

## **A Plain Language Guide to Truth and Reconciliation**

Inclusion Saskatchewan's ICAN members, staff, and community members created this guide. Together, we listened and learned about Truth and Reconciliation. We found that there is a lot of information about Truth and Reconciliation, but we could not find anything written in plain language.

We will keep talking about how to be a good ally, or friend, to Indigenous people, and we want to create other resources. If you have ideas, or you want to partner with us, please email [info@inclusionsk.com](mailto:info@inclusionsk.com), or call (306)955-3344.

### **Content Warning:**

**This guide talks briefly about how children were harmed at Residential Schools. We know that this information is upsetting, and we feel it is important to talk about what happened so that we can fully participate in Truth and Reconciliation. As one self-advocate shared, *"I don't want to know this, but I have to know this so I can understand it."***

If you are Indigenous and you are looking for support, you may want to call the following:

- First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line: 1-855-242-3310
- Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program: 1-866-250-1529
- You can call our office @ (306)955-3344 and we can help you explore other options.

## **What does Truth and Reconciliation mean?**

*Reconciliation* means that a relationship needs to be restored or healed. For relationships to improve, we must first know the *truth* of why and how people got hurt.

There is a new national holiday called *National Day for Truth and Reconciliation* on September 30<sup>th</sup>. The day honours Survivors of Residential Schools, as well as their families and communities.

## **Why do we need reconciliation?**

We need to talk about how non-Indigenous people have harmed Indigenous people in the past, and that this is *still* happening in our country. Indigenous people were the first people living in Canada and they were not treated with respect. This lack of respect has happened for hundreds of years, and it continues to happen.

We must learn from the past and try to do better for future generations. We are only beginning to learn the truth about what has happened to Indigenous people in Canada, and we need to keep learning. We need to honour Indigenous people and their contributions.

## **What are Residential Schools?**

Indigenous children were taken from their families and homes and were put in Residential Schools. They were punished for using their own language, they were forced to cut their hair, and they could not talk about, or practice, their culture. Children were abused, some went missing, or died, and it is very sad that so many children were treated this way.

## **Where is reconciliation happening?**

Reconciliation is happening all around us.

## **Who should participate?**

Everyone should participate. It is important that our government, and our systems, like healthcare, education, justice, and social services, are supporting Truth and Reconciliation.

## **When did this begin?**

From 2008 to 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission started to document and understand how Residential Schools harmed Indigenous people. They listened to thousands of witnesses and their families about the negative impacts of Residential Schools. They wrote a report that included 94 Calls to Action.

### **What are the 94 Calls to Action?**

The *94 Calls to Action* are recommendations to support all Canadians to understand how we can move forward with more respect for Indigenous peoples. They are a guide for us to learn and make better decisions that will benefit all people in our communities.

### **What is Orange Shirt Day?**

Both the *National Day for Truth and Reconciliation* and *Orange Shirt Day* take place on September 30<sup>th</sup>.

*Orange Shirt Day* is an Indigenous-led movement to talk about how “Every Child Matters”. The orange shirt is a symbol, or sign, of the loss of culture, freedom, and ability to feel safe. People wear orange to honour the thousands of Survivors of residential schools in Canada.

### **What if I don’t have an orange shirt?**

It’s okay if you don’t have an orange shirt. Some people can’t afford to buy an orange shirt, but they can still be a good ally, or friend.

There are a lot of people and places selling orange shirts, but you should buy from businesses that support Indigenous-led initiatives. You should also remember to credit, or name, Indigenous artists when you share their art.

### **How can I make a difference?**

- Listen, remember, and honour Residential School Survivors
- Learn about issues that are important to Indigenous, Métis, and Inuit communities
- Read the 94 Calls to Action
- Be an ally, or friend, to Indigenous people. This means that you will learn, listen, and stand with that person or group
- Speak up when you hear people make racist or unfair comments about Indigenous people
- Have difficult conversations with your friends and yourself and try to make positive changes around you
- You may have been taught things about Indigenous people, and you should challenge what you have been taught

## References

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