



WE WERE CHILDREN

A FILM BY TIMOTHY WOLOCHATIUK

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



PRODUCED BY EAGLE VISION AND ENTERTAINMENT ONE TELEVISION
IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA



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PART 1: OVERVIEW – WORDS TO THE FACILITATOR

Within nature there are great examples of resilience. Take the flexible red willow stem: it has the same innate capacity as that of the human spirit to rebound and recover. Resilience is evident in the narratives that emerge from Indian Residential School (IRS) Survivors. Their testimonies reveal remarkable fortitude and a tenacious resolve to lead productive lives. For many Survivors, it has taken a lifetime to achieve some semblance of balance. Many found peace and have reconciled their experiences. The collective memories of Survivors provide the insight needed to make meaning of what happened. Through the many Survivors who are now able to describe what they endured as children, we are presented with a bigger picture.

It is the spirit of the willow that is captured in the film *We Were Children*, which provides a powerful medium to educate and communicate what happened in many Indian Residential Schools. This film uncovers what had been kept secret or hidden for generations: the multitude of emotional and psychological scars that became the framework of dysfunction for many Aboriginal communities. *We Were Children* is an explicit inquiry into the narratives of Lyna Hart and Glen Anaquod, two Survivors who tell their stories through recollections and dramatizations. The film is about a period missing from our shared history. This is a film about truth.

Approximately 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis children attended Indian Residential Schools. The personal accounts of Survivors Lyna Hart and Glen Anaquod provide a glimpse into the horrendous and traumatic abuse experienced by many Survivors. Their experiences and those of other Survivors of the Indian Residential Schools continue to have lasting impacts on themselves, their families, and communities. Their stories will be disturbing, shocking, and painful to see and hear, as the film renders the daily life of Indian Residential School students in all its harrowing reality. This film captures dramatic moments of intense suffering intertwined with exemplary instances of compassion and kindness.

Participants in this session are asked to invest themselves in an intellectual and emotional process. The immediacy and responsiveness to the subject matter may be hard to place. Hard truths are followed with the gift of silence. A productive space for reflection is actualized at the end of the film. With grace and dignity, we are left to contemplate the Survivors: the heroes and heroines who walk amongst us.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FILM WE WERE CHILDREN

As young children, Lyna and Glen were taken from their homes and placed in church-run boarding schools. The trauma of this experience was made worse by years of untold physical, sexual and emotional abuse, the effects of which persist into their adult lives. In this emotional film, the profound impact of the Canadian government's Residential School System is conveyed unflinchingly through the eyes of two children who were forced to face hardships beyond their years. *We Were Children* gives voice to a national tragedy and demonstrates the incredible resilience of the human spirit.

Directed by Tim Wolochatiuk and written by Jason Sherman, *We Were Children* is produced by Kyle Irving, for Eagle Vision Inc., and David Christensen, for the National Film Board of Canada (NFB).

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This facilitator's guide has been designed to support the delivery of a four-hour workshop wherein the film *We Were Children* is contextualized, screened, and discussed. There is also an accompanying PowerPoint presentation. It targets teachers and other educators who wish to advance their own learning and teaching skills on the subject of the Indian Residential School System in Canada. The facilitator will lead activities that are designed to build upon the lifelong learning journey of each participant. Facilitators will contextualize the film by providing a historical overview in order to prepare participants to be taken into the inner world of two Indian Residential School Survivors.

ADVICE FOR FACILITATORS:

- Ensure everyone has the opportunity to be heard, and encourage participation and discussion;
- Expect the film to provoke intense emotional responses and elicit emotionally charged memories: create a learning environment that is welcoming, safe, engaging, and respectful, where participants can express their feelings openly;
- Accept the uniqueness and knowledge of each participant and watch for connections: we are here to learn from each other and what our various needs will be;
- Personalize the concept of resilience: assist participants in making a personal connection in examining adversity and resilience in their own lives;
- Before screening the film, discuss the difficult subject matter that will be presented, such as sexual abuse and racism.

The role of the facilitator is to create an atmosphere where people feel safe to speak openly. Perhaps the most important task will be to anticipate and identify knowledge gaps and to pose exploratory questions that assist participants to better understand the history of the Indian Residential School System and its impacts. The content of the film will spark critical discussions that explore the roots of the social problems that exist within First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities today. Facilitators must be prepared in advance with a good understanding of current social issues within First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. Please see the appendices for an introduction to the Residential School System in Canada and a Glossary of Terms.

We Were Children is a product of an invigorating social healing movement that has helped many Survivors to incorporate cultural healing practices into their healing journeys. By participating in the film, Lyna Hart and Glen Anaquod acknowledged that it was time to talk about Canada's shared history and to publicly open a chapter that had been closed. Truth-making is a powerful process for the Survivors of Indian Residential Schools wherein they tell their own stories, in their words, and in their own way.

This guide is intended for facilitators who are well-versed in the colonization and assimilative history of Canada's First Nations Peoples, and who have already viewed the film. Facilitators should review the Residential School System in Canada and Glossary of Terms appendices.

Additionally, facilitators can contribute to the healing movement by:

- creating awareness of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA);
- introducing the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC);
- advancing the revitalization and decolonization process of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people and celebrating their language and culture;
- breaking the cycle of silence so that the sharing of Survivor stories becomes part of the healing journey undertaken by all Canadians.

The activities are designed to create a reflective learning space. The main goals of the activities are to:

- create understanding of our shared Canadian history;
- engage respectfully in dialogue about the experiences of Indian Residential School Survivors;
- discuss resilience development;
- recognize and understand contemporary manifestations of the legacy of the Indian Residential School System;
- consider and discuss our collective role in reconciliation.

The overall purpose of this guide is to teach participants, to motivate them to share their knowledge, and to communicate methods that will allow them to approach this difficult subject matter with compassion, grace, and dignity.

Inquiry is the dynamic process of being open to wonder and puzzlements and coming to know and understand the world. – Galileo Educational Network, 2004

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

The following questions commonly arise. Each question is addressed in an accompanying text.

- **What led to the production of *We Were Children*?**
- **What themes and topics might emerge from screening the film?**
- **Who are Indian Residential School Survivors?**
- **What support systems are in place?**

What led to the production of *We Were Children*?

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) has a mandate to learn the truth about what happened in the Indian Residential Schools and to inform all Canadians. The Commission began to document all records, wanting to hear directly from the men and women most affected by the school system. Many Survivors came forward to tell their personal stories during the TRC statement gathering. Film producer Lisa Meeches of Eagle Vision Inc. was involved in the TRC documentation process and has gathered stories and interviewed over 700 people.

This film was a direct response to Survivors who wanted their truth to be told. Meeches felt “we have to tell the story”¹ from the perspective of the Survivors. A co-production between the National Film Board, Entertainment One (eOne) Television and Eagle Vision Inc., directed by Tim Wolochatiuk and written by Jason Sherman, chronicled the lives of two Survivors of the residential school system in Canada. Using compelling interviews with these two Survivors, Lyna Hart and Glen Anaquod, and vivid re-enactments, ***We Were Children*** tells their personal stories of abuse. The truth and the impacts of what happened in the Indian Residential Schools are powerfully portrayed.

What themes and topics might emerge from screening the film?

During the statement-gathering process of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Indian Residential School Survivors in all the provinces and territories came forward to speak. “The Commission heard from proud people, people who asserted they were Survivors. They survived mental abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse, and spiritual abuse.”²

Some themes that can be anticipated are:

- systemic racism;
- disruption of culture and home life;
- the legacy of colonization and assimilation;
- abuse, including sexual abuse, confinement, and torture;
- severe restrictions on Indigenous language and cultural expression;
- neglect;
- numbering system;
- journey to forgiveness;
- cultural revitalization;
- PTSD, grief recovery, intergenerational trauma;
- intergenerational impacts (e.g., poverty, mental and physical health issues, alcoholism, co-dependence, violence, suicide);
- cycle of life and spirituality;
- traditional life skills;
- reconciliation;
- resilience and cultural resilience;
- erosion of women’s authority in matriarchal societies;
- forced displacement.

¹ Retrieved Jan. 29, 2013, blog.nfb.ca/blog/2012/10/02/we-were-children.pdf.

² Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Interim Report, 2012 (p. 6).

Many emotions and thoughts will surface among the group, including aggressive responses or outright challenges to the validity of the personal accounts. It is difficult to hear the testimonies, many of which may elicit in the audience feelings of guilt, shame, sadness, or outrage.

The healing journey of many Survivors began when they returned to their families and communities to reconnect to the language, customs, and traditions of their people. The streams of cultural knowledge and traditions that continue to flourish arise out of those who kept their language alive. Language is the purveyor of culture. "Among Residential School Survivors who have gone on to lead well-adjusted adult lives, religious beliefs and spirituality are frequently cited as reasons for their current well-being."³

Who are Indian Residential School Survivors?

Attendance at residential schools was mandatory for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children across Canada, and failure to send children to a residential school often resulted in the punishment of parents, including imprisonment. Many First Nations, Inuit and Métis children were taken from their homes, often forcibly removed, and separated from their families by long distances. Often, even those children who attended residential schools near their communities were prohibited from seeing their families outside of occasional visits.

In the early 1990s, Survivors came forward with disclosures that included accounts of sexual abuse, beatings, punishments for speaking Aboriginal languages, forced eating of rotten food, widespread hunger and thirst, bondage and confinement, and forced labour. Students were forbidden to speak their language or practise their traditional culture, and were often punished for doing so. Other experiences reported by Survivors of residential schools include mental abuse, severe punishments, overcrowding, use of students in medical experiments, illness and disease, and, in some cases, death of their schoolmates.

What support systems are in place?

The film is a powerful portrayal of what children endured in the Indian Residential Schools. There will be participants in the session who may have an intense emotional response to the film and may be re-traumatized. These responses might be visceral, and people may need to leave the room if they cannot continue to watch the film. Prepare teachers and educators by informing them that they are going to enter into a difficult and emotional realm that First Nations, Inuit and Métis men and women have for a long time lived—and continue to live—within.

There may be strong reactions among participants who have just discovered this social injustice. Acknowledge and validate each person's experience, and invite compassion. As the facilitator, it is critical that each person identify him/herself as part of a support system. Have a list of agencies or support groups compiled before the session, and ensure that each person receives a copy! Encourage the group to understand that it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that there are necessary support systems in place.

GETTING READY TO FACILITATE

Certain materials are required. Planning is essential, and supplies such as the following need to be in place:

- adhesive name tags;
- medium-sized sticky notes;
- sticky dots in four colours: red, yellow, green, and blue;
- sufficient number of pens;
- three signs printed with one word per sheet of paper: Trauma, Resilience, Impacts. Tape the signs onto the wall to create the three zones—see Appendix F;
- tape;
- bottles or glasses of water for each participant;
- boxes of facial tissues;
- photocopied handouts. Ensure that there is one copy of the following for each participant:
 - the Screening Activity: *Bursts of thoughts, reactions and feelings*;
 - the Footprint Activity: *Heroes and heroines who walk amongst us*.

Room arrangement and atmosphere are important. The ideal setup is a circle of chairs, as this conveys a sense of belonging. Prepare to do circle work by dividing the circle into four quadrants. Assign each quadrant a colour, such as red, yellow, green, and blue, drawing upon the Medicine Wheel concept (see glossary for a definition). Divide participants into the coloured quadrants for the Footprint Activity group work. As each participant registers, give them a name tag that has a coloured dot that corresponds to a section of the circle. They can seat themselves accordingly.

³ Retrieved January 30, 2013, ahf.ca/downloads/resilience.pdf (p. 50).

PART 2: PRE-SCREENING

Have the provided PowerPoint presentation ready to show.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION (15 min.)

Welcome the teachers and educators, and have an opening prayer or a moment to reflect upon the day. Provide a quick overview of the agenda as shown in the PowerPoint presentation and have participants introduce themselves.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE FILM (30 min.)

It is at this point that the history portion of the PowerPoint presentation is screened.

OPENING ACTIVITY: FRAMING RESILIENCE (15 min.)

- 1 We are about to hear the life experiences of two IRS Survivors, how they progressed from that experience, and what the lasting impacts and effects on their lives were. This is our chance to reflect upon our own life experiences and to learn from them and from one another.
- 2 Have participants draw upon their own life experience to answer these questions:
 - What life challenge or traumatic event have you experienced or heard about?
 - How was it overcome?
 - What were the lasting impacts?

Ask them to write their responses on sticky notes, and make it known that they will be asked to stick these responses on the wall in each of the three inquiry zones: Trauma, Resilience, Impacts. The focus here is to get the participants to think about how they overcame the tragic event, what resilience strategies or coping mechanisms they employed, and how it affected them in the long term.

- 3 Read aloud the responses under the Trauma sign. Invite participants to share a more thorough description of the traumatic event as you read the responses out, should they wish.
- 4 Read aloud the responses in the Resilience zone and summarize the similarities.
- 5 Emphasize the impacts. You might pose this question: How did your experience influence the decisions you made to be where you are today?
- 6 Begin to shift the conversation away from the challenges and start highlighting the stories of resilience, and acknowledge the support systems or strategies they used to overcome their challenges.

Talk about the resilience strategies and coping mechanisms on the sticky notes and discuss how many of these, such as family and friends, healthcare, or therapy, would not be available to students in residential schools. Remove the resiliencies that a student at a residential school would not be able to access. The blank space in the Resilience zone emphasizes how the supports and coping strategies were taken away from the students in the schools.

- 7 Prepare for the break.

15-MINUTE BREAK

Before participants leave the room for the break, ask them to ponder this question: Who do you credit for helping in your life's journey?

Ensure the following preparations are made before the screening:

- inform the teachers and educators that this docudrama will demand their focus;
- ask that all phones and devices be turned off;
- make sure each participant has a glass or bottle of water;
- ensure each table has a box of tissues;
- hand out a copy of the *Bursts of thoughts, reactions and feelings* sheet to each participant;
- the room should be as dark as possible; close the blinds and know which lights to switch off.

AFTER THE BREAK

Ensure all participants are seated before "The Water Teaching" and "The Gift of Silence" are introduced. Acknowledge the impact the film *We Were Children* will have, especially on Survivors and intergenerational Survivors who may be present. The following cultural actions have been incorporated to honour the subject matter through teaching moments:

- reassure the teachers and educators that Indigenous ways of being have been included in every step of this screening process;
- explain that water teaching will be observed during the screening. Water should be made available for each participant. Water carries great significance, and in moments of emotional hardship a glass of water is offered to the individual to ease the sadness;
- invite participants to have a drink of water when they are troubled or feel distraught;
- introduce the screening activity and describe how the Gift of Silence shall be observed.

Screening and Viewing Activity: Bursts of thoughts, reactions and feelings

The subject matter of the film is difficult—it includes thought-provoking, powerful, personal testimonies. Each participant will receive a handout entitled *Bursts of thoughts, reactions and feelings*, to capture—through writing, drawing, or sketching the ideas—thoughts, feelings, or emotions that may surface while they are watching the film. The creative process of writing words or thoughts in the graphic organizer can be cathartic and healing for the participant. The purpose of this activity is to encourage the viewer to capture any images or thought-provoking ideas by either jotting down key words or presenting them as a sketch.

This activity will also be used to help the teachers and educators to express their thoughts and comments in the Footprint Activity and the Sharing Circle, which will be held at the end of the session. See Appendix C.

The Gift of Silence Activity

Inform teachers and educators at the start of the screening that right after the film, they will be offered the "Gift of Silence," a four-minute time period to self-reflect before the lights are turned on to start the break. Explain the cultural understanding of silence and its use in learning: silence is a cultural methodology. Within the cultural practice of the oral tradition, listening is an art, and Elders teach the importance of silence, as explained in the following passage:

In traditional First Peoples cultures, silence has a particular value and purpose (e.g., to demonstrate respect, to train and discipline warriors and hunters, to strengthen the body and mind). Silence also offers opportunities for personal reflection.⁴

Keep in mind that each person is singularly gifted and as they are viewing the film, each will be inundated with emotions, responses, and reactions to what they have just seen or heard. There will be tears, and this is the space that allows for those feelings to be honoured. Silence serves as the bridge or a transition into a self-care space and a break to collect one's thoughts in preparation for the post-screening activities.

PART 3: VIEWING THE FILM (82 min.)

The Gift of Silence (4 min.)

15-MINUTE BREAK

CHECKING-IN ACTIVITY: REFLECTION AND SHARING (30 min.)

The purpose of this activity is to create a safe, non-judgmental place of inquiry to discuss reactions to the film or share observations made on the *Bursts of thoughts, reactions and feelings* sheet, with the opportunity for each person to speak without interruption.

FOOTPRINT ACTIVITY: HEROES AND HEROINES WHO WALK AMONGST US (15 min.)

We are left to contemplate the actions of the Survivors, Lyna Hart and Glen Anaquod, as they spoke of tragic loss and heroic recovery. Ask each group to reflect and consider each of the four footprints, and write within the footprint the answers to the questions below, based on what they have learned and observed.

This activity is a way of pulling all the discussions, ideas, and activities together. In summary, the participants are now aware that many Indian Residential School Survivors tried to live normal lives, but that many succumbed to the

impacts of their residential school experience. For this group activity, divide the participants into their quadrant groups and ensure that each group has a copy of the *Heroes and heroines who walk amongst us* handout. Ask participants to consider the following question: We may never know or be aware of how many Survivors we have passed on the street: How many heroes and heroines walk amongst us?

Also ask participants to (a) reflect on each of the four footprints, and (b) write their responses to the following questions within each of the four footprints.

Answer these questions based on what you learned from the film:

- 1 What were the children's beliefs and views before they went to school?
- 2 How did these beliefs change in residential school? What beliefs replaced them?
- 3 How did these changed beliefs affect them as adults?
- 4 How have their beliefs affected their children and subsequent generations?

Reinforce with the participants that many Survivors are making positive changes and have turned to a combination of Western therapies and traditional practices to heal. Talking Circles, sweats, storytelling, ceremonies, fasts, feasts, and Vision Quests reconnect Survivors to their cultures and to themselves. On-the-land activities—trapping, hunting, fishing, and gathering medicinal plants and wild foods—also renew the spirit. All of these practices assist in reinforcing and celebrating First Nations, Inuit and Métis identities. Healing is a long-term process that occurs in stages, starting with the individual Survivor and expanding to include the whole community. The intergenerational impacts of the Residential School System—the legacy of poverty, ineffective parenting, abuse, grief, and health issues—can appear throughout the entire community, not just in the lives of the Survivors.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Children like Lyna Hart and Glen Anaquod left loving homes. They belonged to an extended family and were loved.

What were the values, the home environment, and the perspective or way in which Lyna Hart and Glen Anaquod each saw their world before and after they entered into the residential school system?

When the children were living within the residential schools, they had to conform or be brutalized. They lost their personal identity and became a number. Resilience factors were removed.

When Survivors reached the age of 16, they could leave the schools. Often they returned as strangers to their communities and entered into another ethno-stressed environment. The traumatic impacts were great because they did not have the traditional life skills teachings or parenting skills or practise their community's value system and traditions because they were far removed from this experience while they were at the schools.

The children of IRS Survivors now understand that their parents were, in many cases, unable to hug their own children. Their narratives are just starting to be shared and understood.

⁴ Retrieved January 17, 2013, fnesc.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/In-Our-Own-Words-final-Apr-16-web.pdf. "In our own words: Bringing authentic First Peoples content to the K-3 classroom" (2012, p. 17).

CLOSING ACTIVITY: LOOKING BACK UPON THE DAY

As part of the inquiry into the narrative, Talking Circles are an important feature. The circle process establishes a unique style of communication that promotes healthy development and successful learning of how to deal with conflicts or difficult issues. Only the person whose turn it is may speak; no one can interrupt that space. There is a traditional teaching in the Nuxalk territory whereby the sun looks back upon its day and upon the work it has done by casting a red hue upon the land. Let us apply this teaching and reflect upon what we have just witnessed with the film *We Were Children*. How do we now see our world? How can we move forward?

The following are guidelines for participation:

- listen with respect;
- give each person a chance to talk;
- speak one person at a time;
- speak only for yourself;
- disagree, but speak from the heart.

EVALUATION (5 min.)

The Sharing Circle can be used as an informal assessment. Participants are given an evaluation sheet. See Appendix E.

CREDITS

The activities in this manual were developed by Indigenous Educator Barbara Frazer for the Legacy of Hope Foundation (LHF) and the National Film Board of Canada (NFB). We wish to acknowledge the contributions of LHF staff: Trina Bolam, Tania Budgell, and Jane Hubbard as well as Tey Cottingham of the NFB and Viola Thomas of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.



APPENDIX A

THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM AND WHY IT MATTERS / CANADA'S SHARED HISTORY

From the early 1830s to 1996, thousands of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, some as young as four years old, were forced to attend residential schools. Known as the Residential School System, this was an attempt to assimilate First Nations, Inuit and Métis people into the dominant culture. These children suffered abuses of the mind, body, emotions, and spirit that have had a deep and lasting impact on the Survivors, their families, and their communities.

Why is this important to non-Aboriginal Canadians? Why should it matter to a Canadian who never attended a residential school?

It matters because it continues to affect First Nations, Inuit, and Métis families—people from vibrant cultures who are vital contributors to Canadian society.

It matters because it happened here, in our country—a land considered a world leader in democracy and human rights.

It matters because the Residential School System is one of the major causes of poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, and violence among Aboriginal Canadians.

It matters because First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities suffer levels of poverty, illness, and illiteracy comparable to those in developing nations.

It matters because we share this land. We may not be responsible for what happened in the past, but we all benefit from what First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people have had to relinquish. We are, however, responsible for our actions today and in the future.

We are committed to a candid exploration of Canada's real history. We believe that education has an important part to play in the healing movement, and that by creating awareness and encouraging public engagement we can foster understanding and reconciliation.

THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM IN CANADA: A BACKGROUNDER

For over 300 years, European settlers and First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples regarded one another as distinct nations. In war, colonists and First Nations formed alliances, and in trade each enjoyed the economic benefits of co-operation. By the mid-19th century, however, European hunger for land had increased dramatically, and the economic base of the colonies shifted from fur to agriculture. Alliances of the early colonial era gave way to direct competition for land and resources. Settlers and the government began to view First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples as a "problem."

Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932, summed up the government's position when he said in 1920, "I want to get rid of the Indian problem. [...] Our object 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."

The commission proposed implementing a system of farm-based boarding schools situated far from parental influence—the separation of children from their parents being touted as the best means by which to sustain their civilizing effects.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- Gradual Civilization Act (1857), which called for "all Indians to be civilized"
- An Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians (1869)
- the Nicholas Flood Davin Report of 1879, which noted that "the industrial school is the principal feature of the policy known as that of 'aggressive civilization'"
- 1872: Dominion Lands Act or An Act Respecting the Public Lands of the Dominion set treaty-making process in motion in the west
- 1876: Indian Act established right to govern over Aboriginal Peoples

EDUCATION: A TREATY OBLIGATION

Government funding of Aboriginal education is a legal obligation negotiated in Treaty. First Nations, Inuit and Métis people wanted access to education for their children, to afford them the opportunity to participate in mainstream society.

1879: Nicholas Flood Davin met with the U.S. Dept. of Indian Affairs to learn about "aggressive assimilation" policy. Davin report recommends industrial boarding schools situated far from reserves. Began Industrial School System.

A product of the times, this report by Davin disclosed the assumptions of his era: that "Indian culture" was a contradiction in terms, Indians were uncivilized, and the aim of education must be to destroy the Indian in the child. In 1879 he returned from his tour of the United States' Industrial Boarding Schools with a recommendation to Canada's Minister of the Interior, John A. Macdonald, that a system of industrial boarding schools be implemented in Canada.

Although policies to manage "Indian Affairs" were being devised in Ottawa as the numbered treaties were signed across the prairies in the 1870s, it was not until 1924 that Inuit were affected by the Indian Act, and not until the mid-1950s that residential schools began to operate in the North.

For Inuit, the Residential School System was but one facet of a massive and rapid sweep of cultural change that included the introduction of Christianity; forced relocation and settlement; the slaughter of hundreds of sled dogs, eliminating the only means of travel for many Inuit; the spread of tuberculosis and smallpox and the corresponding mandatory southward medical transport; the introduction of RCMP throughout the Arctic; and many other disruptions to the centuries-old Inuit way of life.

Prior to the 1800s, few opportunities for formal European-based education were available to Métis children. Treaty provisions for education did not include these children, who were considered half-breeds and not Indians.

It wasn't until the Northwest Half-breed Claims Royal Commission of 1885 that the federal government addressed the issue of Métis education. The Catholic Church, already a strong presence in Métis society, began instructing Métis children in the Red River area of Manitoba in the 1800s. Despite these efforts, many Métis parents struggled to find schools that would accept their children, and would often have to pay tuition for their education.

Attendance at residential school, where the use of Native languages was prohibited, resulted in the erosion of an integral part of Métis culture. Residential schools profoundly affected Métis communities, a fact often overlooked in the telling of the history of residential schools in Canada.

The intent of the Residential School System was to educate, assimilate, and integrate First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples into European-Canadian society. Effectively, it was a system designed to kill the Indian in the child.

The earliest was the Mohawk Indian Residential School, opened in 1831 in Brantford, Ontario. The schools existed in almost all provinces and territories.

At the System's peak in the early 1930s, 80 residential schools operated across Canada, with an enrolment of over 17,000 students.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS DEFINED

These federally funded, church-run institutions were born of a government policy of assimilation. Children were removed from their families and sent to these schools so that they would lose their culture and language in order to facilitate assimilation into mainstream Canadian society.

These may include industrial schools, boarding schools, homes for students, hostels, billets, residential schools, residential schools with a majority of day students, or a combination of any of the above. At the request of Survivors, this definition has evolved to include convents, day schools, mission schools, sanatoriums, and settlement camps. They were attended by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students.

The Residential School System, as defined by the federal government, is limited to 132 schools that operated across Canada between 1831 and 1996. This disputed definition does not represent Survivors who attended provincially administered schools, as well as hostels and day schools.

In 1920, Duncan Campbell Scott, the bureaucrat in charge of Canada's Indian Policy, revised the Indian Act to make attendance at residential school mandatory for all First Nations, Inuit and Métis children up to age 15.

Very gradually, the System was discarded in favour of a policy of integration. First Nations, Inuit and Métis students began in the 1940s to attend mainstream schools.

Indian Affairs and Northern Development assumed full management of the Residential School System on April 1, 1969.

Throughout the 1970s, at the request of the National Indian Brotherhood, the federal government undertook a process that saw the eventual transfer of education management to First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.

In 1971, Blue Quills Indian Residential School became the first residential school managed by First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples. The last federally administered residential school closed in 1996.

1996: Government closes student hostel at Gordon's School, in Punnichy, Saskatchewan, and main building is demolished.

Compiled by General Synod Archives, September 23, 2008, anglican.ca/relationships/trc/histories/gordons-school-punnichy.

Attendance at residential schools was mandatory for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children across Canada. Many children were taken from their homes, often forcibly removed, and separated from their families by long distances.

Others who attended residential schools near their communities were often prohibited from seeing their families outside of occasional permitted visits.

Broad occurrences of disease, hunger, and overcrowding were noted by government officials as early as 1897.

Though some students have spoken of the positive experiences of residential schools and of receiving an adequate education, the quality of education was low in comparison to non-Aboriginal schools.

As late as 1950, according to an Indian Affairs study, over 40 percent of the teaching staff had no professional training. This is not to say that past experiences were all negative, or that the staff were all bad. Such is not the case.

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children were often separated from their parents for long periods of time, and this prevented them from discovering and learning valuable parenting skills.

The removal of children from their homes also prevented the transmission of language and culture, resulting in many First Nations, Inuit and Métis people who do not speak their traditional language and/or who are not familiar with their culture.

The system of forced assimilation has had consequences that continue to affect First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples today. The need for healing does not stop with the school Survivors: intergenerational effects of trauma are real and pervasive and must also be addressed.

In the early 1990s, beginning with Phil Fontaine, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Survivors came forward with disclosures about physical and sexual abuse at residential schools.

Throughout the 1990s, these reports escalated, and more First Nations, Inuit and Métis victims from one end of the country to the other courageously came forward with stories.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) confirmed a link between social crisis in Aboriginal communities, residential schools, and the legacy of intergenerational trauma.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples have begun to heal the wounds of the past. On January 7, 1998, the federal government of Canada issued a Statement of Reconciliation and unveiled a new initiative called Gathering Strength – Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan.

A strategy to begin the process of reconciliation, Gathering Strength featured the announcement of a \$350-million healing fund.

On March 31, 1998, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) was created. It was given 10 years to disburse this \$350-million fund beginning March 31, 1999, and ending March 31, 2009. Since June 1999, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation has been providing funding support to community-based initiatives that address the intergenerational legacy of physical and sexual abuse in Canada's Indian Residential School System. In 2007, the AHF received \$125 million from the federal government, extending the life of the Foundation to 2012.

In 2000, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation established the Legacy of Hope Foundation, a national charity whose mandate is to educate and raise awareness about residential schools and to continue to support the ongoing healing of Survivors.

While the strides that have been made in the healing process for school Survivors are extensive, it must be remembered that healing does not stand as the only action being taken. Compensation for the suffering is also a component of the attempts at redress that are being made to Survivors and their families.

In 2007, the Government of Canada implemented the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement.

The settlement agreement included:

- Common Experience Payment (CEP) to all surviving former students of federally administered residential schools;
- the Independent Assessment Process (IAP) to address compensation for physical and sexual abuse;
- establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC);
- healing initiatives;
- and a fund for commemoration projects.

By 2008, most of the church denominations responsible for the operation of the residential schools in Canada had publicly apologized for their role in the neglect, abuse, and suffering of the children placed in their care. Most of these organizations apologized through their national offices, except for the Catholic Church, which left it up to individual dioceses to make apologies.

- United Church of Canada (1986)
- Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate (Roman Catholic) (1991)
- Anglican Church (1993)
- Presbyterian Church (1994)
- Government of Canada (2008)
- Roman Catholic Church (2009)

In June 2008, the Government of Canada apologized for its historical role in the Residential School System. By saying “We are sorry,” Prime Minister Stephen Harper acknowledged the Canadian government’s role in over a century of isolating First Nations, Inuit and Métis children from their homes, families, and cultures.

Harper called residential schools a sad chapter in Canadian history and indicated that the policies that supported and protected the System were harmful and wrong.

For the thousands of Survivors watching from across Canada, the government’s apology was a historic occasion, though the response was mixed. The First Nations, Inuit and Métis leaders who heard the apology from the floor of the House of Commons called it a “positive step forward [...] even though the pain and scars are still there.”

Mainstream perspectives on health and healing began to change, and this led to a movement that centred on health promotion and healthy communities.

In 1978, the World Health Organization defined health as “not only the absence of disease” but also as sharing control over those things which lead to health—a view in harmony with traditional First Nations, Inuit and Métis concepts of healing.

Holistic approaches to health—which emphasize healthy lifestyles, relationships, and communities—together with personal growth programs and traditional spirituality and healing practices, have all contributed to the efforts to heal.

APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY

Not all Survivors will feel that these descriptions reflect their personal experience, as each Survivor's experience was unique.

Aboriginal Peoples

In the Constitution Act, 1982, three Peoples are recognized as "Aboriginal"—Indians, Inuit, and Métis.

Alternative healing approaches

Approaches to healing that incorporate strategies including but not limited to homeopathy, naturopathy, aromatherapy, reflexology, massage therapy, acupuncture, acupressure, Reiki, neurolinguistic programming, and bioenergy work.

Assimilation

The process by which one cultural group is absorbed into another, typically dominant, culture.

Colonization

Colonization may simply be defined as the establishment of a settlement on a foreign land, generally by force. It is also often used to describe the act of cultural domination.

Elder

Generally means someone who is considered exceptionally wise in the ways of their culture and spiritual teachings. Elders are recognized for their wisdom, their stability, their humour, and their ability to know what is appropriate in a particular situation. The community looks to them for guidance and sound judgment. They are caring and are known to share the fruits of their labours and experience with others in the community.

Enfranchisement

Enfranchisement can be a means of gaining the vote, and is viewed by some as a right of citizenship. Under the Indian Act, enfranchisement meant the loss of Indian status. Indians were compelled to give up their Indian status and, accordingly, lose their treaty rights in order to become enfranchised as Canadian citizens.

Eurocentric

A focus on Europe or its people, institutions, and cultures; assumed to mean "white" culture; often connotes an arrogant or dismissive attitude toward other cultures.

First Nation(s)

This term replaces "band" and "Indian," which are considered by some to be outdated, and signifies the earliest cultures in Canada.

Genocide

Article II of the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide states: Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Healing journey

The participation of Survivors or people affected intergenerationally by the legacy of residential schools in any number of healing approaches.

Historic trauma

The historical experiences of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis during centuries of colonial subjugation that disrupted Aboriginal cultural identity.

Indian

The term "Indian" collectively describes all the Indigenous Peoples in Canada who are not Inuit or Métis. Three categories apply to Indians in Canada: Non-Status Indians, Status Indians, and Treaty Indians.

Innu

Innu are the Naskapi and Montagnais First Nations Peoples who live primarily in Quebec and Labrador.

Intergenerational impacts

The unresolved trauma of Survivors who experienced or witnessed physical or sexual abuse in the Residential School System that is passed on from generation to generation through family violence, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, substance abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, loss of parenting skills, and self-destructive behaviour.

Inuit

In Canada, Inuit are the culturally distinct Aboriginal Peoples who live primarily in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, northern parts of Quebec, and throughout most of Labrador.

Lateral violence

This includes bullying, gossiping, shaming and blaming others, and breaking confidences. Lateral violence hurts others within families, organizations, and communities. It occurs in homes, schools, churches, community organizations, and workplaces.

Legacy of residential schools

Refers to the ongoing direct and indirect effects of the abuses at the residential schools. This includes the effects on Survivors and their families, descendants, and communities. These effects may include family violence, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, substance abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, loss of parenting skills, loss of culture and language, and self-destructive behaviour.

Medicine wheel

The medicine wheel symbolizes the interconnection of all life, the various cycles of nature, and how life represents a circular journey. The number four is sacred to the many Aboriginal Peoples of North America and can represent many things: the four seasons, the four parts of a person (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual); the four kingdoms (animal, mineral, plant, and human); the four sacred medicines (sweetgrass, tobacco, cedar, and sage). You may see the medicine wheel presented in a variety of ways using a variety of colours.

Métis

Historically, the Métis are the descendants of First Nations women, largely (but not exclusively) from the Cree, Sauteaux, Ojibwa, Dene, and Assiniboine Nations, and fur traders, largely (but not exclusively) of French, Scottish, and English ancestry. The Métis developed distinct communities based on their economic role, and it was their sense of distinctiveness that led them to develop their own political institutions and sentiment by the early 19th century. The Métis Nation today is composed of people who descend from the early Métis.

Today, although they may or may not share a connection with the historic Métis Nation, a growing number of Canadians of mixed Aboriginal and European ancestry self-identify as Métis.

Non-Status Indians

Non-Status Indians are people who consider themselves Indians or members of a First Nation but who are not recognized by the federal government as Indians under the Indian Act. Non-Status Indians are not entitled to the same rights and benefits available to Status Indians.

Paternalism

A style of government or management or an approach to personal relationships in which the desire to help, advise, and protect may negate individual choice, freedoms, and personal responsibility.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

A severe anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to any event resulting in psychological trauma. This event may involve the threat of death to oneself or someone else, or the erosion of one's own or someone else's physical, sexual, or psychological integrity.

Racism

Prejudice or animosity against people who belong to other races; the belief that people of different races have differing qualities and abilities and that some races are inherently superior or inferior.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation is the process by which individuals or communities attempt to arrive at a place of mutual understanding and acceptance. There is no single approach to achieving reconciliation, but building trust by examining painful shared histories, acknowledging each other's truths, and a common vision are essential to the process.

Reserve

The Indian Act of 1876 states: "The term 'reserve' means any tract or tracts of land set apart by treaty or otherwise for the use or benefit of or granted to a particular band of Indians, of which the legal title is in the Crown, but which is unsundered, and includes all the trees, wood, timber, soil, stone, minerals, metals, or other valuables thereon or therein." Occasionally, the American term "reservation" is used, but "reserve" or "Indian Reserve" is the usual terminology in Canada.

Residential schools

These federally funded, church-run institutions were born of a government policy of assimilation. Children were removed from their families and sent to these schools so that they would lose their culture and language in order to facilitate assimilation into mainstream Canadian society. These institutions may include industrial schools, boarding schools, homes for students, hostels, billets, residential schools, residential schools with a majority of day students, or a combination of any of the above. At the request of Survivors, this definition has evolved to include convents, day schools, mission schools, sanatoriums, and settlement camps. They were attended by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students.

Resilience

The capacity to spring back from adversity and have a good life despite emotional, mental, or physical distress.

Resistance

Defiance or opposition that may be expressed in overt or covert acts. One of the most frequently cited acts of resistance by residential school students was the stealing of fruit, bread, and meat from kitchens or pantries. One of the most dangerous and difficult acts of resistance was running away.

Status Indian

Status Indians are people who are entitled to have their names included on the Indian Register, an official list maintained by the federal government. Only Status Indians are recognized as Indians under the Indian Act and are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law.

Stereotype

An oversimplified image or perception of a person or group. A stereotype can also be an image or perception of a person or group that is based exclusively on well-known cultural markers—such as the notion that all Inuit live in igloos.

Survivor

A First Nations, Inuit and Métis person who attended and survived the Residential School System in Canada.

Traditional healing

Approaches to healing that incorporate culturally based strategies including but not limited to sharing circles, healing circles, talking circles, sweats, ceremonies, fasts, feasts, celebrations, vision quests, traditional medicines, and any other spiritual exercises. Traditional approaches also incorporate cultural activities such as quilting, beading, drum making, and so on. Others include on-the-land activities such as hunting, fishing, and gathering medicines.

Treaty Indian

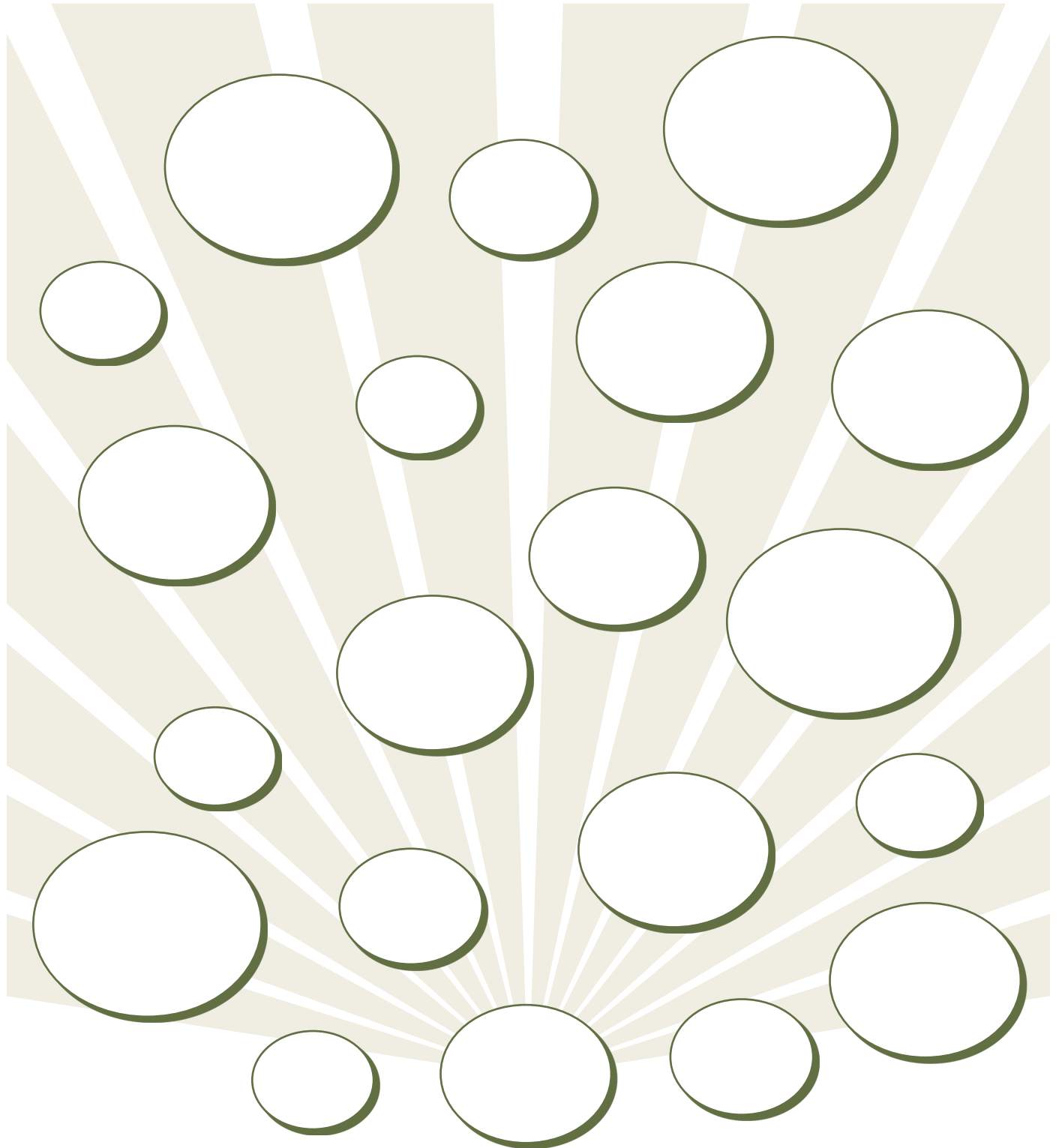
A Status Indian who belongs to a First Nation that signed a treaty with the Crown.

Western healing

Healthcare approaches that incorporate strategies that follow a more institutional approach to healing; practitioners include, but are not limited to, psychologists, psychiatrists, educators, medical doctors, and social workers.

APPENDIX C

BURSTS OF THOUGHTS, REACTIONS AND FEELINGS



APPENDIX D

HEROES AND HEROINES WHO WALK AMONGST US



1 What were the children's beliefs and views before they went to school?

2 How did these beliefs change in residential school? What beliefs replaced them?



3 How did these changed beliefs affect them as adults?

4 How have their beliefs affected their children and subsequent generations?



APPENDIX E

EVALUATION FORM

APPENDIX F

TRAUMA

RESILIENCE

IMPACTS