

Transformative Reconciliation

A Shared Journey

Resource Kit



Transformative Reconciliation: A Shared Journey

Reconciliation is about restoring and maintaining respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Reconciliation is a verb – it's a continuous, active journey of reflection, humility, and growth. It asks us to sit with discomfort, listen deeply, and commit to long-term change.

What Reconciliation Is About

- **Shifting from performance to accountability**
Move beyond statements toward sustained action.
- **Changing systems, not just job titles**
Embed reconciliation into policies, practices, and decision-making.
- **Measuring progress through relationships**
Build trust, reciprocity, and mutual respect.
- **Resourcing Indigenous engagement and leadership**
Ensure Indigenous voices and perspectives are centred and supported.

About This Resource

This kit includes three interconnected resources:

Colonial Trauma

Understanding historical and ongoing impacts.

4 Steps To Workplace Reconciliation

Practical ways to begin the journey.

7 Steps to Decolonization

Applying reconciliation in your daily work.

Together, these tools are designed to help you explore reconciliation within your organization, your community, or your own helping practice.



Start your journey.

Explore how reconciliation can shape policies, teams, and daily practice. CTRI & ACHIEVE's **Reconciliation in the Workplace** and **Decolonizing Your Helping Practice** workshops provide concrete frameworks for building respectful, inclusive, and trauma-informed workplaces.

Colonial Trauma

Colonial trauma happens when people live in unsafe places and survive violence from the ruling group. It can be felt individually, collectively, historically, currently, or through ancestral trauma, especially by those whose land and communities have been colonized by another group.

In the geopolitical area known as North America, settler colonialism has a long, complex history. Since settlers arrived, their policies, practices, and domination have affected every aspect of society, from taking land and governance to forcing people to fit into the dominant society.

It is important to consider the impact of colonial trauma on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in Canada using a critical lens. Different groups have experienced colonization differently, and it is crucial to understand individual experiences within the intersecting systemic forces, both past and present.

Examples of colonial trauma on community:

- Loss of culture or belief system due to criminalization or stigmatization of beliefs
- Forced assimilation into settler culture
- Loss of land, property, economic means
- Increased rates of lateral violence
- Prohibited use of native language
- Denied access to control over education of children
- Disrupted social systems
- Genocide
- Overrepresentation in child welfare, prison systems
- Increased rates of violence (MMIWG)
- Loss of power to governance
- Denied access to culturally appropriate means of parenting children
- Poorer health due to marginalization and decreased access to resources

Examples of colonial trauma on individuals:

- Disconnection from family, culture, and community
- Increased violence to members of colonized group
- Feelings of shame about self or culture
- Lack of voice in matters impacting their own lives and/or community lives
- Increased negative perceptions or stereotypes about colonized group
- Increased involvement in social services
- Decreased educational opportunities
- Increased incarceration rates
- Decreased access to economic and social means and supports
- Increased rates of mental health, substance use, suicide

Reflection

1. How has colonization impacted you? How has colonization impacted your workplace?

2. Identify your positions of power, privilege, oppression or disempowerment. How does this influence your daily life and your work?

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Steps to Workplace Reconciliation



1 Learn about and acknowledge the historical trauma that oppression and colonization have caused.

- Indigenous peoples in Canada have faced years of systemic and societal oppression. This oppression is multilayered and intergenerational. Although the goal of colonization was to eradicate Indigenous peoples, through resiliency, resistance, and dedication, Indigenous practices, culture, spirituality, and teachings have remained.
- Before we act, we must learn. Providing education sessions for staff and leaders allows for growth and understanding. It also helps you recognize how current policies reinforce a colonial world view and continue to oppress Indigenous peoples.

2 Develop a reconciliation plan and write a statement of commitment.

- A reconciliation plan provides your organization with a roadmap for engaging in reconciliation.
- A reconciliation statement is a public commitment that not only demonstrates your dedication to reconciliation, but also holds senior leadership accountable and motivated to achieve the goals of your action plan.

CTRI's Reconciliation Statement

As we walk the path of reconciliation, we are mindful of the connections we share with all our relatives. We understand that these connections are impacted by colonization and that there is trauma in our relationships and to the land and Indigenous ways of life. We commit to listening and learning from our relationships, and to be guided by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

3 Familiarize yourself with the TRC Calls to Action, MMIWG+ Calls for Justice, and UNDRIP. Consider how your organization can respond to these calls.

- [Click here](#) to learn more about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.
- Read the [National Inquiry's Final Report](#) to learn more about MMIWG+.
- To find out more about the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, read [this report](#).

4 Do an annual review of your progress. Add new items to your plan as you continue your reconciliation journey.

Our Reconciliation Plan

- Seek counsel from Elders
- Develop a reconciliation statement
- Offer and organize opportunities for staff to receive training
- Attend ceremonies, and learn from knowledge holders and Elders
- Active Indigenous recruitment
- Incorporate Indigenous representation in marketing materials
- Partner with Indigenous organizations
- Incorporate a two-eyed seeing perspective in our work

7 Steps to Decolonization

Throughout colonization, land has been taken, and Indigenous people have been displaced. Indigenous peoples' practices and ceremonies were outlawed. Children were forced to attend residential schools, where many suffered abuse, and their languages, ceremonies, and ways of life were disallowed. Children were also removed from their families and adopted out to non-Indigenous families.

These events created a loss of connection to culture, practices, medicines, ceremonies, land, and traditions. This disconnection directly impacted and continues to impact identity, physical and mental health, and spirituality. Despite the oppressive realities of colonization, Indigenous knowledge, practices, languages, culture, and ways of being continue to thrive and grow.

Here are seven steps you can take to decolonize your workplace:

1 Research and acknowledge the history of colonization.

- Learn the history of the land you work and live on.
- Determine how you and your organization fits into this history.
- Acknowledge and understand the effects of systemic oppression, power imbalances, and colonization on the human condition and all our relationships.
- Acknowledge the impacts of oppression and trauma.

2 Know yourself and understand your limitations.

- Recognize cultural influences and differences.
- Recognize the importance of your own intersecting identities, privileges, and experiences as they relate to your own lived experiences.
- Participate in reconciliation and understand your position. Continue the journey of reflection, learning, and building reciprocal relationships.

3 Understand that you have been educated in and are working within a Western, Eurocentric system.

- Recognize the limitations of colonized systems. Be open to learning different perspectives.
- Learn about wholistic and relational systems. Expand your knowledge of Indigenous culture.
- Challenge the inequalities present within the systems you operate in.

4 Build relationships with Indigenous peoples in your area and learn about Indigenous culture.

- Learn about Indigenous practices, culture, and perspectives.
- Connect with Indigenous Elders and knowledge holders and build collaborative relationships.
- Participate in and invite opportunities for reciprocal learning in your workplace.
- Consider and implement wholistic relational models.
- Create safe spaces where everyone can show up authentically, including you.

5**Promote systems that acknowledge oppression and colonization trauma.**

- Challenge dominant beliefs.
- Acknowledge intergenerational histories and intersecting identities and how these relate to oppression and the experience of folks within your organization.
- Unlearn patriarchal ways of doing and Eurocentric internalized conditioning. Acknowledge how these patterns inhibit authentic connection. Destigmatize mental health and challenge dominant beliefs.

6**Review the calls to action from the TRC and MMIWG+.**

- Identify the calls to action that directly relate to your area of work.
- Create an action plan to address these calls to action in your workplace.
- Inform yourself of local and national movements that are centred on these calls to action.

7**Continue the journey.**

- Decolonizing your helping practice is an ongoing and active process.
- Practice self-reflection and examine your areas of power and privilege.
- Challenge your implicit and explicit biases.
- Partner with a mentor, coworker, or colleague to encourage accountability.

