Safe Passage: An Anti-Trafficking Toolkit

An Initiative of:



L'Association des femmes autochtones







Welcome

Welcome, ⊃∾ບ∂∩⊂, pjila'si, Wa'tkwanonhwerá:ton', ⊂⊲́•∘, Aaniin, Uy' skweyul!

Native Women's Associate of Canada, in partnership with Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata

Centre Inc, would like to acknowledge this training model is developed through survivor engagement leadership. Historically, Indigenous women's voices and experiences are excluded from policy development around anti-human trafficking initiatives that directly impact their lives. Through survivor engagement initiatives such as this training model, Indigenous women's expertise with lived experience around sexual exploitation and human trafficking were integral to this project's vision.

Tender Reminder

You are not alone in this learning journey. Some content in this booklet may be difficult to learn. Please be sure to have support and take good care of yourself while you learn.

THIS BOOKLET IS DIVIDED INTO 6 PARTS.



Contact & Colonization reviews how settlers started treating Indigenous People unfairly and began cycles of violence.

Present-Day Experiences goes over how past violence may affect Indigenous People today, and how this violence continues.

Indigenous Women & Exploitation gives information about being in the sex trade and how to exit.

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PART 4

Next Steps looks at how Indigenous people can heal and move forward in a good way.

ART 6

Planting Seeds of Hope reviews what it means to reclaim Indigenous identity and voices.

Indigenous Peoples Pre-Contact

Before Europeans came to North America (known by many communities as Turtle Island), Indigenous Peoples were diverse and strong.

Communities had their own values and customs, but most lived in harmony with each other and the land. Many believed that all things were connected, and so they treated Mother Earth and all she provided with love and respect.

Indigenous Peoples lived this way for thousands of years. Communities would have faced hard times, but they always recovered and thrived.



Reclaim your Power

As an Indigenous woman, you come from a long line of powerful ancestors. Remember to carry that fire within you; and know that nobody can take it away from you.



Check-In: What is an item of strength your ancestors and/or traditions have given you?



Women & Two-Spirit

Before contact, there weren't any strict gender and sexuality expectations or rules. Individuals expressed themselves in whatever way felt most natural to them. People weren't divided or labelled based on their gender or sex since these were seen as fluid and not fixed.

Most importantly, all community members were equally valuable and accepted.

Some had specific sacred roles, such as women who were life givers, and gender-diverse people who were seen to hold multiple spirits; but there was always an understanding of equality among all community members. Men, women and gender-diverse people would work together to make decisions for the community.

Roles and responsibilities were filled based on need rather than gender, and everyone understood their job was to help the whole group.

Some communities were also matriarchies, which meant the families were led by women and lineage would be passed on through her side of the family. Even in traditional patriarchies, where men led the families, women and gender-diverse people would still contribute to community decisions.

> KEY TERM

PATRIARCHY: A social system of unequal relations that gives men more power and privilege than women.

PART 2

Contact & Colonization

When the Europeans first arrived in North America, they usually had peaceful relationships with Indigenous Peoples. They would trade with one another and agreed to share the land. Some Indigenous communities even helped Europeans fight wars. But even through these peaceful times, settlers saw Indigenous Peoples as 'savage' and wanted them to give up their way of life and live like Europeans.



When Britain won control over all the colonies in Canada, it was determined to expand its empire and its efforts to settle Canada started to be more forceful and aggressive. This is when a lot of the violence Indigenous people still experience today began.

Europeans felt that Indigenous people got in the way of their plans to build and grow their communities. So, settlers began taking action to both control and erase Indigenous Peoples.

> **SETTLER:** A person who comes to live on a land that they do not historically come from, and which belongs to another people.



SETTLER COLONIALISM: A form of colonialism where a colonial power claims a territory and begins to replace the Indigenous population with settlers who then create a new national identity.

COLONIALISM: The practice of taking over parts or all of another land or country in order to exploit the land, resources, and people. In some cases, this land is also populated with settlers.



INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ARE REMOVED FROM THEIR TRADITIONAL LANDS.

This was done through the government (Britain) making laws to remove them, and/or Indigenous people needed to move because there wasn't enough food or other items they needed to survive (i.e., slaughter of the bison in the Prairies).

INDIGENOUS CHILDREN ARE SENT BY THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT TO RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS.

The goal of these schools was to separate children from their families, which would make it easier to teach them European values and way of life. Indigenous languages and cultures were not allowed to be spoken or practiced at the schools. The living conditions were very unsafe. Children were physically, sexually and emotionally abused, and many children died.

THE NUMBERED TREATIES

ARE SIGNED. On paper, these treaties outline a trade of traditional Indigenous lands for different rights (i.e., education, cash, hunting rights etc.). But settlers and Indigenous people had different understandings of what these treaties meant, and Indigenous views were ignored.

THE INDIAN ACT IS PASSED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF

1876

CANADA. This Act had many harmful policies including: making it illegal to practice some Indigenous ceremonies; created reserves to keep Indigenous people on small pieces of land; created a new form of governing; stopped them from voting; and controlled how they could make money. These are only a few examples, but the Indian Act caused a lot of damage to Indigenous communities.

THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN ARE TAKEN FROM THEIR FAMILIES AND PLACED IN

1960s-

1980s

FOSTER CARE. They are usually adopted by non-Indigenous families. The goal of this policy was similar to residential schools: remove Indigenous children from their families so they can learn European values and lose their Indigenous identities.



For a more in-depth review of Canada's history with Indigenous perspectives, **see this timeline.**

KEY TERM

ASSIMILATION: Where individuals or a group of people is encouraged or forced to adopt the culture of a dominant group while losing their own culture.

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Inuit people's experiences of colonialism are unique from First Nations and Métis peoples because Canada has treated Inuit Nunangat differently. Canada saw the North as a strategic territory that was difficult to access.

In the 1950s and 1960s the government began to aggressively colonize the Inuit, using them to claim the High Arctic (as human flagpoles) and moved communities for its own purposes.

Inuit were also given identification tags, their names were changed (to European names), and all the Inuit sled-dogs were killed so that no one could hunt and move about the land. When the sled-dogs were killed, the Inuit were forced to rely on the government for support, which made them easier to control. All these experiences are similar to experiences of trafficking (i.e., having your movements and lives controlled by someone else). As a result of this, and because these colonial experiences have occurred in a single lifetime, trafficking is seen as a normal experience for many.

Tender Reminder

You are living proof that Indigenous people are resilient. You are a gift.



Contact & Colonization for Women

While colonization has affected all Indigenous Peoples, there were added layers to this experience for Indigenous women. Some women started families with settler men, but this 'mixing' was seen as a threat to the idea of 'pure' (i.e., white) communities. So, European women were brought over to separate settler men from the Indigenous women. Next to these European women, Indigenous women were treated as dirty, sexual objects and were placed in the lowest class of society.

Because Indigenous women were seen as 'unhuman,' sexual violence against them became normal and was never punished.

Contact & Colonization for Two-Spirit People

Colonization also affected Two-Spirit people differently. Europeans were disgusted with how freely Indigenous Peoples saw gender and sexuality. They forced their own beliefs around gender and sexuality on Indigenous communities and told them any other expressions were wrong and shameful. For these individuals, their Indigenous identity, gender and sexuality were all being erased at the same time.

As you can see, there is a long history in Canada that has tried to get rid of Indigenous Peoples; but these efforts have failed. They may have hurt Indigenous communities, but they have not broken them.

PART 3

Present-Day Experiences

Many experiences of Indigenous Peoples today can be tied back to trauma because of what they have had to survive through, and the ways that systems continue to treat them today. As an Indigenous person, you are surrounded by and touched by systems that have all at one point in time tried to control and/or hurt Indigenous Peoples.

Consider these examples:

KEY TERM **TRAUMA:** An emotional response to an experience that disturbs and/ or scares a person so much that they struggle to cope with their feelings.

Education (1831-1996) RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Children in these schools suffered physical, mental, sexual and spiritual abuse. Then they were taught to hide the effects of this abuse.



From this experience, they learned that abuse was normal. Now these children are grown up, they have many health problems and many aren't able to deal with their trauma. This started a cycle of unhealthy Indigenous families, which could look like:

- Physical, sexual, emotional abuse
- Self-medication (i.e., reliance on drugs and/ or alcohol)
- A feeling of being lost or in pain
- Staying distant from family

These feelings may also make it difficult to do other things such as making healthy choices, going to school or getting a job (which can mean living in poverty).

The education system for Indigenous Peoples began as a way to assimilate them into the European way of life. Still today, the education system focuses on European values and leaves little space for Indigenous stories, or ways of life.





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Justice System/Police (1873) NORTHWEST MOUNTED POLICE (NWMP)

The Northwest Mounted Police (NWMP) which is the beginning of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) were started so they could control the Indigenous population.

The settler justice system that was started ignored traditional Indigenous forms of justice, and focused on punishing people rather than helping them.

Today, there are very high amounts of Indigenous people in jail and they are much (10 times) more likely to be hurt, or even killed by police than non-Indigenous people. These high numbers are usually because the effects of poverty are often framed as being criminal.

For example, when living in poverty someone may feel they have few options but to turn to criminal acts so they can survive and/or provide for others. Instead of understanding a person's illegal actions may be acts of survival, the justice system continues to harshly punish minor crimes committed by Indigenous people. Many Indigenous people may also self-medicate to deal with past and present trauma, and are in the justice system for drug-related charges. Rather than helping, or understanding that these actions are results of being colonized, the justice system continues to punish people that are most in need of support.

KEY TERM **IMPERIALISM:** When a country takes over another country, including its people and resources, so the controlling country can make money.

Government (1876 – TODAY) THE INDIAN ACT

The Indian Act was made so it could control Indigenous Peoples. It included many harmful laws including making reserves, making some traditions illegal, controlled how Indigenous people could make money, and made 'Indian status'. It also included rules that controlled Indigenous Peoples' movements on and off reserves (they had to get permission to leave), and stopped them from voting.

Taking Indigenous Peoples away from their traditional lands and keeping them on small areas of land changed their whole way of life which led to unhealthy lifestyles. Also controlling how Indigenous people could make money (and making it hard to make money) meant that a lot of Indigenous communities lived in poverty. The Indian Act made it so that Indigenous Peoples couldn't live traditionally, but by controlling the movements of Indigenous Peoples and making it hard for them to work in the new settler systems, the Act kept them in poverty. By making it difficult for Indigenous Peoples to succeed on their own (by controlling their movements and keeping communities in poverty), the Indian Act made sure that Indigenous Peoples had to rely on the government. This was another way the government could control Indigenous Peoples.



(Government Continued)

The Indian Act also created status Indians which decided who was an Indigenous person in the eyes of the government.

Status could be lost for different reasons such as going to university, or when a woman married a non-Indigenous man or an Indigenous man from a different community. The Indian Act is still in place today. Although some of the more harmful laws have been changed, it still controls and divides Indigenous people today.

In Inuit Nunangat, the government made it impossible for Inuit to hunt and live off the land.

KEY

TERM

Inuit were forced to rely on the government but it has provided very little and many people do not have access to safe housing, food, and health care. The extreme poverty forced on Inuit has also exposed them to exploitation and violence, including exploitation by the RCMP.

Child Welfare System (1960 – 1980s) 60s SCOOP

Thousands of children were taken away from their family, communities and culture and placed with non-Indigenous families. Growing up away from such important people and practices hurt children physically and mentally.

Today's child welfare system is known as the 'Millennial Scoop' because it continues to take Indigenous children away from their families at very high rates. Often the reason for removing the children is because the family is living in poverty. gender, or age. This can lead to certain groups of people being excluded.

DISCRIMINATION: When groups of people are

treated unfairly because of their race, sexuality,

Children are often placed far away from their communities, and Inuit children are brought to the south where they are completely isolated.

Once again, the system focuses on punishing Indigenous Peoples rather than supporting them. Children who are taken from their families are made to feel like the problem, which can cause a lot of hurt, confusion and anger. This hurt can lead to self-medicating with drugs and/or alcohol.



Rather than talking about how colonialism has hurt Indigenous Peoples, the media frames them as the problem. This continues to feed into biases and negative views that settlers have about Indigenous Peoples. The beauty and strength of Indigenous people is lost in media.

Media

In the past, media like newspapers were used to spread awful ideas about Indigenous Peoples. Men were framed as lazy drunks, women were framed as dirty sexual objects. These ideas were meant to hurt Indigenous Peoples and make the Europeans 'look better'. Still today, the media treats Indigenous people differently than non-Indigenous people. Indigenous people in general are not in the media (I.e., books, movies, newspaper articles etc.). And when they are included, media often focuses on their criminal behaviour, or gives very few details about them.

Healthcare

The healthcare system has a history of treating Indigenous Peoples in a cruel way. For example, in the 1940s & 1950s, they studied children who didn't have enough to eat. Instead of giving them enough food, they only gave some of the starving children vitamins so they could test the results. From the 1800s to today, it has also forced or tricked Indigenous women into sterilization, which means they make sure the women can't have any more children. Today, the healthcare system often does not treat Indigenous people well because workers don't understand how the history of colonialism and trauma affects them.



Because colonial systems in Canada have worked for hundreds of years to assimilate and control Indigenous Peoples, some Indigenous people now believe European values and ways of life are the way they should live. INTERCI one gene passes it can be pa and/or b

For example, some might believe that only men should be in total control, that women should act a certain way (I.e., not speak up against men). Others might hold homophobic and transphobic beliefs. This was never the traditional Indigenous way. These different beliefs can divide Indigenous Peoples and could result in violence against each other.

To this, Grandma Shingoose says:



Also, some communities, particularly in Inuit Nunangat, don't have access to health care and have to travel to the south for their care. Some healthcare workers may also judge people just because they are Indigenous and treat them poorly because of that. For example, there are many cases across Canada where Indigenous Peoples are having a real medical emergency (I.e., stroke, low blood pressure) and are ignored because the healthcare staff just think they are drunk.

INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA: When one generation experiences trauma, and passes it on to next generations. This trauma can be passed on through the parenting style and/or behaviours of the first generation.

"We need to unite as a collective voice, we need to stop the lateral violence amongst ourselves because we are only feeding into the negative that exists because of colonization. We need to build each other up, love one another, and support one another to be courageous and take back our power."

- Grandma Shingoose



From your Sisters

Be kind, be gentle, and learn to love yourself. It's a long road but never forget you deserve love.



Present-Day Experiences for Two-Spirit People

Because present-day systems are based on European values around gender, Two-Spirit people are often misunderstood by people working in these systems. There are very few resources available that take into account both Indigenous identity and gender-diverse identities. This can leave Two-Spirit people feeling unheard and unsupported.

"Colonization not only attacked our spirits, it attacked our identity and sense of belonging that we started to believe and still are to this day affected by the discriminatory attitudes of settlers."



- Survivors Circle Participant

KEY TERM **RACISM:** Taking discriminatory beliefs and turning them into practice that can be seen in laws that protects one group of people over another.



Check-In: Reflect on your experiences using these systems, or being in these systems and consider how racism may have affected your experience.

PART 4 Indigenous Women & Exploitation



sold as slaves in the past and this continues today in the form of human trafficking. There are far too many Indigenous women and girls who are being trafficked, so this section aims to give some information on this issue so it can be prevented.

Indigenous women were bought and

Two-Spirit People & Exploitation

Two-Spirit people may experience a mix of racism, homophobia and/ or transphobia and it is common for them to move a lot to find a place where they feel safe and accepted. A combination of few supports and moving around a lot can make these individuals targets for exploitation.

SYSTEMIC RACISM: Taking

discriminatory beliefs and turning them into practice that can be seen in policies and laws that protect and serve one group of people over another. KEY TERM



HUMAN TRAFFICKING: The

process of recruiting and controlling the movements of a person with the goal to exploit them (often sexually).



Why Indigenous Women and Girls are Targeted

KEY

TERM

Traffickers target Indigenous women and girls because they have often experienced significant trauma that harms their spirits, and because they are often already looked down on by our society. Traffickers take advantage of their trauma and feelings of isolation by offering fake affection and a false sense of control over their lives.

Being taken from family because of the child welfare system; being abused by parents who never got help for their trauma; and/or disconnected from their culture and roots can make it easier for people to recruit Indigenous women and girls because these experiences harm and isolate individuals.

Recruiters know this and will exploit those who are already hurting.

Being Groomed

Many women and girls don't even realize they are being groomed. It might not be obvious when it's happening, but this is part of the trap. Groomers can be acquaintances, but they can also be friends, family members and boyfriends. The grooming process can take place over a long period of time, or it can happen fast.

Groomers can target women and girls at key points in their lives; when they are moving or are new to a place and don't know many people, when they are in their early teens, when they are exploring their first relationship, and/or when they are experiencing some kind of challenge, like poverty, are taken into or moved in the child welfare system, or when they have experienced some kind of loss.

The goal of grooming is to build trust. Once groomers have gained their trust, women/girls become attached to them.

SOME WAYS GROOMING CAN HAPPEN TO GAIN THE TRUST OF WOMEN AND GIRLS INCLUDES:



Being Trafficked

IT IS EASY TO BECOME CAUGHT IN A CYCLE OF TRAFFICKING/EXPLOITATION BEFORE YOU KNOW IT BECAUSE:

You trust the person asking you to do things you feel might be wrong

You are being given items that you need (i.e., food, money, clothes, shelter etc.) but always for a cost

You like feeling needed and cared for

7

You want nice things

You are being given drugs to sustain addictions, with expectations You grow up seeing family or friends doing it, so it seems normal

You may like the feeling of the 'fast life' and making money quickly, though you can't keep most of it

KEY TERM **GROOMING:** The process where a person gains the trust of someone, so they can later exploit that person.

SOME TELL-TALE SIGNS YOU MIGHT BE BEING TRAFFICKED, CONTROLLED AND/OR EXPLOITED INCLUDE:

You are never alone or feel like you are being watched or monitored all the time

You have to keep in constant contact with someone who may give you multiple phones to do this

You are being offered drugs, housing, food, clothing, money or other gifts in exchange for sex or companionship

> You don't ever feel safe

You have to report your actions to someone and they are always asking you where you've been and who you've been talking to

> You don't have any privacy

There's someone you care about and think cares about you but everything they do for you has a price "We see you. It's scary, but it's worth it."

- Survivors Circle Participant

SOME TELL-TALE SIGNS SOMEONE YOU KNOW MIGHT BE BEING TRAFFICKED, CONTROLLED AND/OR EXPLOITED INCLUDE:

> A loved one often goes missing

They have new friends or boyfriends but don't give any details about who they are

They seem to have new things but you're not sure how they paid for them

They say that "someone is taking care of them" or they are "owned" by someone

KEY TERM

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: When a person gains something from the sexual acts of a person they have a position of power over.

Exiting

Exiting means escaping a trafficker or leaving behind the lifestyle of exploitation. Everyone will have a different support that helps them exit. It's your journey and it will need to start with you. Some supports that may be helpful include, but aren't limited to:



Understanding how to recover (i.e., learn how to celebrate small steps and know that relapse is a normal part of recovering)

Addiction programs and treatment that use Indigenous knowledge

Re-connecting with the land

Focusing on healing using Indigenous teachings

Connecting with an Elder

nee

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when that this experience was not your fault, or something \mathbf{T}_{to} be ashamed for. You do what you need to do to survive, and nobody can blame you for that.

the ones to be exploitation, is is where we egacy of coloniz art shifting this s d look outward we are part of a m plan that was e us out. are still k together learnin

one another to stop time cycle of violence from continuing for our women."

- Survivors Circle Participant

For centuries, Indigenous women have been targeted and removed from their place in communities. Messages that you are not worthy enough or don't deserve protection are so common, you may start to believe it. These are tools of colonization. They needed to disconnect Indigenous women from their spirit so they could control them. You can break this cycle, and find your spirit again. You can rise up and remember what it means to be a strong, proud Indigenous woman.



- Survivors Circle Participant



Tender Reminder

You are valuable, and you are loved. You deserve to live a life free from violence.



Check-In: If you had to choose one area to have help to exit, what would it be? (i.e., housing, finances, childcare etc.)

IF YOU SUSPECT YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW MIGHT **BE BEING TRAFFICKED, CONTROLLED AND/OR EXPLOITED, HERE ARE SOME STEPS YOU CAN TAKE:**

- Call the Canadian Human 0 **Trafficking Hotline** (1-833-900-1010)
- 0 Find a support service who can offer you a safe space
- Connect with survivors who can help you



Next Steps

Understanding what it means to be a colonized person is an important first step in moving forward. The reality is that you are living in a country that benefits from the violence against and removal of Indigenous Peoples.

THROUGH THIS HEALING AND LEARNING, YOU CAN DO GREAT THINGS.

It's important to remember that healing is a journey. It's also normal to have some setbacks as you're healing. Sometimes it may feel too hard, that you don't have the power to change things, and/or you may slide back to unhealthy habits. If you fall, be sure to have supports to help you back up. There will always be someone willing to support you. Remember you are powerful, and you can do this.



From your Sisters

You are worth it. There is help

out there and people who care.

Check-In: What will be

the first step on your

SOME FIRST STEPS IN CHALLENGING COLONIAL VIOLENCE MAY BE:

- A journey of healing from past and present trauma. Some examples of healing include:
 - Reclaiming your identity as an Indigenous person
 - Participating in Indigenous healing practices and/or ceremonies
 - Learning about Indigenous spirituality
 - Learning happiness comes from inside you
 - Learning to live without addictions
 - Learning to live a stable life
 - Removing yourself from people or places that might draw you back in to unhealthy ways of living
 - Learning to put yourself first
 - Letting go of judgement or shame you may feel towards yourself
 - Opening your heart to give and receive love

- Addressing negative views around Indigenous Peoples and understanding that is not who you are. It is easy to think Indigenous Peoples are less valuable because that is the message sent by colonial systems in the past and present. Challenging these messages by valuing yourself and others as Indigenous Peoples can help to lift each other up so we can work together.
- Working to build a strong positive Indigenous identity and being a proud Indigenous person is a way to take back your power.



PART 6 Planting Seeds of Hope

Colonial systems have worked for hundreds of years to erase and silence Indigenous Peoples. It's time to resist these systems by reclaiming our Indigenous identities and finding our voices.

Reclaiming Identity

The journey of reclaiming your identity as a strong Indigenous person will look different for everyone, but some steps in this process might include:

Re-learning who you are as an Indigenous woman and/or 2SLGBTQQIA+ person and learning to accept this identity

Not allowing your past to define who you are today

Participating in traditional ceremonies. Connecting with the land and medicines

Connecting with Elders and spirituality

Letting go of negative thoughts and feelings

Never apologizing for who you are, or who you were

Finding what your truest self is and being proud of that

Learning to love yourself *always*

Learning about your family history and drawing on the strength of your ancestors

Breaking the cycle and teaching the next generation that they are loved

Reclaiming Voices

Reclaiming identities as strong Indigenous Peoples is a powerful start to reclaiming our power. As Indigenous Peoples continue to come together to resist and raise up each other's voices, change will come.

If you are interested in joining communities making change, don't be shy. You are always welcome, and you belong.

- Idle no More
- Programs run by Indigenous women across the country
- Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples
- Marches for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

"We need to build each other up, love one another, and support one another to be courageous and take back our power."

NO MORE

STOLEN

SISTERS

Idle

NO

More

- Grandma Shingoose

"The eighth fire is going to burn, and our women are reclaiming our space, and that sometimes means we are going to have a big mouth. It might get us in trouble but [we have] had enough of not being able to speak our truth."

- Grandma Shingoose



Reclaim your Power: You are a warrior and you have the power to make a difference.

Local Resources:

WHAT TYPE OF SUPPORT	WHERE	WHEN

This resource was produced by the **Native Women's Association of Canada** in partnership with the <u>Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre</u>. We would like to thank <u>Tungasuvvingat Inuit</u> for their support in providing insight on Inuit perspectives.



Native Women's Association of Canada L'Association des femmes autochtones du Canada



MA MAWI WI CHI ITATA CENTRE We all work together to help one another.



Tungasuvvingat Inuit