragogy

The method you teach it

Content & Curriculum

The things you teach

Our value system

Western Values	Indigenous Values
Science	Spirituality
Literacy	Orality
Nuclear family	Community of families
Bureaucratic authority	Relational authority
One reality	Multiple realities
Success by material gain	Success by relationships
Competition	Cooperation
Dominating conversations	Influencing conversations
Restrict emotions	Encourage emotions

Perceptions and values of time

Cronos: chronological

Quantitative
Measured in minutes
A minute is a minute
Past, present, future
Finite

Kairos: "higher" time

Kairos is qualitative
Measured in moments
Moments vary
Eternal dimension
Infinite

- Follow the peoples lead with time

- Slow things down to let life in

- Focus on the people in front of your rather than on the clock on the wall

- Some ceremonies and cultural events (like birth or death) will have strict time protocols

Decolonizing leadership

Western Leadership	Indigenous Leadership
System of control	System of empowerment
Trickle down hierarchy	Circle of accountability
Authority	Service
Linear information	Transparency
Categorical leadership	Strength-based leadership
Micromanaging	Coaching & development
Team productivity	Social cohesion

Where can we transform?
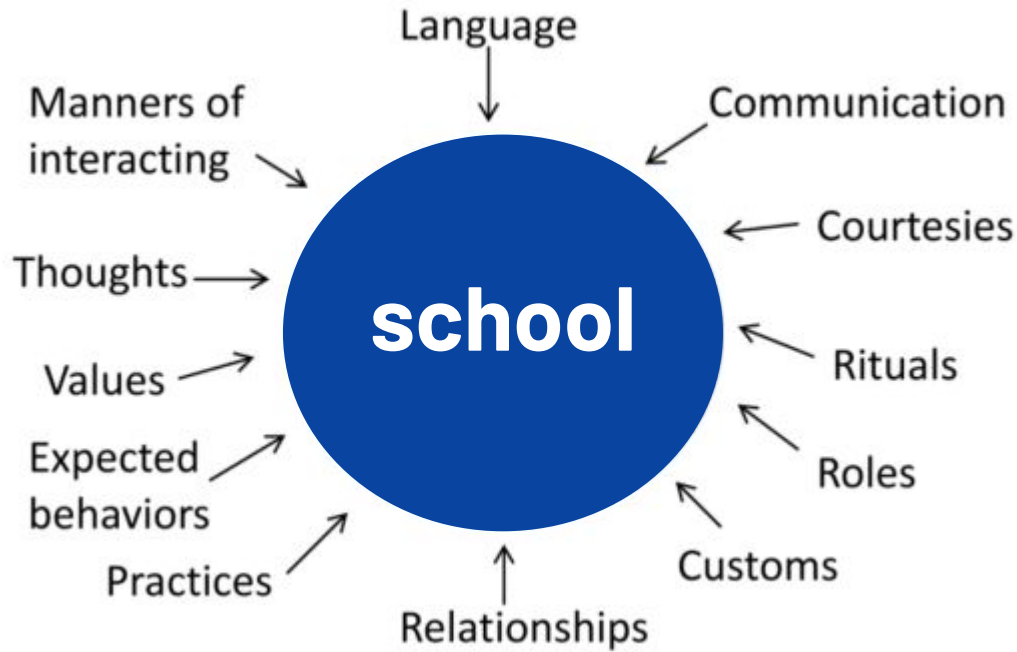
PART 2: Indigenous Cultural Appropriation vs. Appreciation

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CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

- No expressed permission, credit, or relationship
- Non-Indigenous person benefits

CULTURAL APPRECIATION

- Indigenous person benefits and receives credit
- Good heart, mind, and intentions of educator

CULTURAL AMPLIFICATION

- Indigenous person is brought in and compensated
- Purchasing Indigenous materials/services from Indigenous producers, artists, writers, developers, etc.

3

Indigenous Cultural Safety Strategies for Schools

"Knowing oneself comes from attending with compassionate curiosity to what is happening within"
-Gabor Mate

What is Indigenous cultural safety?


Cultural Advocacy

Cultural Safety

Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural Awareness

Cultural
Avoidance

Cultural safety is an outcome based on **respectful engagement** that recognizes and strives to **address power imbalances** inherent in colonial systems. It results in an environment **free of racism and discrimination**, where students and families **feel safe** when receiving educational services.
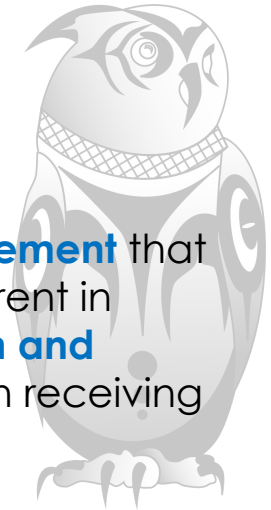
Cultural Safety Ethics and Principles

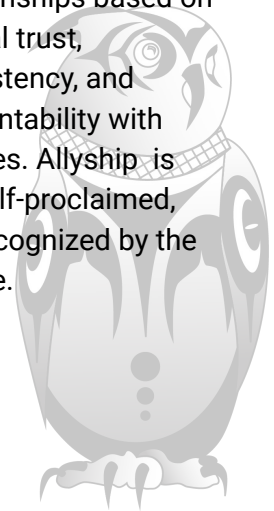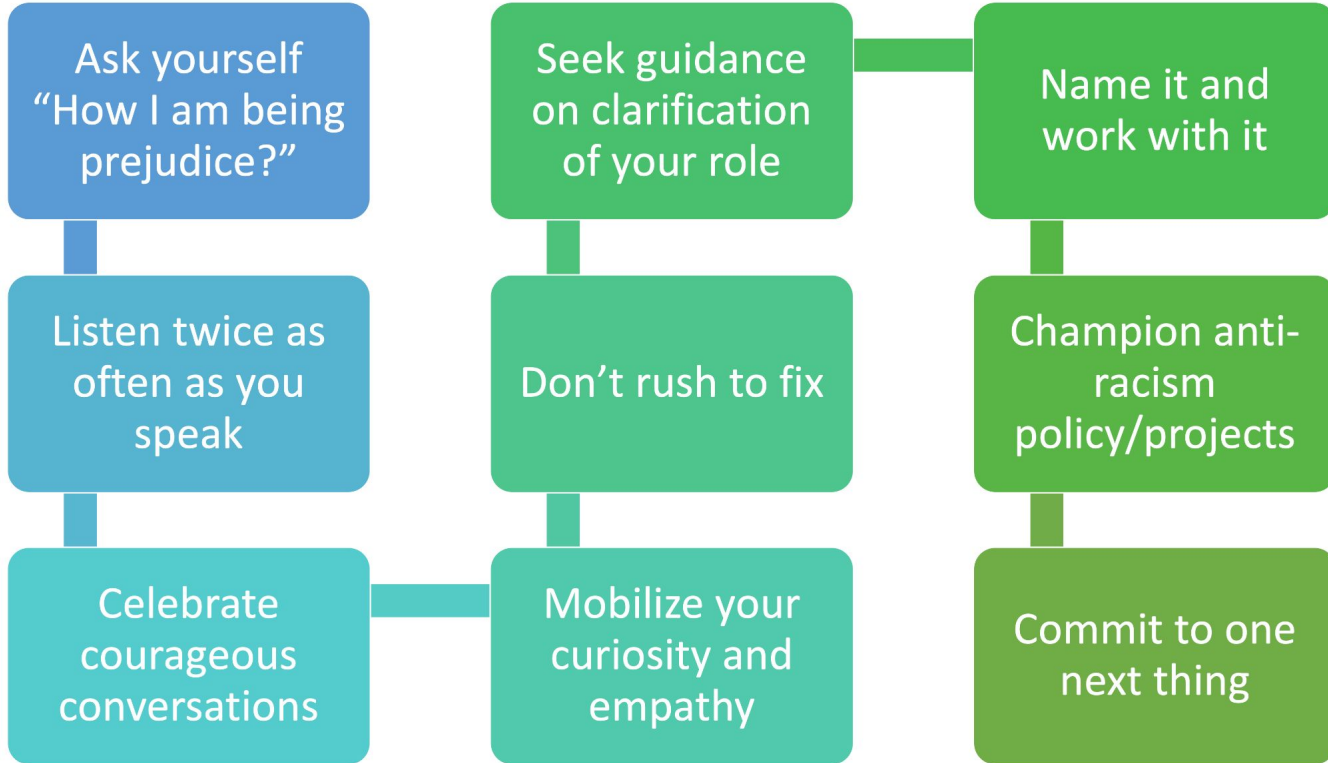| Cultural Awareness	Cultural Humility	Build Trust	Trauma & Equity Informed	Allyship & Advocacy
Know the history of Indigenous peoples. This means learning about the Residential Schools, the theft of lands, the stealing of children, exploitation of resources, and the imposed state violence on the community.	Avoid the "savior mentality". We do not need saving, but we do need to be recognized for our self-determination to endure as a result of our own cultural values. Cultural humility recognizes that our cultural values supersedes the corporate western values.	Building trust comes with time, patience, reflection, and respect. This is best achieved by being in the community and being with the people. In our culture, trust and knowing one another is the first step towards working together.	*Indigenous Trauma & Equity Informed Practice* is an organizational approach to emphasize respect and appropriate responses to the effects of trauma at all levels; while recognizing the strength and determination of Indigenous peoples.	Allyship & Advocacy is a process of building relationships based on mutual trust, consistency, and accountability with peoples. Allyship is not self-proclaimed, but recognized by the people.

Cultural Safety Tools:

Ask yourself "How I am being prejudice?"

Seek guidance on clarification of your role

Name it and work with it

Listen twice as often as you speak

Don't rush to fix

Champion anti-racism policy/projects

Celebrate courageous conversations

Mobilize your curiosity and empathy

Commit to one next thing

Indigenous Cultural Safety Pitfalls

1 Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion
Develop Indigenous Specific

2 Multiculturalism
Erases Indigenous peoples

3 Only focusing on culture
The principle is Truth before Reconciliation

4 Sensitivity vs. Advocacy
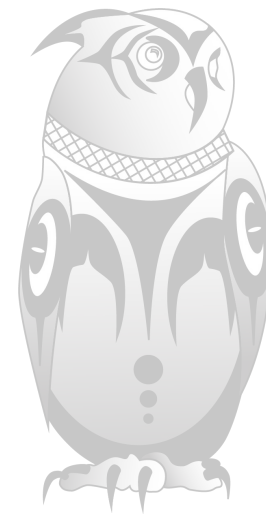Focus on justice doing over sensitivity

Embedding Equity & Cultural Safety:

Professional Practice
● Make a commitment ● Make a Reconciliation Reflection Journal ● Advocate for change ● Be an ally ● Speak up ● Lead the change ● Learn how to be anti-racists ● Learn about Two-Eyed Seeing ● Read/research about decolonizing methodologies

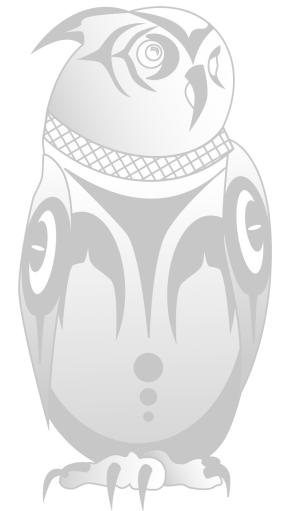Ask about and volunteer for Indigenous curriculum and events

Embedding Equity & Cultural Safety:

Professional Practice	Processes
- Make a commitment - Make a Reconciliation Reflection Journal - Advocate for change - Be an ally - Speak up - Lead the change - Learn how to be anti-racists - Learn about Two-Eyed Seeing - Read/research about decolonizing methodologies	- Job postings - Hiring - Performance reviews - Feedback processes - Team meetings - Orientation and onboarding - National Truth and Reconciliation Day - Reconciliation Committee

- Start ICS or reconciliation committees in schools
- Dedicate one pro-d day annually to reconciliation
- Make a school goal for ICS
- Create a standing agenda item at your staff meetings

Embedding Equity & Cultural Safety:

Professional Practice	Processes	Physical Places
- Make a commitment - Make a Reconciliation Reflection Journal - Advocate for change - Be an ally - Speak up - Lead the change - Learn how to be anti-racists - Learn about Two-Eyed Seeing - Read/research about decolonizing methodologies	- Job postings - Hiring - Performance reviews - Feedback processes - Team meetings - Orientation and onboarding - National Truth and Reconciliation Day - Reconciliation Committee	- Territorial Acknowledgements - Local Indigenous art contracts - Wellness rooms - Naming of spaces - Architecture - Medicine corners - Sacred Spaces - Naming buildings, wings, and spaces in the local Indigenous language

Embedding Equity & Cultural Safety:

Professional Practice	Processes	Physical Places	Policies
- Make a commitment - Make a Reconciliation Reflection Journal - Advocate for change - Be an ally - Speak up - Lead the change - Learn how to be anti-racists - Learn about Two-Eyed Seeing - Read/research about decolonizing methodologies	- Job postings - Hiring - Performance reviews - Feedback processes - Team meetings - Orientation and onboarding - National Truth and Reconciliation Day - Reconciliation Committee	- Territorial Acknowledgements - Local Indigenous art contracts - Wellness rooms - Naming of spaces - Architecture - Medicine corners - Sacred Spaces - Naming buildings, wings, and spaces in the local Indigenous language	- Territory acknowledgements - Anti-racism policy statements - UNDRIP Policy Statements - Education and Training Initiatives - Organization-wide recognitions - Decolonization policy, clauses, and amendments

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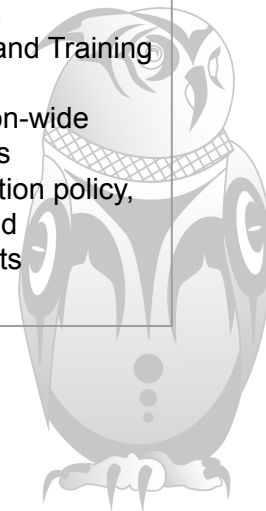
"Safety is not the absence of threat... it is the presence of connection"

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DR GABOR MATE

Questions

Comments

Critique

Reflections and sharing

THANK YOU
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LEN
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CONSULTING