

Mi'kmaq people have been living in Mi'kmaki for over 10,000 years.

Mi'kmaki is made up of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and large parts of New Brunswick, the Gaspé Peninsula, Newfoundland and into the American state of Maine.

Pre-Contact, Mi'kmaq people had their own territories, governance structures, economies, laws and political systems in which women, girls and Two-Spirit people played integral roles in the functioning of the society, community and family. Much of the role of women, girls and Two-Spirit people has been erased from history.

Indigenous people in Canada — especially women, girls and Two-Spirit people — face high rates of sexual violence. Colonialism, cultural genocide, intergenerational trauma, and racism, are some of the root causes that contribute to this lived reality.

Sexist and racist ideas about Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people send the harmful message that people won't notice or react quickly, or at all, if they are subjected to violence or go missing. These attitudes contribute to the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada. Research shows that most cases are not reported to police or officials.

The high rates of sexual violence and abuse of children in residential schools have only been discovered as the children, now Elders, found a safe forum to be together and share through the Truth and Reconciliation process. Many were only able to tell their stories in their dying years.

Currently, many mainstream approaches to addressing sexual violence are not culturally relevant or safe for Indigenous people.

Indigenous communities continue to work together to create meaningful and much needed community-based programs. Programs that are rooted in Indigenous values, cultures and traditions.

A Note on Language

Throughout this training we use the term Indigenous to refer to all first peoples of Turtle Island (North America). The term Indigenous includes both status and non-status people. The words used to describe the first peoples of this land have evolved over the years. It is important, however, to remember that terms such as Aboriginal and Indigenous have been imposed on First Nations people.

Indigenous Advisory Group

This module was developed with the guidance, passion and expertise of a Mi'kmaq Advisory Committee that emerged from a Community Engagement Gathering held in Truro, Nova Scotia in April 2016. We are grateful to the following people who have been involved in the Committee: Karen Bernard, Cheryl Copage-Gehue, Walter Denny, Juliana Julian, Audrey Heidi Marshall, Paula Marshall, Wilma Simon, Corinna Smiley, Bridget Smith, and Inkin Young.

Residential School survivors in crisis are encouraged to call the 24-hour Residential School Crisis Line at 1-866-925-4419.

Mi'kmaq historical context

Pre European contact, the Mi'kmaq or L'nu (meaning "the people"), had their own territories, governance structures, economies, laws and political systems. According to Mi'kmaw historian Daniel Paul, The Mi'kmaq were nomadic, following the food supply based on the season, and did some farming. Mi'kmaw life was, and continues to be, intrinsically linked to the land.

"Indigenous peoples had systems that were complete unto themselves and met their needs. Those systems were dynamic; they changed over time and were capable of continued change."
Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The family unit, which consisted of extended family, was central to the social and political structure of Mi'kmaw communities. Men, women and Two-Spirit people all made valued contributions.

Current context

There are currently 13 Mi'kmaw communities, and over 16,000 Mi'kmaw people, throughout Nova Scotia. Mi'kmaw people have lived through and overcome a wide variety of challenges and traumas.

Mi'kmaq cultural values

"Cultural values inform all aspects of life and interactions. Sometimes these values are easily identifiable, other times they are more difficult to discern. The values presented here are not all encompassing, but they represent some of the primary values that guide many Mi'kmaw decisions and practice. Rather than seeing these values as standards, it would be more appropriate to understand them as guiding practice and interactions among people—they are embedded in our stories and oral traditions and passed on from generation to generation."
Mi'kmawe'l Tan Teli-kina'muemk/Teaching About the Mi'kmaq, The Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre

The Mi'kmaq have been in Mi'kma'ki for more than 13,000 years or more than 665 generations.



Image courtesy of Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre

"Blue generations = generations since European contact. Yellow generations = the generations (the current generation of children) can relate to directly in their families."

Throughout, Mi'kmaw people, and Indigenous people as a whole, have demonstrated immense personal and cultural resilience.



Image courtesy of Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre

The seven sacred teachings

“The traditional concepts of respect and sharing that form the foundation of the Indigenous way of all life are built around the seven sacred teachings. Each teaching honours one of the basic qualities that are necessary for a full and healthy life. Each law is represented by an animal to show the connection between the animal world, the environment, and people.”

Teachings of the Seven Sacred/Seven Grandfathers,
Ontario Native Literacy Coalition

This explanation of the Seven Sacred, or Grandfather, Teachings is from the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC).

1. To cherish knowledge is to know **wisdom**
2. To know **love** is to know peace
3. To honour all of creation is to have **respect**
4. **Bravery** is to face the foe with integrity
5. **Honesty** in facing a situation is to be brave
6. **Humility** is to know yourself as a sacred part of Creation
7. **Truth** is to know all of these things

Timeline of colonization, cultural genocide, and indigenous resilience

This timeline outlines a small part of history, focusing on elements of colonization and cultural genocide that have left Indigenous people vulnerable to abuse, including sexual violence. It also features some of the ways in which Indigenous people have resisted colonization, genocide, racism, and gendered violence.

Mi’kmaq pre-contact

According to Daniel Paul, pre European contact “the food supply was bountiful, dependable and extremely healthy, and materials needed to construct snug wigwams and make clothing suited to the changing seasons were readily available. They were not wanting.”

Pre contact the Mi’kmaq had developed a culture founded on: “the supremacy of the Great Spirit, respect for Mother Earth, and People Power.” (Daniel Paul) The Mi’kmaq spoke, and many continue to speak, Mi’kmaq a non-gender specific language.

The Mi’kmaq’s traditional territory included seven districts. They made decisions using a democratic, consensus based model. Elders were held in the highest regard and involved in all major decisions.

1400s–1600s

Colonizers Arrive / Doctrine of Discovery

The Vatican gave colonizers permission, which was not theirs to give, to claim land populated by non-Christians and overthrow and convert Indigenous people. Lands that had been inhabited by Indigenous people for thousands of years were considered empty as Indigenous people “occupied, rather than owned, the land”. (*Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*)

Colonizers dehumanized Indigenous people, referring to them as heathens and savages.

Thinking of a person or a group of people as less than human leads to treating them inhumanely.

1700s

Focused Efforts to Exterminate Indigenous People

Colonization was – and is – a violent act. According to Daniel Paul, locally it included “bounties for human scalps, including women and children, out and out massacres, starvation and germ warfare.”

Peace and Friendship Treaties

Throughout the 1700's several Peace and Friendship Treaties were negotiated between the Mi'kmaq (and the Maliseet and Passamaquoddy) and the British crown. These are referred to as the Covenant Chain of Treaties.

"They were treaties entered into with the intent to establish 'peace and friendship'—diplomatic measures desired by the British to secure Mi'kmaw neutrality in the wars with France. The treaties promised peaceful interaction in return for explicitly protecting Mi'kmaw hunting, fishing, and trapping practices.

Land was never ceded in Mi'kmaw treaties."

*Mi'kmawe'l Tan Teli-kina'muemk/
Teaching About the Mi'kmaq*

Unfortunately, successive colonial governments did not honour, and continue to ignore, their treaty obligations and the treaty rights of the Mi'kmaq.

Late 1800s – early 1900s

British North America Act (BNA)

The BNA (1867) gave the newly established federal government exclusive control over Indigenous people and lands reserved for them.

Severing the relationship between Indigenous people and the land led to the loss of their traditional way of life, economies, and food sources, resulting in high rates of poverty.

Indian Act

The Indian Act (1876) attempted to release the government of its legal and financial obligations to Indigenous people and gain control over their territories and resources. The Act defined who is and who isn't "Indian", excluding many people that Indigenous communities considered members.

Gender discrimination in the act

Under the Act a woman lost her status if she married a non-status man. This meant she would lose "treaty benefits, health benefits, the right to live on her reserve, the right to inherit her family property,

and even the right to be buried on the reserve with her ancestors" (Indigenous Foundations, University of British Columbia). It often forced Indigenous women to relocate to urban centres where they lived in poverty, in substandard housing, without access to long-standing supports or the ability to connect to the land, traditions, and ceremonies. It also negatively impacted many Indigenous women's sense of identity and belonging.

Women were also not allowed to vote or run in band council elections.

These were clear attempts to disempower Indigenous women, and further sever their relationship with the land.

Residential Schools

The residential school system is a prime example of cultural genocide. Over 150 years, more than 150,000 Indigenous children were taken from their families and communities and sent to residential schools. Students were prohibited from speaking their language and practicing traditions. Their long hair was cut, personal possessions taken, and names replaced by a Christian name or number. Boys and girls were not permitted to associate, separating siblings, family, and friends.

If a student was caught breaking a rule they were punished with violence. Thousands of students were psychologically, physically, and sexually abused by school officials.

Continued cultural genocide

Later versions of the Indian Act allowed the government to force parents to send their children to residential schools, outlawed cultural and spiritual practices, overrode decisions made by bands, and got rid of Chiefs and council members.

Resistance to residential schools

Indigenous people resisted residential schools in a variety of ways including refusing to enroll students or to return children who ran away, and not sending them back after the summer break. Parents also pressured the government to increase funding and improve conditions. Others were not aware of the terrible conditions and abuse.

These schools separated Indigenous people from their languages and ability to communicate with their families; oral histories; culture, values and traditions; connections to their community; and familial bonds. Indigenous women were not able to fulfill their roles as nurturers, caregivers and teachers, significantly impacting their role in the family and community.

1940s–1960s

Centralization

In the mid 1900's the federal government began moving all Mi'kmaw people to Eskasoni and Sipekne'katik. Efforts to confine Mi'kmaw people to specific geographic locals began in the late 1700's and the Mi'kmaw community at Kings Road was moved to Membertou in the early 1900's.

Centralization was an attempt to: isolate the Mi'kmaq, further sever their relationship with the land, move them away from white communities and economic centres, and cut government costs.

The government promised Mi'kmaw people better housing, health care, education, and employment as incentive. They arrived in their new communities to find half-built homes, overcrowding, and only short-term employment. Many were no longer able to hunt or fish, and much of the land was not adequate for farming.

People who wanted to return to their home communities were threatened with loss of status and Indian Agents destroyed many Mi'kmaw homes after they were relocated. (History of Eskasoni, Eskasoni.ca)

Some families refused to move and remain in those communities today.

Sixties scoop

Over 20,000 Indigenous children were removed from their families and communities by Child Protective Services starting in the 1960s. Children were often placed in non-Indigenous foster homes or adopted by non-Indigenous families. This was yet another attempt to "take the Indian out of the child".

Many children were bounced from one foster home to another and some suffered emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse. Some grew up not knowing they were Indigenous.

Even children with well-meaning, loving foster or adoptive families, grew up disconnected from their culture, community, heritage, traditions, spirituality, and language.

An extension of the residential schools, it interrupted family bonds and denied another generation of Indigenous youth role models and crucial parenting and life skills.

In February of 2017 an Ontario Superior Court judge found that the federal government failed to prevent children who were taken during the Sixties Scoop from losing their Indigenous identity. The ruling is a result of a Class Action lawsuit launched eight years previous.

Indigenous communities have historically relied on kinship networks and customary adoptions when parents were unable to raise their children. Taking children from their families and communities undermines the traditional role of family and kinship networks and was and is traumatizing for many.

White paper and opposition

The Trudeau Liberal government's *White Paper on Indian Policy* (1969) sought to eliminate reserves, the Indian Act, and any recognition of individual 'Indian status' or collective Indigenous rights. The paper garnered "forceful opposition from Aboriginal leaders across the country and sparked a new era of Indigenous political organizing in Canada." (UBC Indigenous Foundations) A counter document published by the Indian Association of Alberta, known as the "Red Paper", was adopted as the national Indigenous response.

Major Indigenous organizations, most notably the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), gained political recognition and momentum in the wake of the proposed White Paper.

Shubenacadie residential school closes

Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, the only residential school in the Maritime provinces, operated from 1927 to 1967. Shubenacadie survivor Isabelle Knockwood interviewed 42 fellow survivors for her book *Out of the Depths*.

1970s–1980s

Indigenous women push for changes to Indian Act

In the mid 1900's several high profile protests and court cases challenged the section of the Indian Act under which a woman lost her status if she married a non-status man (12-1-b).

Mary Two-Axe Earley, of the Mohawk Nation, started speaking out against section 12-1-b as early as the 1950s. Two-Axe Earley, who lost her status, created the Equal Rights for Native Women association in 1968, the same year she made a submission to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

In the early 1970's Jeannette Corbiere Lavell of the Wikwemikong Nation and Yvonne Bédard of the Iroquois Nation argued before the Supreme Court that their rights under the Canadian Bill of Rights had been violated when they lost their status. Though the Court did not rule in their favour their cases were pivotal in the fight against gender discrimination in the Act.

In the late 1970's Sandra Lovelace Nicholas, a Maliseet woman from New Brunswick's Tobique Nation, took a similar appeal to the United Nations human rights committee, which she won in 1981. Lovelace Nicholas' case built on several years of activism by the Tobique Women's Group, including a 110-mile walk and protest on Parliament Hill in 1979. The book *Enough is Enough: Aboriginal Women Speak Out* tells the story of the Tobique Women's Group in their own words.

Amendments to the Indian Act

Bill C-31 (1985) amended the Indian Act so that women who married men without status would not lose theirs. Two-Axe Earley was the first to have her status restored.

Unfortunately, First Nations Bands were not given additional government funding, and women and children whose status was reinstated didn't have access to housing and essential services.

Indigenous Women's Advocacy Organizations

Both the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association (NSWA) were founded in the early 1970's. Corbiere Lavell served as President of NWAC.

1990s–present

Last State Run Residential School Closes (1996)

Royal commission report and activism

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) issued its final report (1996). The report's 440 recommendations called for sweeping changes to the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and governments. Indigenous communities and organizations pressed for action on the recommendations.

The current child welfare/protection system

There continues to be a disproportionate number of Indigenous children in care and many are still placed in non-Indigenous homes. There are currently more Indigenous children in care than at the peak of the residential school era. In 2016 the federal Human Rights Tribunal ruled that the federal government discriminates against First Nations children by providing less funding, and services, to child welfare/protection services on reserves. The ruling was the result of a 2007 complaint filed by the First Nations and Family Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) began in 2007. It is part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, which grew out of a class action lawsuit against the Canadian government. Nora Bernard, a Mi'kmaq woman and former Shubenacadie Indian Residential School student, launched the first class action lawsuit for compensation for residential school survivors.

The TRC has two goals: 1) Document the experiences of survivors, families, and communities affected by Indian Residential Schools. 2) Teach all Canadians about what happened in Indian Residential Schools.

Idle no more

In 2012 Idle No More's founders led a series of teach-ins that grew into a nationwide, mass protest movement focused on Indigenous rights and respect for treaties. It quickly became one of the largest Indigenous mass movements in Canadian history – sparking hundreds of events and protests. Locally and nation-wide this movement was largely led by Indigenous women.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)

Thousands of Indigenous women have gone missing or been murdered in this country in recent decades. Police have recorded 1,800 missing or murdered women. Estimates by families, Indigenous groups, and the federal government are much higher.

Racism, poverty, and sexism leave Indigenous women vulnerable to violence, and have led to slow and inadequate police investigations when an Indigenous woman goes missing.

Sisters in Spirit and the National Inquiry into MMIWG

Families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and various organizations have worked relentlessly to tell the stories of their loved ones and draw attention to this crisis.

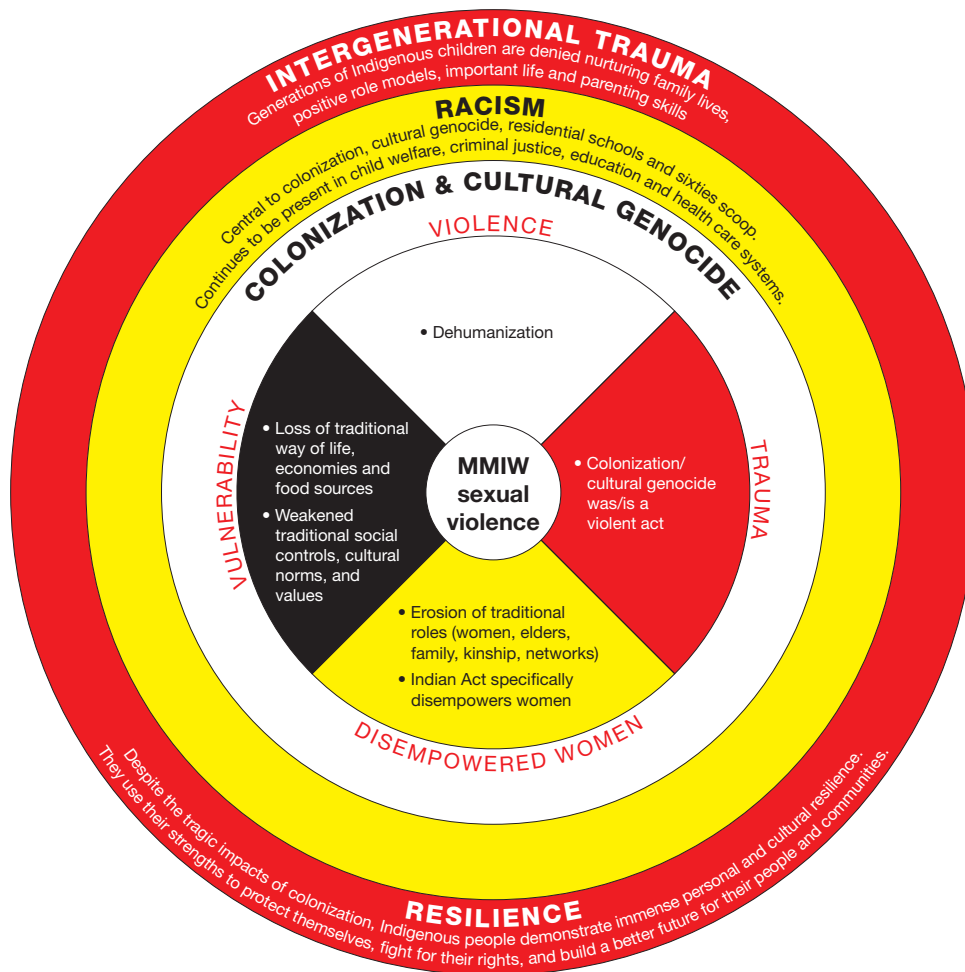
In 2016, responding to the mounting pressure, the federal government launched the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Indigenous women continue to be dehumanized and hypersexualized, reducing a population of diverse and multifaceted women to sex objects. Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people deserve to be respected, valued, loved and celebrated.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP)

The UNDRIP was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007 but not endorsed by Canada until 2016.

Understanding the root causes of sexual violence



Inner circle

Sexual violence

“For many years government policy has left many Indigenous families and communities broken apart and impoverished therefore resulting in the vulnerability of many Indigenous women and girls to exploitation and attack.”

Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada, Amnesty International

Indigenous people, and specifically women and girls, face disproportionately high rates violence, including sexual violence. Indigenous women are three times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be the victim/survivor of violent crime.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)

“Acts of violence against Indigenous women and girls may be motivated by racism, or may be carried out in the expectation that society’s indifference to the welfare and safety of these women will allow the perpetrators to escape justice.”

Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada, Amnesty International

Thousands of Indigenous women have gone missing or been murdered in this country, including in Nova Scotia, in the last few decades. Police have recorded 1, 800 missing or murdered women and girls. Estimates by families, Indigenous groups, and the federal government are much higher.

Second circle

Colonization and Cultural Genocide

It is important to look at this violence in the context of colonialism, cultural genocide, racism, and inter-generational trauma, which have left Indigenous people – women, girls and Two-Spirit people specifically – vulnerable to abuse, including sexual violence

Colonization brought with it many values and belief systems, followed by policies and laws, that were in opposition to Indigenous values, cultural norms, and

social controls (expectations regarding behaviors enforced by the group). Pre-contact, Mi’kmaw people prevented and dealt with violence by utilizing these controls, including public shaming.

Colonization and cultural genocide continue today.

Some of the impacts of colonization and cultural genocide include:

<p>Dehumanization (thinking of a person or group as less than human)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treating Indigenous people inhumanely/violence against Indigenous people. • Treating an entire population of women as sex objects, making them vulnerable to sexual violence. • Inadequate police investigation if an Indigenous woman is subjected to violence and/or goes missing. 	<p>Robbing people of their traditional way of life, spirituality, economies, and food sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of control of natural resources. • High rates of poverty. • Lack of housing options/ poor living conditions, on and off reserve. • Poor health due to lack of traditional foods. • Lack of traditional coping mechanisms/supports/ ways of healing.
<p>Imposing European gender roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undermined traditional division of responsibilities/ labour, introduced gendered hierarchy. • Imposed sexist ideas about women. • Targeted women (often via children) in attempt to destroy culture. • Undermined Two-Spirit identity and their role in communities. 	<p>Disrupting the roles, values, and traditions of families and communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robbed women of traditional roles, such as maintaining social controls and passing down language. • Undermined traditional roles of family and kinship networks. • Broke up families and denied Indigenous children cultural identity. • Imposed child protection, disproportionate rate of Indigenous children in care, insufficient funding for on-reserve services. • Negatively impacted mental health, and led to trauma, alcohol and drug abuse, and a high number of youth suicides.

Third circle

Racism

“The legacy of these policies is a society where one social group has disproportionate access to power and resources in society, leading to avoidable and unfair inequalities between these groups – or systemic racism against Indigenous peoples. This imbalance of power and resources is maintained through inequitable treatment under the law and unfair policies, rules, and regulations.”

Health and Health Care Implications of Systemic Racism on Indigenous Peoples in Canada

Racism is linked to dehumanization and is central to colonization, cultural genocide, residential schools, the 60's scoop, disproportionate numbers of children in care, and high rates of incarceration.

Fourth circle

Intergenerational Trauma

Intergenerational trauma is widespread in Indigenous communities and stems from traumatic experiences such as residential schools, the 60's scoop, the mass incarceration of Indigenous people, or being a surviving family member of a missing or murdered woman or girl. Intergenerational trauma can also result from a constant feeling of loss or grief.

Many Indigenous trauma survivors did not, or have not, had the opportunity to address their trauma. For example, residential school students were denied access to families, Elders, and communities who could have helped them to deal with the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual impacts of trauma.

These traumatic events impacted entire generations, including generations of Elders who would traditionally provide cultural and spiritual support and guidance. Additionally, many residential school and 60's scoop survivors weren't able to talk about their experiences until recently.

Fifth circle

Resilience

“Despite the many layers of trauma experienced by Aboriginal peoples throughout history and into today, Aboriginal women, men, their families and communities, continue to live and love, work, teach, protect, provide, hope, create and dream. It is a legacy of strength and resilience, one more powerful than colonialism.”

What Their Stories Tell Us: Research findings from the Sisters In Spirit initiative,
Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)

Culture and the pathway to healing

“Wellness is the belief in one's connection to language, land, beings of creation and ancestry, supported by a caring family, community, service providers and environment.”

Thunderbird Partnership Foundation

For many Indigenous people the physical, spiritual, mental, cultural, emotional and social wellbeing are necessary for healing and achieving balance within oneself.

Elders and other kinship networks are the cornerstone of the contemporary Mi'kmaq community. Family is central to providing both cultural and personal support.

Talking to an Elder, family member, friend, traditional healer, health or mental health professional can help a person who has survived sexual violence.

When supporting an Indigenous person who has survived sexual violence it is important to consider traditional cultural and spiritual practices and supports such as:

- **The medicine wheel:**

The medicine wheel represents the Four Directions, each of which are assigned a colour: white, yellow, red, or black. The medicine wheel also encompasses the four aspects of human personality, the four seasons, and the four stages of life. The centre of the wheel represents the sacred mystery. The medicine wheel forms the basis for many teachings.

- **Elders:**

An Elder is someone chosen by a First Nations community to be “the keeper and teacher of its oral tradition and knowledge”(Mi’kmaw Confederacy of PEI). Elders can also provide teachings, cultural supports, and healing to victims/survivors of sexual violence as well as people supporting a victim/survivor.

- **The seven sacred teachings:**

- Wisdom
- Love
- Respect
- Bravery
- Honesty
- Humility
- Truth

- **Smudge ceremonies:**

Smudging is a cleansing ceremony that involves burning sacred medicine such as sage and sweetgrass.

- **Sweat lodges:**

A sweat is a ceremony centred on spiritual cleansing. The lodge is designed to provide a safe, sacred place where the participants can concentrate on the spirits that are invited to the ceremony. Stones, known as the “grandfathers” are heated in the fire, placed at the centre of the dome-shaped lodge, and then doused with water, creating steam. Earth, air, fire and water are all present in the lodge.

- **Talking circles:**

A non-judgmental space that allows participants to share their thoughts and feelings and solve problems. There are talking circles for sharing, for healing, and for mediation.

- **Sacred pipe:**

The Sacred Pipe is used in prayer by an individual (and is not to be shared) or by a pipe carrier for a group of people.

- **Traditional Medicine bundles:**

A small pouch containing medicines and other objects that provide protection to the wearer. Generally worn around the neck and concealed.

- **Fasting:**

Going without food and water in order to cleanse, seek guidance, or as part of a ceremony, for example.

Mi’kmaw people of all ages are reclaiming their traditional spiritual and cultural practices, which were prohibited by colonial law, policy, and specifically residential schools. Many Mi’kmaw people are also reclaiming the Mi’kmaw language, which can be an empowering and healing experience.

Check out the following link for a video in which Stephen Augustine and Ashlee Cunsolo Willox of Unama’ki College teach Mi’kmaw words that are sung in the Honour Song: <https://vimeo.com/161964054>

Indigenous community initiatives against sexual violence

Indigenous people continue to work to break the cycle of violence, rebuild relationships, educate family and community members about sexual violence, encourage community members to speak out, and incorporate traditional practices and strength based approaches into their health care and community programming.

Here are several important Mi'kmaq initiatives that work to prevent and respond to sexual violence.

Paqtnkek mi'kmaw nation responding to and preventing sexual violence project

The Paqtnkek Project was created to respond to the lack of culturally relevant, revitalizing and safe approaches to addressing sexualized violence in their community.

The Paqtnkek Health Centre and the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association worked together to develop Mi'kmaq-specific and community-led initiatives to respond to and prevent sexualized violence. The program has included community healing circles; storytelling, art, and music nights; public education; a community supporters team; and cultural competency training for non-community service providers.

The project has also started a male youth group, the Paqtnkek Warriors Program, and one for Two-Spirit community members.

A toolkit has also been developed as a guide for other communities who want to do similar work.

Jane Paul Mi'kmaq Women's Resource Centre, Sydney

In the fall of 2015, the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association responded to the glaring gap in supports for Indigenous women in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) and created the Jane Paul Mi'kmaq Women's Resource Centre. The Centre provides a safe environment for at-risk Indigenous women in the CBRM and services such as advocacy, counselling, cultural and spiritual teachings, and sexual and mental health information. The Centre also offers programs focused on skills development and building collective capacity.

The Centre incorporates traditional teachings and ceremonies, guided by the seven sacred teachings.

Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Crisis and Referral Center

The Mi'kmaw Crisis and Referral Phone Line is available toll free 24/7 to Mi'kmaw people across the province. The Center also provides online support through the Eskasoni Crisis Worker Facebook account. The line was created in 2009 in response to a series of suicides and drug related deaths and is a service of Eskasoni Mental Health.

BECOMING AN ALLY WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE



10 Things you can do to work towards
being an Ally with Indigenous People

Recognize your own privileges

Listen more than you speak

Learn about treaties

<http://www.mediacoop.ca/blog/dru/15600>

Educate yourself
constantly (especially
about historical and
ongoing colonization
and cultural
genocide)

Question
and resist
stereotypes

Expand
opportunities for
Indigenous people
to speak for
themselves

Defer to Indigenous
leadership, decision-making
and priorities

When criticized, listen, apologize, and
act differently going forward

Read and promote the calls to action of the
Truth and Reconciliation Commission

<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3>

Celebrate National Aboriginal Day - June 21st
Celebrate Treaty Day - October 1st

breakthesilenceNS.ca

Acknowledgments

This handout was created as part of Nova Scotia's Sexual Violence Strategy. It is one of the many components of the training course, *Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence: A Nova Scotia Resource*.

A Provincial Committee made up of community members from across Nova Scotia dedicated nearly 2 years of time, energy and expertise to develop this important resource. It would not exist without their unwavering dedication and passion.

This specific module was developed with the guidance, passion and expertise of a Mi'kmaq Advisory Committee that emerged from a Community Engagement Gathering held in

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Amnesty International

Stolen Sisters

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Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada: A Summary of Amnesty International's Concerns and Call to Action, Amnesty International

https://www.amnesty.ca/sites/amnesty/files/iwfa_submission_amnesty_international_february_2014_-_final.pdf

Assembly of First Nations

A National Action Plan to End Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls

http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/13-07-10_afn_national_action_plan_to_end_violence_en.pdf

Assembly of First Nations Submission in Support of the 4th National Aboriginal Women's Summit

http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/end_violence/afn_wc_nawsivsubmission.pdf

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

Judge rules in favour of Indigenous survivors of Sixties Scoop

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/60s-scoop-ruling-aboriginal-1.3981771>

Betrayed, humiliated Val-d'Or women speak out after no charges against police accused of abuse

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/val-d-or-women-speak-out-abuse-1.3856422>

Canada discriminates against children on reserves, tribunal rules

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/canada-discriminates-against-children-on-reserves-tribunal-rules-1.3419480>

First Nations children still taken from parents

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/first-nations-children-still-taken-from-parents-1.1065255>

Cape Breton resource centre helps aboriginal women at risk

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/cape-breton-aboriginal-sex-trade-resource-centre-1.3503861>

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