



Ontario  
College of  
Teachers

Ordre des enseignantes  
et des enseignants  
de l'Ontario

# Restorative Journey: Indigenous Educational Wellness





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**Care**

Kaya'takenhà:tshera Nikarihó:ten

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**Respect**

Atatkwenyénhtshera Nikarihó:ten

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**Trust**

Kanyaheséntshera Nikarihó:ten

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**Integrity**

Tyorihwaé:ri Nikarihó:ten

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The artistic representations of the four Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession for *A Rotinonhsyón:ni Representation for the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, 2019, by Six Nations artist Elizabeth Doxtater.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The artistic representations of the four Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession from an Indigenous perspective were first presented in *Exploring the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession through Anishinaabe Art*<sup>1</sup>, by Bruce Beardy (2016).

These were followed by *A Rotinonhsyón:ni Representation for the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*<sup>1</sup> in 2019. To honour the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages in 2019, it was made available with *Kanyeńkeha*/Mohawk language translations by George Doxtater and edited by David Kanatawakon Maracle. This was the same year Canada (**Kaná:ta** – Mohawk translation for ‘village’) introduced the *Indigenous Languages Act* (Government of Canada, 2019).

Six Nations artist Elizabeth Doxtater worked in dialogue with members from Six Nations communities and in friendship with the Ontario College of Teachers (the College) to develop this resource in a way that inspires the ethical pursuit of Indigenous educational wellness.

Ontario is home to six Indigenous language families – Anishinaabek, Onkwehonwe, Mushkegowuk, Lunaape, Inuktitut and Michif, which include more than 18 unique languages and dialects<sup>2</sup>.

This resource leans toward a Haudenosaunee perspective for several reasons. Key among them is that the Ontario College of Teachers’ name holds the word “Ontario,”

which translates to “Nice” or “Good Lake” in Rotinonhsyonni (Mohawk). *Kanyatarí:yo* (the land of the Good Lake) still holds the water that Peacemaker travelled on, carrying the message of *Skén:nen* (Peace), *Kahsatsthénshera* (Power) and *Ka’nikonhrí:yo* (Good Mind).

The Haudenosaunee perspective was chosen as a first step, not to be exclusive or exclusionary. It is the College’s intention to work collaboratively with all Indigenous nations within our membership to thoughtfully develop steps that protect the integrity of the teaching profession, Indigenous communities, as well as the interests and well-being of students.

## Voice & Perspective

Elizabeth Doxtater

This resource contains historical information, as well as personal and professional provocations, that reflect the voice of Elizabeth Doxtater as both an Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT) and a member of the Six Nations community. Her words are found in the *Voice & Perspectives* sections throughout this document.

The writings and images within these pages were done with the best of intentions and not to hurt anyone. Concerns regarding

appropriation have been a key part of our discussions, and Elizabeth has consulted with members of her community and other Haudenosaunee communities on an ongoing basis.

**We begin this journey with much care. Please consider taking steps to protect your heart and mind as you review this content.**

\*Educators have permission to share and reproduce any content within this resource for educational purposes only.

<sup>2</sup> [Ontario investing in Indigenous language revitalization](#)

# Note to Education Administrators and Teaching Professionals

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The content of this resource comes from a place of hope, honesty, mutual respect, and trust. We hope the following reflective inquiry prompts help educators use this content within their educational practice in the same spirit.

## Reflective Inquiry:

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**1** How do I engage Knowledge Keepers and members from the local community?

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**6** Who is the appropriate person to facilitate this learning?

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**2** Who are the Indigenous leads within my local school board or authority?

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**7** Who is the audience that will be engaged in this learning?

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**3** How do I distinguish between authentic, accurate curriculum versus ceremonial and sacred appropriation?

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**8** What are the processes and protocols for exploring Indigenous culture?

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**4** How do I guard against appropriation of Indigenous knowledge?

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**9** How do I ensure restorative educational practices are honoured?

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**5** Is there a system within my educational context for vetting Indigenous lessons?

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**10** How do I engage in deeper meaningful reflection as I learn more about Indigenous peoples?

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# Table of Contents

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## 3 Section 1: Beginning the Journey

- 3 We Gather Our Minds
- 4 Journey Together
- 8 Lifting Grief
- 9 Condolence Poem
- 10 Tsyoyèn:kwarote Like Smoke that Rises
- 16 Section 1: Reflective Inquiry

---

## 17 Section 2: We are All Treaty Partners

- 18 Treaty Agreements
- 23 The Silver Covenant Chain
- 25 Sewatokwá:’tshera’ (Mohawk language)  
Dish With One Spoon Treaty
- 27 Original Instruction
- 29 We Come from Matriarchs
- 32 The Great Peace and Matriarchy
- 34 Manifestation of Western Education in  
Native Communities
- 39 Section 2: Reflective Inquiry

---

## 40 Section 3: Under the Guise of Education

- 42 Residential Schools & Indian Day  
Schools: Survivors, Current Learners,  
and Future Generations
- 50 Squash Blossom, Six Nations,  
Grand River 2021
- 51 A Note to Educational Administrators  
and Teaching Professionals
- 54 Inquiry
- 57 Uncle Louie’s Alarm Clock
- 59 Section 3: Reflective Inquiry

---

## 60 Section 4: Reframing the Discourse of Indigenous Educational Wellness: A Language within a Language

- 66 Section 4: Reflective Inquiry

---

## 67 Section 5: Wellness and Moving Forward

- 67 Solstice and Storytelling
- 72 Calls to Action
- 73 From Where the Fire Burns
- 74 The Group of Six
- 77 Elizabeth Doxtater Shares her  
Cornhusk Dolls
- 83 Section 5: Reflective Inquiry

---

## 86 THE GOOD MIND

- 87 Closing Address

- 88 Appendix 1

- 91 References

## Foreword

### Restorative Journey: Indigenous Educational Wellness

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Dear Members of the Teaching Profession,

When we started on this journey, it was our intention to produce something that could make a meaningful difference.

We wanted to positively impact the way that we can, with distinct perspectives on history, work to understand each other better.

At the start I wrote a note to myself and taped it by my computer: *The most important document I'll ever write!* Throughout this process, this note has been my constant companion and a reminder of the enormity of this initiative.

It has been imperative that we have ongoing conversation with and guidance from Haudenosaunee community members. Our open dialogue has contributed to the final product.

*Restorative Journey: Indigenous Educational Wellness* represents progress on this journey.

We invite all treaty partners to join us as active participants or as witnesses to explore the Federal Indian Day Schools' impact on learners.

Together, we will explore innovative approaches to education so we can develop models that will be more meaningful to:

- Indigenous territories and reserves
- Rural and urban Native communities
- All schools within the province.

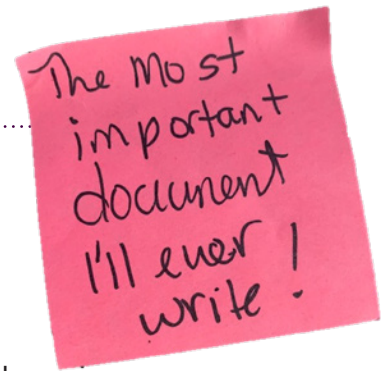
Members are encouraged to be aware of teaching practices based on Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies.

These practices can reflect the aspirations of Indigenous learners and communities and contribute to a new chapter that celebrates Indigenous educational wellness.

You are invited to join us on this restorative journey as we critically explore old models, think outside of the box, and begin to think inside of the circle.

In Peace and Friendship,

Elizabeth Doxtater, OCT  
Mohawk, Turtle Clan  
Six Nations Indian Reserve #40  
Grand River Territory







*Figure 1: Grandmother Moon in the Seventh Hour in the Western Sky, painting by Elizabeth Doxtater*

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*Restorative Journey is a valuable resource for Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners. The document was developed through an Indigenous lens and honours our rich culture and worldview, something that is lacking in the current Canadian education system. Elizabeth's art depicts our culture, ceremonies, and ways of healing that have sustained our resilience from time immemorial.*

*As a survivor of the Indian Day School Era, it is important to have these types of documents, written by our community people, that guide how our education needs to be delivered.*

– Yvonne Bomberry, PhD Candidate  
Mohawk, Bear Clan,  
Six Nations Indian Reserve #40  
Grand River Territory

## Why this Journey?

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*The reconciliation work being done, work like this where we learn, share, and heal – when done with integrity – will have a real positive impact for our Children.*

*I remember when I was younger, living on Oneida Settlement, attending what they call one of those Indian Day Schools. I remember the harshness. The teachers were so mean. They were sure they were going to “reform” us.*

*In retrospect I had no idea that the whole purpose was to make us forget who we are. Many have played along for so long that it almost made us forget who we are. The impacts of the Residential Schools (RS) and the Indian Day Schools are real.*

*We must understand that the effects of the RS and day schools have intergenerational impacts on our Children, and therefore our communities.*

*It can be said that it was not our generation that made the mistakes, it was not “us” that did the damage. But please know it’s the institutions, not the few teachers and nuns that had to implement what was law back then.*

*We cannot control what happened, we cannot go back and undo it. But we can work at changing it. We as educators can help change the social climate, and we can help foster better relationships. In time, I’m confident our Children will overcome, our Children will thrive.*

*Our Children have their strong and resilient ancestors behind them. They have our songs, ceremonies, and our languages. Our Children will overcome, and they will thrive. I hope that as educators we do our part to support our Children on that path towards true reconciliation.*

– Ursula A. Doxtator, B.A., B.Ed.  
Oneida Nation, Bear Clan  
Oneida Nation of the Thames  
Indian Reserve #41

## Section 1: Beginning the Journey

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### We Gather Our Minds<sup>3</sup>

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*Figure 2: The Ethical Standard of Trust, painting by Elizabeth Doxtater*

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We send greetings and thanks  
With our gathered one-mind  
For our on-going Peace  
With all of humankind.

To our Mother the Earth,  
To the waters that flow,  
To corn, beans and squash  
The sisters – we grow.

To the plants that are fruit  
To the medicines too,  
To the four-legged animals  
For all that you do.

To the sweet-water maple  
And all of the trees,  
To the birds that we hear,  
To the winds and the breeze.

To Grandfather Thunders,  
To Eldest Brother the Sun,  
To Grandmother Moon,  
Our minds are now one.

To the Stars in the night  
And the teachers who share  
Integrity, trust  
And respect us with care.

To all of Creation  
These words are now done  
But our thanks continue  
And our minds are now one.

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<sup>3</sup> Inspired by the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address

## Journey Together

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***Restorative Journey: Indigenous Educational Wellness*** is intended to be thought-provoking with further intention to infuse knowledge and create awareness of our past. It fosters understanding, encourages care, challenges integrity, redefines respect, and cultivates reciprocal trust. It encourages hope and creates a clear delineation from the past while incorporating the ***Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*** and the ***Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession***. The goal is to guide educators in finding collaborative ways to develop Indigenous educational wellness as partners, co-creators, and witnesses.

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*Figure 3: Two Row Wampum Belt painting by Six Nations artist Elizabeth Doxtater*

This resource is designed in consideration of the Federal Indian Day School class action lawsuit and pending settlement between the federal government and First Nations communities whose territories are in Ontario.

This painting is an artistic representation that was informed by the College Logo. The painting depicts the Two Row Wampum treaty belt. It symbolizes that we are all treaty people who can journey together on the same river.

The original intent of the Two Row treaty agreement was that each culture could maintain their distinct language, beliefs, traditional forms of governance and territory while living side by side as equals on the basis of eternal peace, friendship and respect.

We invite all members to get involved, either as active participants or as witnesses, as we co-create a critical exploration of the Federal Indian Day Schools' impact on generations of Indigenous learners. We can further explore how intergenerational experiences continue to impact education and education systems in Indigenous territories, (off-reserve) rural and urban Native communities, and all schools in the province of Ontario.

This resource invites you to consider who continues to be privileged by historic policies and how we can work together to reframe the discourse of Indigenous education. It encourages careful steps toward co-creating education models that support the aspirations of Indigenous learners and communities. Educators are encouraged to reflect on three areas:

- Commemoration
- Education
- Healing/Wellness.

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## Federal Indian Day Schools

The Federal Indian Day School class action lawsuit has gone largely unnoticed by media. There was no commission struck, as was the case with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the appointment of former Senator Murray Sinclair to study Canada's residential schools.

There has been no inquiry, nor any healing circles. With no commission, there are no calls to action. Instead, there is only a website<sup>4</sup> with instructions on how to submit an application<sup>5</sup>.

This process risks further harm for former students, by encouraging them to document experiences they were previously coerced into not discussing.

In the summer of 2020, a court ruled that once a claimant submitted their application, they would not be allowed to adjust it in any way. This meant that survivors, who were possibly just beginning to talk about their experiences, felt the stress of having to complete an application without sufficient time and access to supports that were unavailable during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

In addition, survivors of certain Federal Indian Day Schools did not qualify for the lawsuit and were left with little to no explanation why.

We invite College members to critically explore policies that were designed by the federal government to forcefully assimilate Indigenous children but were portrayed as "education" policies.

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<sup>4</sup>[Federal Indian Day School Class Action](#)

<sup>5</sup>[Indian Day Schools Class Action Settlement](#)

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## The Ontario Educational Context

As part of the College's mandate to regulate the profession, and to commemorate and honour survivors of the Federal Indian Day School System, we hope to co-create and jointly support healing and Indigenous educational wellness.

***“Placing students’ interests and well-being first by regulating and promoting excellence in teaching.”***

– The Ontario College of Teachers, 2018

The historical context that acknowledges the need for healing was described by Carolyn Bennet:

As a result of the harmful and discriminatory government policies at the time, students who attended these schools were subject to sexual, physical, and psychological abuse and forced to abandon their language and culture. Survivors across this country continue to suffer from the abuse and horrific experiences they were subjected to, which were perpetuated by the very people charged with educating them as children.

– *(Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations Carolyn Bennett, December 2018<sup>6</sup>)*

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<sup>6</sup><https://www.cpac.ca/en/programs/headline-politics/episodes/65894245/>

Under the guise of education, individuals acting in the role of “teacher” implemented systemic assimilation policies in Federal Indian Day Schools across the country with little to no structure for culpability. There was no regulating body in place to set professional and ethical standards for teachers in Ontario.

There is a discrepancy regarding on-reserve schools. Schools in Ontario are considered provincial schools, while many schools located on the province’s “Indian reserves” formerly maintained federal status. This lack of clarity and consistency regarding the jurisdiction of Ministry of Education guidelines may have further impaired the delivery of on-reserve education standards. Currently, “on-reserve” schools can be listed under a variety of designations including First Nations or Band-run schools, Inuit or Métis schools, and a few that continue as federal schools.

The last closing date for a Federal Indian Day School in Ontario listed in Schedule K of the Federal Indian Day School Class Action lawsuit is September 1, 1997,<sup>7</sup> a date that coincides with the establishment of the College. This means that despite the discrepancy in jurisdiction, most teachers in First Nations communities would now be required to be licenced by the College. Clear guidelines defined by the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996*<sup>8</sup> better protect the safety of learners and the integrity of the profession.

As we reframe the discourse of Indigenous educational wellness, we co-create a vision for intergenerational healing, and replace deprivation of identity with rich cultural teachings based on Indigenous pedagogies.

***Our journey begins.***



*Figure 4: The Ethical Standard of Respect, painting by Elizabeth Doxtater*

<sup>7</sup>Federal Indian Day School Class Action

<sup>8</sup>Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c 12

## Lifting Grief

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The ears, eyes, and throat are where we can release grief and carry peace. We move forward while being careful with the images and words we share.

*Ayonwatha wandered alone in grief after the loss of his daughters. During that time, he formed the words to lift grief. He shared the words with Peacemaker. The dolls in this photo depict when Peacemaker lifted the grief from Ayonwatha.*



*Figure 5: Photo of Peacemaker Lifts Ayonwatha's Grief, Corn Husk and Mixed Medium by Six Nations artist Elizabeth Doxtater*



## Condolence Poem

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We know we'll have days  
When we'll have to mourn,  
Our tears will keep falling  
Our hearts feel torn.

Our throats become sore  
We can't speak quite right  
Our ears will not listen  
We won't have clear sight.

Our minds become heavy  
With sorrow and pain  
Our tears are as endless  
As a warm summers rain.

It's then we remember  
What our teachings would cite  
That comforts us through  
Our most sorrowful night.

Loved ones who've passed  
Begin a journey they say  
They travel back home  
Along the milky way.

They dance with the stars  
They sparkle and shine  
Now they are home  
With the Creator divine.

Our teachings then help  
To dry up our tears  
To clear our throats  
To open our ears.

Some say a week  
Ten days to a year  
To start healing – from losing  
A loved one so dear.

The balance of life  
Can always be found  
There's sun and there's moon,  
There's up and there's down.

There's planting and harvest  
And sureness and doubt  
And backwards and forward,  
And still and about.

There's happy and sad,  
There's day and there's night  
There's sunshine and rain  
There's black and there's white.

The circle of life  
Balances sunset and dawn  
As both are connected  
For life to go on...

Tsyoyèn:kwarote  
Like Smoke that Rises  
Beaded Yoke



Figure 6: DaeLynn Doxtater, Oneida Turtle wears the Beaded Yoke by Elizabeth Doxtater

I remember seeing Vincent van Gogh’s *Starry Night*, which he based on the view of the sky from his hospital room window. I read that he was institutionalized when he painted it. I wondered if the Haudenosaunee teachings of peace from Turtle Island could have helped him.

If his window was facing east and one of the White Roots of Peace stretched across the ocean, what if he was able to follow that root to our shores? What if he was able to follow one of those roots and find the protection and support of the Great Peace? Would that have helped him?

I was inspired to study *Starry Night* in two mediums.

First, the beaded yoke in Figure 6 is clearly inspired by van Gogh. To the left, the swirl goes up and leads over the shoulder to the (front view) right panel to become smoke from the longhouse.

To the back-right, the beads become a trail leading to the White Pine that stands atop the four white roots on the (front view) left panel. Across the bottom in the front panels are blue beads that represent the river that carries the weapons away “forever.”



Figure 7: Inside lining of the yoke in progress



Figure 8: Outer layer of the yoke in progress



Figure 9: Inside thread design of the yoke in progress

Usually, a lining would be put on the back of a piece of beadwork last to hide the thread (Figure 7). I did this project differently and put the lining and border on first (Figure 8).

I wanted everyone to see the inside thread designs. I thought of it as looking inside, maybe seeing the tangled thoughts in someone's mind (Figure 9). From this project, these are my thoughts:

- We were all given a strong, good mind
- Our minds are precious and should be protected. We need to relearn ways to do that, to decide what we will allow into our minds. We can then protect our minds like a palisade protected the ancient village
- We learn to protect our minds from hurtful things we refuse to allow in, or things we have no control over that would be more harmful than helpful.

## Artist's Narrative

We are reminded that our mind is a gift from *Shonkwaya'tihsonh*, our Creator. It is a sacred place. A healthy mind is the first thing that is mentioned in the Great Law.

We all contribute to maintaining our healthy minds. We can start by doing small things, for example breathing deeply and methodically with gratitude. Our breath connects us to *Shonkwaya'tihsonh* and to every generation of our ancestors. Our breath reaffirms our interconnected and interdependent relationship with the trees and with all of Creation (Doxtater, 2016).

### White Pine

A while ago I was talking to a young man. He said he was actively learning about traditions and participating in ceremonies. He said, "I've asked a lot of people this one question and so far, everybody I ask gives me a different answer. Maybe you know."

The question was "Do you know where that tree was planted?"

He was referring to the White Pine that is a symbol of peace. It was uprooted, and all weapons of war were thrown into the pit to be carried away by an underground river. The tree was then replanted.

This was at the time of the ratification of the *Kaianere'kó:wa*, or Great Law

- *Peace, healthy mind, healthy body*
- *Power harmonious, nonviolent unity*
- *Good mindedness, also called righteousness. Having a good mind, leading to justice fairness between people and nations, also includes compassion and love.*

The location of the White Pine, which I once heard referred to as a "holy tree," has been the topic of many discussions.

This young man went on to explain, while motioning with his hands, that he heard that it was "here", and someone else said it was "there." He asked, "Where do you think it is?"

I explained how I understand the teaching:

"The four roots of the tree go out to the four directions. Any person who is looking for the protection of that peace can follow those roots and find it under that tree. So, if each of us is supposed to carry the peace, where do you think it is?"

He looked a bit puzzled.  
He thought for a few seconds.  
He smiled.  
He placed his hands over his heart.  
He said, "It's right here!"

(Elizabeth Doxtater, 2016).

**Artist's Statement –  
Tsyonè:kwarote Like Smoke that Rises**

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*Figure 10: Like Smoke that Rises, painting by Elizabeth Doxtater*

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Figure 10 is a narrative in dialogue with members from Six Nations communities and in friendship with the Ontario College of Teachers.

\*Note: The white pine is an ancient symbol of peace for the Haudenosaunee. It is the tallest of the Indigenous trees. Its needles grow in clusters of five, symbolizing unity. The white pine stays green year-round, reminding us that peace does not rest. The white pine is also the official tree of the Province of Ontario, chosen because newcomers used it for building materials.

This lodge is based on a photo of one of the original schoolhouses built on Six Nations. This school was located at Martin's Corner. In the painting, the schoolhouse sits beside the shore of Lake Ontario. The palisade protects the lodge.

This painting symbolizes how we can follow one of those white roots and find ourselves at the base of the White Pine to find the safety and protection of peace.

The shades of purple and white in the sky and lake are the colours of wampum and remind us of the importance of being true to our word.

We use our breath to form the words we use to state our intentions, just as our Ancestors used their breath for the words to form their promises to Creator, Mother Earth, and each other. We are reminded of these promises and commitments when we see the symbols represented in wampum beads, strung together.

Tangled thoughts have a way of disturbing peace. I took this from Peacemaker's visit to Cohoes Falls when the Mohawks escorted him into the village.

They saw his smoke rising so straight that it appeared to "pierce the sky" as he sat beside a cornfield. This was during a time many villages and territories were ravaged by war.

Runners were sent out to see who it was and what was his intended business. The runners greeted him and asked what his intentions were. They carried his message back to the people inside the village, protected by the palisade.

The people of the village then met. After much discussion it was decided that he would be allowed in to share his message. The runners left, and returned to escort him in.

This can be a model for the careful steps we can take to protect our minds. Decide what is helpful to you, your family, and others that you are with, especially in difficult times.

The swirly skies in the painting represent intergenerational turmoil that was imposed on our communities, causing minds and intentions to be twisted and sometimes destructive... and often self-destructive.

Many people who came to Native communities “misrepresented” themselves as educators. They helped create intergenerational trauma, based on acts committed under the guise of education.

We can work together to reframe the discourse of Indigenous education. We then identify how cultural deprivation has a negative impact on intergenerational wellness. With this understanding, we take a restorative step forward.

Indigenous educational wellness is our collective goal as we co-create a vision for intergenerational wellness. We displace deprivation of identity with rich cultural teachings based on Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies for everyone:

Indigenous Peoples and the Treaty Partners who live in Ontario, the land of the Good Lake, Kanyatarí:yo. This lake holds the water that Peacemaker travelled on, carrying the message of peace. Together we acknowledge the history and return to the original treaty agreement, and honour the promise of eternal peace, respect and friendship.

We return to the promises represented in the wampum beads that were strung together. We reaffirm the Two Row Wampum belt agreement.

The Two Row will be a guide to protect Indigenous educational wellness and honour the ancestral visions anticipated when education was negotiated as a treaty right. Our minds will be clear, and our thoughts will be straight... like smoke that rises.

## Section 1: Reflective Inquiry

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**1**

The beginning of this resource reminded us of the importance of protecting “your heart and mind as you review this content.” It begins with a poem, *We Gather Our Minds*, inspired by the thanksgiving address that brings us to a place of collective gratitude, well-being, and strength so we may move forward together. Examine the various strategies you use to nurture courageous and fruitful conversations.

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**2**

As allies, critically explore the reciprocal dimension of peace, friendship, unity and strength inherent in the statement “we are all treaty partners.”

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**3**

How do you define your personal and professional responsibilities as a treaty partner?

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**4**

Reflect on the steps you may take to reframe the discourse of Indigenous education within your educational community.

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## Section 2: We are All Treaty Partners

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Since 1613 we see and saw  
Treaties (with Europeans) that are  
still the law.  
The list is long and tattered, too.  
So here's some if you never knew.

The first ones were legal deeds  
Two separate lines in wampum beads  
Distinct: culture, language, ceremony  
Governance and Territory.

1710, Three Silver Links  
Of the Covenant Chain  
The agreements for friendship  
That still remain.

Treaty of Niagara  
1764 accord  
The links were then polished  
Agreement restored.

Preventing all hunger  
From the time of our birth  
Like A Dish with One Spoon  
We protect Mother Earth.

John Jay's treaty (article 3) 1794  
Was also known as so much more  
"Treaty of Amity, Commerce and  
Navigation"  
Recognized we're Sovereign Nations.

1814, Treaty of Ghent  
Reaffirmed what Sovereignty meant  
These treaties that still recognize  
We did not (willingly) colonize!

---

*These treaties were to be honoured...  
...As long as the sun shines  
...As long as the grass grows  
...As long as the rivers flow.*

---

## Treaty Agreements

### Kahswénhta Two Row Wampum

---

*...As long as the sun shines*  
*...As long as the grass grows*  
*...As long as the rivers flow*

Wampum beads are made of quahog shell. The quahog shell is purple and white, and the beads are strung together. Some are made into belts with intricate designs to represent promises to Creator, Mother Earth, and each other. They transcend merely documenting agreements for the purpose of remembering them. Promises conveyed in wampum carry extra significance and are understood to be sacred and honoured forever.

The Two Row Wampum treaty belt is one of the original agreements made between Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island and Europeans. It is a long white belt with two parallel purple lines. The white represent a very long river.

If you hold this belt horizontally, it resembles a mathematical equals sign. It is a symbol of equality based on eternal peace and friendship. The purple lines each represent a vessel. One is a canoe, and the other is a European vessel. They are travelling parallel, as equals, acknowledging the respect for each other's distinct language, culture, beliefs, governance, and territory.



*Figure 11: Two Row Wampum: Vertical Teaching, presented to the Ontario College of Teachers by First Nations artist, Elizabeth Doxtater*

When held vertically (Figure 11), this belt captures a different perspective. It reminds us of when our ancestors launched our canoe in the water hundreds of years ago. At that time, they did it for the benefit of us, the “coming faces.” This agreement will be honoured on behalf of the ancestors and will continue for our grandchildren and their grandchildren and their grandchildren...

The ancestors pictured us in that canoe on that river. They identified things that each generation would be responsible for, to protect and to pass to the next generation. The ancestors created a foundation for us to remain dissimilated and distinct in our homelands.

Today, Indigenous peoples have the power to honour this treaty. The eternal peace and friendship was violated by the Europeans. There were attempts to place shame on our people, many of whom are still recovering from the historic trauma that may now manifest as intergenerational trauma that continues to plague our communities.

Over time, the origins of our historically inflicted trauma and shaming became obscured and intentionally almost forgotten. Whole communities were colonized and deprived of being naturally entrenched in the rich cultural teachings, languages and laws of their families, clans, nations, and ancestors.

We come from a time in history when it was indoctrinated to be silenced. Many remained silent. The shame and trauma can still be seen and might manifest as violence where we shame each other.

We might come from a family that has experienced generations of extreme poverty, or from a family that has struggled with addictive mind-changers resulting in dependency on alcohol, drugs, or gambling. Or from a family that has difficulties forming and maintaining healthy relationships. Or from a whole community that constantly deals with ongoing trauma.

We might carry these burdens and with them a sense of shame. However, we need to remember who we are. Hundreds of years later, we represent our ancestors and the love they had for us when they launched our canoe.

After the historic process of being removed from the village model of life:

- *devillagized*

To ensure we would be:

- *colonized*

We now work to:

- *decolonize*

In the hopes to:

- *revillagize.*

Generations of our people have been deprived of many things. One of the most heavily impacted was the understanding of our self-value and importance.

If we consume ourselves with the fact that the newcomers' treaty created much pain in our communities but do nothing to protect or celebrate what is remaining, then we accept ourselves as victims.

However, we can consider our responsibility to uphold our side of the Two Row, the side that honours and cherishes each unique member of our families and communities. These acts are not done "in spite of" or as an expression of tolerance, but because of our reawakened ancestral understandings of true acceptance. All communities can then truly be inclusive, safe places.

By doing so, we would be honouring our ancestors, further rejecting shame, and discarding any labels or roles that were placed on us by the colonizing era. We then

accept our inherent responsibility to steer that canoe.

Beyond the centuries of rough waters and the trauma, shame, and judgement that has been inflicted on our communities, there is something beautiful we all possess. We find strength and protection in our stories, laws, and teachings.

As we continue to recover what generations of our communities were deprived of, we get stronger and healthier. We steer that canoe and prepare to hand that paddle over to the next generation. We can work together to guide our canoe to calm waters.

.....  
**...The grass still grows,  
The rivers still flow,  
And the sun still shines...**  
.....

**And that canoe is still on the water...**

## Kahswénhta Two Row Wampum Belt Treaty

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*Figure 12: Two students, Jordyn Degakas Doolittle, Mohawk, Turtle Clan and Taylor Goihwawi General, Seneca, Bear Clan, hold a replica Two Row Wampum Belt that was later presented to the Ontario College of Teachers by First Nations artist, Elizabeth Doxtater*

The Two Row Wampum belt (Figure 12) is one of the treaties that was first used by the Five Nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy when the Great Law of Peace, Power and Good Mind/Righteousness united the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca Nations approximately 1,000 years ago.

The Two Row Wampum symbolizes everlasting equality between genders and nations through peace and friendship. This ancient treaty continues to be honoured. The inclusion of the Tuscarora Nation in the early 1700s created the Six Nations.

The Two Row Wampum was also the original treaty made between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch in 1613, followed by the British and the French. This treaty – recognizing the right to distinct culture, language, beliefs, governance, and territory – was to be honoured:

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***As long as the grass grows,  
As long as the rivers flow,  
As long as the sun shall rise.***

---

At this time of reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and descendants of European colonizers, who are now joined by new Canadians, we must reassert and honour treaty agreements, restore the promised friendship, and heal the international relationships and boundaries that were violated when treaties were broken.

This designated time of truth and reconciliation can be difficult. Reconciliation is a concept that was announced to Indigenous peoples. It was not negotiated with Indigenous leaders. Any consultation with Indigenous communities was done quietly.

There is confusion around how we can reconcile. Various organizations often reach out to individuals from Indigenous communities to support their reconciliatory efforts.

However, if we follow the symbolism of the Two Row, with Indigenous peoples in their canoe and treaty partners sharing a vessel and struggling to understand reconciliation, then Indigenous peoples can honour the ancestral promise of eternal peace and friendship, and offer assistance.

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***The grass still grows,  
the rivers still flow, and  
the sun still rises.***

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## The Silver Covenant Chain

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Figure 13: The Friendship Belt replica presented to the Ontario College of Teachers by First Nations artist, Elizabeth Doxtater, refers to the Silver Covenant Chain Agreement.

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*Ka'sw^ta* (Oneida language, Figure 13) is an extension of the Two Row Wampum. It binds newcomers to a promise to protect education, welfare of the people, and ongoing trade, or *Yukwanowayahtu* (Oneida language), in exchange for living in our homelands. The Silver Covenant Chain is an important symbol for Indigenous negotiators. The three links represent peace, friendship, and respect, or *Atatkwennyénhtshera Nikarihó:ten* (Mohawk language), which are the customary baseline for all treaties with Haudenosaunee.

At the time, the British offered a three-link chain made of cast iron to represent this agreement. The Haudenosaunee responded that it wouldn't be long-lasting, since cast iron crumbles over time.

The British then offered solid iron. But the Haudenosaunee responded that it would tarnish.

The Haudenosaunee offered a three-link silver. The silver was durable, and when polished it was bright and beautiful. The chain would represent the binding of their words and the intentions of their people. This agreement is also documented in the Friendship Belt.

The links will be polished when deemed necessary to renew their promise.

On July 4, 2010, Queen Elizabeth II acknowledged the Silver Covenant Chain Treaty by gifting a set of silver bells (Figures 14 and 15) to representatives of the Grand River in Six Nations near Brantford, Ontario.

They were engraved with the words 'The Silver Chain of Friendship 1710-2010.' Symbolic of the councils and treaties that originated between the English colonies in North America and the Iroquois Confederacy...

– (Peter Kuitenbrouwer,  
National Post July 04, 2010)

We must understand our responsibility as treaty partners to honour the Silver Covenant Chain agreement. We will move toward a future with care while protecting the integrity of all with mutual respect. As treaty partners and friends, we rebuild trust. We then bring our best tools and walk forward together.



Figure 14: Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd.  
Photo by Roxanna Nazarowicz



Figure 15: Silver Bells. The bells are currently stored in a vault and are brought out for special events. Photo by Roxanna Nazarowicz



## Sewatokwá:'tshera' (Mohawk language) Dish With One Spoon Treaty

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*Figure 16: 'Sewatokwá:'tshera Dish with One Spoon' replica, presented to the Ontario College of Teachers by First Nations artist, Elizabeth Doxtater, held by Abi Kariwanoroh Courchene, Mohawk Turtle Clan and Athena Yenorarórok's Doxtater, Mohawk Turtle Clan*

The Dish With One Spoon Treaty (Figure 16) was first established between the original five Haudenosaunee nations. It was based on eternal peace and friendship and has existed since the ratification of the Great Law approximately 1,000 years ago. It is commonly referenced when sharing of hunting territories between nations is discussed.

The treaty recognizes the responsibility of everyone to harvest only what is needed and to share what is harvested. The agreement conveys that the Earth provides for everyone, so no one should go hungry. It also includes the understanding that anyone who benefits from what the Earth provides has a responsibility to care for and protect “all of the entities on her body.” The treaty was extended to include the Anishinaabe nations in 1701. In ancient times, Peacemaker taught *Atatárho*<sup>9</sup> to hunt deer. An annual hunt reinforces the teachings and honours inherent rights that pre-date Canada.

Although some treaty rights were negotiated, the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples existed long before any agreements with Europeans. Newcomers to these shores understood they had an obligation to abide by the Dish with One Spoon Treaty.

**“The inherent rights of Indigenous peoples existed long before any treaty with Europeans”**

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<sup>9</sup>Atatárho was an Onondaga. He was notorious for having a twisted body that emulated his twisted mind. When Atatárho mistook Peacemaker’s reflection as his own, his mind began to straighten and heal. His title continues to hold a unique stature among the circle of title holders within the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

## Original Instruction

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*Figure 17: Starry Night by Lyle Logan, Deer Clan, Seneca Nation, Cattaraugus Territory*

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In very ancient times, many people in a certain village were given the original instruction to help the people. They were also told to protect the Earth, share the entities on her body, and to give thanks for all those things that help her and all of us to live.

The people were also told to give thanks for the air and the celestial beings, and to remember we are all connected. The people followed this instruction for many years.

There were young men in one of the old villages that would make sure that all the people had firewood for cooking, warmth, and council. They made sure there was enough water for cooking, drinking, and washing. They would teach the younger men about these important duties for the day when they too would become helpers.

**The Original Instruction narrative reminds us that many of our Native communities, on-reserve, off-reserve-urban, and rural currently work toward healing from many almost impossible things. This is compounded when the truths of our collective experiences have been hidden and our collective voices have been muffled for so long.**

Slowly, they moved away from this original instruction. At first it was just some, then most, then all began to make sure only their lodge was well supplied, and they refused to give thanks for anything.

Many people in the village were now experiencing things that were once unknown and they no longer felt safe.

Hunger. Loneliness. Thirst. These things were now common.

The ones who were once helpers now only helped themselves. They did not see to anything but their own needs. They believed that as long as only the people in their village knew what they were doing, it really didn't matter.

High above the village, the winds quietly danced in the sky. The winds were important, they helped bring the change of seasons.

One day while they danced, they became distracted by an odd pattern they noticed far below. There was smoke rising, but from very few lodges.

The winds held a meeting. One whispered, "what happened? There were once great clouds of smoke coming from all of the lodges, now there are only a few."

Another wind whispered, "we need to remind them."

The next day some young men left the village to gather supplies for only their lodges. The leaves on the trees were starting to turn colour. It was getting colder.

As they walked through the woods, the winds began to whisper through the trees,

"... the original instruction...to help the people...they should be fed, be warm and be safe..."

The young men continued to walk and paid no attention to the noise they heard, laughing about the gentle winds and their soft voices.

The winds that at first had quietly whispered now joined their whispers together. The whispers were now strong winds.

No longer could these young men hear anything but air rushing past their ears so quickly they had to cover them and seek shelter.

When the winds calmed one whispered, "... young men, we are always to work together. We are always to fulfill our duties...young men were to take care of the people..."

From that day until the present, we are reminded of our original duty and how when the gentlest whispers unite, they can become the strongest winds.

## We Come from Matriarchs

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*Inspired by the Haudenosaunee Creation Story  
Figure 18: Otsitsison, Sky-woman, corn husk mixed  
medium by Elizabeth Doxtater*

Sky-woman fell  
Through the hole near the tree  
Tumbled toward earth  
When it was covered in sea.

She called out for help  
The birds answered her call  
They brought her on their wings  
To break gently her fall.

They placed her on  
The turtle's giant shell  
She planted strawberry roots  
on turtle's back  
With tobacco roots as well.

She lived alone for awhile  
But Sky-woman soon gave birth  
She loved and raised her daughter  
Now there were two women living  
on the Earth.

Two arrows appeared  
When the daughter was grown  
She asked her mother  
If she had known.

The Thunder beings' visit  
And the message he sent  
Twin boys will be born  
As the crossed arrows meant.

In birth, Sky-woman's daughter  
Died leaving to grow  
Corn, beans and squash,  
Our sisters to sow.



Figure 19: *Sky-woman Falling*, corn husk & mixed medium by Elizabeth Doxtater

*Tharonhiawakon* and *Shawihskara* had the  
job to find,  
Names for the plants  
And breath for mankind.

The twins had a contest  
As they fought to rule day  
After many battles  
Good-minded twin found a way.

Grandmother stepped in  
When her grandsons would fight,  
And now it's her spirit  
That guides us at night.

She visits the women  
13 moon-times a year  
With the promise new life  
Will always be here.

The waves and the water,  
The rains and the tides,  
It's her power that guides us;  
It's her who decides

When to plant or to harvest,  
When gardens will grow,  
The birth of new babies,  
How high waters will flow.

Sky-woman's brother, now  
Our eldest brother the sun  
The Earth is our mother  
And our family's now one.

## To Show That We Care

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*Figure 20: Mother of Nations, also called Queen of Peace (Tsikónhsase), placed the horns on Atatárho, corn husk & mixed medium by Six Nations artist, Elizabeth Doxtater*

We gather our minds  
To send a thanksgiving prayer  
To the women in our lives  
To show that we care.

We pray that you're happy  
Have a safe home to stay  
You're heard and respected  
And loved every day.

We pray you're protected,  
Encouraged to learn  
Fulfilling your goals  
Because it's your turn.

To be independent  
And Good-minded for growth  
As leaders and helpers  
Because now you are both.

We pray as you walk  
From the time of your birth  
You have been without fear  
As you walk on the Earth.

We send our thanks  
And now our prayer's done  
But our caring continues  
And our minds are now one.

## The Great Peace and Matriarchy

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Approximately 1,000 years ago, Peacemaker was born on the northern shores of Lake Ontario in an area that today is called Tyendinaga, Mohawk Territory. When Peacemaker crossed the lake, he went to a place called Ganondagan where he met a powerful woman named Tsikónhsase. Tsikónhsase was influential in perpetuating the wars between the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk Nations. The Peacemaker travelled to her lodge and shared the message of peace, power, and a good-mind with her.

Tsikonhsase lived at the intersection of many paths. She was known for utilizing her supply of corn to feed travelling warriors. Corn was served to the warriors as bread or mush or soup, and used as a tool to manipulate them into war. She would now use it as a tool for peace.

When Peacemaker recognized her strength, he saw that she was influential in stopping the wars between these nations. She is also called the Queen of Peace. Her acceptance of this great message led Peacemaker to bestow her with the authority to confirm, and if necessary, depose chiefs from their title and role.

Tsikónhsase was now the head matriarch, the Clanmother of Clanmothers.

On October 4, 1988, the concurrent H. Con. Res. 331 was passed by the 100<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress to:

Acknowledge the contribution of the Iroquois Confederacy of Nations to the development of the United States Constitution and to reaffirm the continuing government-to-government relationship between Indian tribes and the United States established in the Constitution.

Whereas the original framers of the Constitution, including most notably, George Washington and Benjamin Franklin are known to have greatly admired the concepts of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy.

Whereas the confederation of the original Thirteen colonies into one republic was influenced by the political system developed by the Iroquois Confederacy as were many of the democratic principles which were incorporated into the Constitution itself (U.S. Congress, 1988)

The resolution refers to the three branches of the traditional governance model. It included how the U.S. Congress was modelled similarly to the role of the chiefs.



The role of their president (*Ranatakáryas*) was loosely modelled on the role of *Atatárho*. However, unlike the U.S. president, *Atatárho* remained equal to the other titles and was to serve and unite the people.

The next level are the roles of *Ronwatihtsi'okón:'a* – the Elder Brothers:

- *Kanyen'kehá:ka* (Mohawk): People of the Flint
- *Onoñda'gega'* (Onondaga): People of the Hills or Mountain
- *Onöndowa'ga'* (Seneca): People of the Great Hill

*Shakoti'ken'okón:'a* – The Younger Brothers:

- *On'yota'a:ka* (Oneida): People of the Standing Stone
- *Gayogohó:no* (Cayuga): People of the Great Swamp, also called People of the Pipe

The Supreme Court was modelled after the *Yotiyanérhshon* (Clanmothers), with one great difference: The Clanmothers were all women and are still responsible for confirming or, if necessary, deposing the chiefs.

These ancient models of governance are still used in Haudenosaunee territories that span from Ontario into parts of Quebec, Upper New York State, and Wisconsin.

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**“We have a responsibility to prepare our children to be self-sufficient in the modern world.**

**But we have to make sure they have a strong base in who we are before they leave to get that Western education.”**

– Carol Jacobs  
Cayuga, Bear Clanmother

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Figure 21: Peacemaker and Tsikónhsase (Mother of Nations), corn husk mixed medium by Elizabeth Doxtater

## Manifestation of Western Education in Native Communities

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### Oyenkwa'ón:we + Niyohontéhsa

Tobacco + Strawberries and Reconciliation

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*Figure 22: Gifts From the Skyworld, painting of old tobacco kilns, painting by Elizabeth Doxtater*

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According to the Haudenosaunee teachings of Creation, tobacco and strawberries are medicinal gifts that came from the Skyworld. Strawberries continue to be acknowledged as a sacred plant and are celebrated every year as the first fruit to be harvested, marking the start of a new cycle of life. They remind us of our teachings and our origins. Greetings of gratitude and thanksgiving are offered to the strawberry plant. They remind us that everything good starts from a place of love.

Tobacco in its pure state is a traditional medicine. For thousands of years, Native people used tobacco in many forms for ceremony, prayer, and physical application for various ailments. Over the years, tobacco became commercially processed and today's colonized version is a remnant of the original plant.

In southern Ontario, Native people were hired as workers on tobacco and strawberry farms that were owned by Canadians. Young people in residential schools would be trained as farmhands to work farmlands they were forbidden from owning, since it was illegal for status Indians to own lands not located on the reserve they were a registered member of. Even Native soldiers who fought during the Great Wars were denied ownership upon their return home.

In modern Ontario, an influx of migrant workers populate farms during the summer months. Previously, it was common for Native families to leave their reserve each summer and work on local farms. Harvests of cucumbers, tomatoes, raspberries, and tying grapes were the fillers between bigger crops. Strawberry and tobacco farms provided a steady income.

On many farms there were living quarters provided by the owners, a staggered row of small shanties to house the "Indians." Families would stay there so the parents and children could work.

Residential schools were, in part, designed to train boys to be farmhands and girls to be in-house servants. Historical figures like Egerton Ryerson and Nicolas Flood Davin helped design the residential school system to house "inmates," as they were called by government officials, to be trained for those roles.

Prime Minister John A. Macdonald and Department of Indian Affairs deputy superintendent Duncan Campbell Scott were instrumental in designing and implementing church-run residential school systems that contributed to the intergenerational cultural genocide<sup>10</sup> of Indigenous children. These policies were in place in residential schools and Federal Indian Day Schools until 1997.

Historic policies and attitudes that shaped the foundation of Canadian society reveal the need for reconciliation. Acknowledging them can be difficult, especially when we consider the intergenerational effects experienced by Indigenous peoples and their treaty partners. It is important to review who continues to benefit from these foundational policies, and who continues to be marginalized.

Complete deprivation of culture and identity was the reality for Native learners for generations, but there is progress. The *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report* was released in 2015. It included 94 calls to action, the majority of which pertain to education. Change is slow, but it has begun.

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<sup>10</sup> [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)

## Recognizing and commemorating change as it unfolds...

We now witness how Indigenous peoples are being newly recognized in schools across the province. Many school administrations are educating themselves about the cycle of ceremonies that may require Indigenous students to be away from class. It is restorative when they are respected for the same beliefs that recent generations were deprived of.

To mark this new recognition, schools across the country have added commemorative occasions to their calendars.

March 31 is Indigenous Languages Day. This recognition preceded the announcement of the federal Indigenous Languages Act in 2019.

May 5 is the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and more recently, Two-Spirit+ (MMIWG2S+). This day has been dedicated to creating awareness of the heightened vulnerabilities of certain members of society.

May 10 is Bear Witness Day to honour Jordan's Principle.

Jordan's Principle is an initiative that seeks to ensure all First Nations children living in Canada can access the services and supports they need, when they need them, including the unique needs of those with disabilities and those who identify as First Nations Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA.



*Figure 24. Stuffed bears are used to mark Bear Witness Day in support of Jordan's Principle*

June 21 is Native Solidarity Day, however many schools use the whole month of June to celebrate and educate about Indigenous peoples.

September 30 is Orange Shirt Day, honours residential school survivors. Along with lessons about their history, students are encouraged to wear orange T-shirts with the words "Every Child Matters" (Figure 23)



Figure 23. Corn husk dolls wearing orange shirts for Orange Shirt Day, Elizabeth Doxtater



Figure 25. Aileen Kanennakene Joseph, Mohawk, Wolf Clan  
Six Nations Indian Reserve #40  
Photo courtesy of Sheena Joseph

Treaty Week is recognized every November. This creates opportunity for a more meaningful understanding of agreements based on “eternal peace and friendship” that were intended to form the beginning of relationships between Indigenous peoples and treaty partners.

We are now at a time in history where we can examine how to move forward together in a positive way.

In the spring of 2020, traumatic events were occurring across the country. Some were related to the Covid-19 pandemic, some were not. Throughout, Native spiritual leaders provided ceremony, comfort, and support to their treaty-partner neighbours who were experiencing trauma and loss.

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*Aileen Kanennakene Joseph, Mohawk, Wolf Clan, was the matriarch of a strong, loving, and beloved family on Six Nations. She was an advocate for the Sisters in Spirit initiative at the Native Women's Association of Canada. Kanennakene was a fierce advocate for the MMIWG2S+ movement. She had a daughter named Shelley, who was murdered in 2004. Shelley is one of the thousands of Indigenous women who are listed as either missing or are known to have been murdered.*

*Aileen was asked, "Why should our (spiritual leaders) help 'them' after everything that's been done to us?"*

*Her final answer was so simple. "Love starts with us..."*

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May 5 is National Day of Awareness for MMIWG2S+

We pray for the health, safety and prosperity of the girls, women, and LGBTQ+ in all communities

We promise to protect you

To guide you with love and respect

We will support you when you set life goals

So you know that your sacredness is honoured

We promise to help create those safe boundaries by respecting you

So that you will grow with confidence and

You are able to walk upon Mother Earth without fear

To all the girls, women, and LGBTQ+ community members in our lives.



Figure 26. Unidentified Woman in a Red Dress, painting Elizabeth Doxtater

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## Section 2: Reflective Inquiry

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1

How do I ensure the Two Row Wampum, Silver Covenant Chain, and Dish With One Spoon treaty agreements are honoured within curriculum lessons and learning environments?

2

The Dish With One Spoon treaty agreement reflects the importance of environmental stewardship in ensuring the human right of access to nourishment. Reflect on the ethical dimensions of inherent rights in the treaties discussed in this resource.

3

Although heralded in the American Congress as exemplary in framing a democratic constitution, many forms of traditional Indigenous governance practices were made illegal in Canada's Indian Act of 1876. Read and discuss the [Indian Act](#).

4

Indigenous peoples fought on behalf of Canada during major world conflicts, yet were unable to own land, hire a lawyer, get advanced education, and or vote in elections unless they gave up their status as "Indians." For further insight into these injustices, watch the National Film Board documentary [The Forgotten Warriors](#) by Loretta Todd

## Section 3: Under the Guise of Education

For many, this will be the most difficult and uncomfortable leg of the journey. It exposes the deep injustices of the residential and Federal Indian Day School systems through the voices of survivors. Readers will be troubled by these injustices and feel empathy for the survivors. But the journey requires us to move deeper on the path of reflection.

- What deep-rooted prejudices and assumptions within sociopolitical culture allowed for the emergence and sustainment of residential and Indian Day Schools over decades?
- How and where might these prejudices and assumptions continue to affect educational decisions?
- How am I complicit in supporting these prejudices and assumptions, and what do I do to change it?
- What is my call to action?

This personal and ethical inquiry is framed by the ethics of care, respect, trust, and integrity that guide the teaching profession in Ontario. Travelling on the path of critical self-reflection will sometimes get bogged down by feelings of uncertainty and being lost. We can collectively draw strength and hope if we journey together.



*Figure 27: The Ethical Standards of Care, painting by Elizabeth Doxtater*





*Figure 28: Fence Post in Fall from Former #4 School Yard.  
Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Doxtater.*

## Residential Schools & Indian Day Schools: Survivors, Current Learners, and Future Generations

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Included are narratives, poetry, and statements that illuminate an ongoing dialogue, around disclosure, self-preservation, survival, healing, and hope.

### From the Land of the Peacemaker:

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*According to the Two Row Wampum Treaty, the ancestors envisioned us to be in a canoe. I am paddling, healing, and learning. I did not grow up in my maternal home community, Tyendinaga at the Bay of Quinte, the birthplace of the Peacemaker. My educational experience was one where I did not see myself, nor others like me. As a child from a blended cultural background (my mother is Mohawk, and my father is Italian), this experience was not questioned but it did carry heaviness. As an adult, I have only recently started to unpack the many generations of educational experiences that influenced my own learning. There are many valid reasons why so many Native families do not share their stories, with each other or with the children in their lives. I have come to understand that this is done with the intentions of the truest love.*

*As an Indigenous woman, parent, and as a person that works within the education system, my responsibility is to support Indigenous youth, learners, families, and communities in educational spaces by helping to vision and redesign the places, spaces, and experiences that were not designed for us, nor for our well-being.*

*The concept of Indigenous educational wellness recognizes that the keys to healing and wellness are within our own knowledge systems.*

*This is where I am steering my canoe and how I am preparing to hand over the paddle.*

– Kristina Zito, MSW, RSW  
Mohawk Turtle Clan,  
Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory  
Indian Reserve #38.



*Figure 29: Fence Post in Summer from Former #4 School Yard.  
Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Doxtater*

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## Intergenerational Healing

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*My dad only knew farm work from being in the mush hole<sup>11</sup>. So that's all I did. I worked picking strawberries beginning in 1969 at age 5 and up, tomatoes from age 5/6, cherries age 7/8, and age 9 to 34 I worked in tobacco.*

*Ever since Grade 1, I remember students getting the strap and getting their hair pulled by the teacher, getting called "heathen." We had to put our hands on the desk so the teacher could hit them with her pointer stick.*

*I remember the principal getting upset because I wouldn't cry when he hit me. So he jumped up and hit even harder.*

*All this time, when I was in school, I was an honour student. I always would have to work harder during the school year to catch up because I worked into harvest time right into October.*

*Then I'd start back on the farms during planting time in May. I went back to school when I was an adult. In 1996, I graduated with honours from the Social Services Worker Program, Niagara College.*

*In 1999, I went to Six Nations Polytechnic and graduated with honours from the University Access Program and then went to Brock University in 2015.*

*I'm completing my Bachelors of Education Degree. I will graduate this year.*

– Debora Martin,  
Mohawk, Bear,  
Six Nations Indian Reserve #40  
Grand River Territory

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<sup>11</sup>Nickname of the Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford



*Figure 30: Beaded Bird, representing Kenkwit :ne (Springtime and Hope), by Barb Thomas, Tuscarora Nation Skar :r ? (Tuscarora) – Hemp Gatherers, Wearers of the Shirt Nation, Snipe Clan*

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## Hope

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*I have attended elementary schools on my reserve for Grade 1 – Grade 7, and Mohawk Institute in Brantford for Grades 5, 7 & 8.*

*Throughout those years I never once was taught about the history of my people, First Nations, or the present.*

*My original language, Cayuga, was heard in the ceremonies in the Longhouse I attended before public school. English was the only language spoken and written in the school.*

*Throughout my school attendance in elementary, secondary, and college, my people's history was never presented. Grateful for the elders in my community to revive my spirit and enhance and foster my personal and professional growth with culture, traditions, and language.*

*I believe teachers should have an understanding of our past history and our present environment. They should also be taking care of their own health and well-being.*

– Sherlene Bomberry, Thriver  
Cayuga, Wolf Clan  
Six Nations Indian Reserve #40  
Grand River Territory

## Two Spirits, One Sky

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*Figure 31: Photo of Eldest Brother the Sun and Grandmother Moon in the Sky Together, by Elizabeth Doxtater, Six Nations, Grand River, 2020*

## Mush Hole

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*Mohawk Institute Residential School:  
1951 – 1958*

*I often hear that those of us who “attended” residential school never talk about the time we spent there, with our children or grandchildren. More recently, from talking to my sisters who were also in the mush hole, I have come to realize that this silence is where intergenerational trauma is rooted and thrives. I was in the mush hole for eight years from 1951 – 1958.*

*Whenever I spoke of my experience, I would make light of it. I never discussed the reality of it and how it made me feel. Those memories are still, all these years later, too raw to talk about.*

*It wasn't until I read my granddaughter's poem, *The Haircut*, that I realized that she had researched on her own, to discover what might have happened at the school.*

*The fact that we all got our hair cut off on arrival, and then our heads were shaved up the back, only emphasized that they thought we were “dirty Indians” bringing in “bugs/head lice.” That haircut was the first thing that they used to take away every part of our identity, right upon arrival.*

*We marched two-by-two to church every Sunday. All the girls with our matching short haircuts and wearing matching navy blue uniforms with our matching sweaters, all of our pairs of stockings matched and all of us with the same shoes. We were a familiar sight along Mohawk Street. The children in the area, the ones that lived across the road with their families, would stand across the street and whoop those “Indian war calls” like in the old Western movies. It was humiliating and left us feeling ashamed.*

*Whenever we got to go home, to our own community, like on Bread and Cheese Day (Victoria Day) we never felt like we really fit in. We arrived on a bus, and we were all dressed the same. Nobody came to talk to us. Nobody said, “welcome home” or “we are glad you are here to visit.” I didn't think it even felt like we were getting to go “home.”*

*The kids who lived on the reserve, who still lived with their family, had their language and culture. Their connection to the community wasn't severed like ours was. They still had “family.” Over the years, that shame that we experienced, or that we were taught, became engrained in our psyche. We were ashamed of who we were. The mush hole made sure of that.*



*My great-great-grandmother Francis Ann Wampum was in the mush-hole. Her grandsons, my uncles, were in Mt. Elgin, and my sisters and I were in the mush hole. My grandson and granddaughter represent the seventh generation of our family who inherited this intergenerational trauma.*

*Today, I am proud of my children and grandchildren. My granddaughter is making it her business to reshape the intergenerational shame. She is learning her culture and language. I'm proud of her for that. She is proud of her heritage. At the same time, she's angry with some of the shameful policies that still exist when it comes to Indigenous peoples the world over.*

*I was #28 for those eight years in the mush hole.*

*Now I'm Marilyn Morley, retired educator **and no longer filled with shame.***

– Marilyn Morley  
Mohawk  
Turtle Six Nations Indian Reserve #40  
Grand River Territory.

## Commemoration

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### The Haircut

Stripped bare  
Of everything that defines me  
Skin scrubbed raw,  
To wash away my perceived sins  
Sleek black locks of culture flutter to the floor  
Swept away and disposed of  
Uniform-clad children,  
Marching in unison  
To the dining hall, to the classroom,  
To the White clapboard Chapel up the road  
To the house of their Creator,  
As night approaches,  
Retreating to the girl's dormitory.

Assigned numbers above each bed,  
Nameless child  
Dreaming of my family  
My home  
Remembering who I am  
I am Haudenosaunee  
I am Mohawk  
*Kaniénkehá:ka niwakonhwentsió:ten*  
Not #28, Say her name:  
"Totah!"  
"Marilyn!"

By: Emily Pitts,  
Mohawk, Turtle

*This poem was written to honour Emily's grandmother, Marilyn Morley.*

## Squash Blossom, Six Nations, Grand River 2021

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Figure 32: Onon'ónhsera' aotsì:tsya' (Squash Blossom)  
Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Doxtater

## A Note to Educational Administrators and Teaching Professionals

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This message is to aid in understanding the perspectives of Native people, students, families, and extended families, as well as Native educators and administrators who strive to heal the system from within.

There is a long history of legislative abuses that occurred in Canada, endorsed, condoned, and implemented by the Crown. The *Gradual Civilization Act of 1857* and the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869* preceded the *Indian Act of 1876*. There have been some modifications to the Indian Act over the years, including quietly expunging reference to Canada's residential schools in 2014 (Indian Act, 1985).<sup>12</sup>

This was done just one year prior to the *Truth and Reconciliation Report's* release in 2015. Dialogue with former "inmates" was documented in the *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Volume One: Summary: Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*.

I ask you to understand that Western education did not represent "opportunity" for most Native people. These institutions were intended, in our communities, to deprive our people of everything that defines who we are as sovereign, distinct nations. They represented trauma and continue to represent intergenerational trauma.

We can now take intentional steps that will infuse healing, not as isolated events, but as a well thought-out, continuous, and consistent process. We need mainstream educators and education administrators to understand that.

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<sup>12</sup>[Indian Act – Archived](#)

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Bob Watts, Adjunct Professor, Queens University, offers the following observations regarding the *Indian Act*:

“The *Indian Act* has been a colonial tool of oppression for as long as Canada has been a country.

Through the *Indian Act*, the federal government gave itself control over “Indian” land and trust accounts.

The mismanagement of land and trust accounts has resulted in billions of dollars of “land claims.”

Examples of mismanagement noted in the document referenced below include using and not paying back trust accounts for the development of Osgoode Hall and the Welland Canal.”<sup>13</sup>

– Bob Watts, MPA, PhD  
Mohawk, Bear Clan  
Six Nations Indian Reserve #40  
Grand River Territory

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Figure 33: Corn soup cooking on open fire.  
Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Doxtater.

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<sup>13</sup>[Land Rights: A Global Solution for the Six Nations of the Grand River](#)

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Justice Murray Sinclair, former TRC Commissioner, stated during an interview with APTN News:

“Public school systems have largely failed about respect for Indigenous people. They taught everybody that Indigenous people were inferior, had no rights, had no existence, had nothing worth talking about, that they were heathens, savages, pagans, uncivilized, that they were lucky Europeans came here and saved them from extinction – which is all mythology.

They basically taught white supremacy, saying that the white Europeans who came here and settled saved this country from being nothing. And therefore, they teach the myth of white superiority. And those twin myths of Indigenous inferiority and white superiority are the terrible results of the public school system.”

– (APTN News interview with Justice Sinclair hosted by Brett Forester, January 2021)

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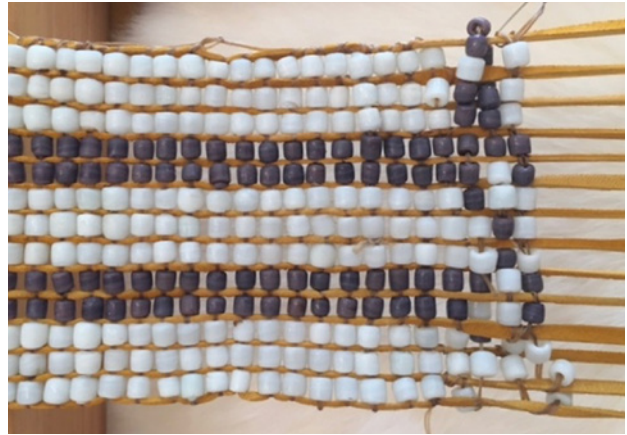


Figure 34: Image of the Two Row Wampum replica. Photo taken by Elizabeth Doxtater<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>This replica belt was part of the *Since Forever Art Show* in 2017 during Canada’s sesquicentennial (150th) anniversary., Treaty partners were invited to contribute individual rows for its completion. The intent was to keep the pattern accurate to foster respectful and meaningful understanding of this agreement. Supplies and instructions to follow the pattern of the Two Row Wampum belt were provided. However, some of the contributions, as seen in the last three rows of this image, reflect a disconnect between the learning and the application.

## Inquiry

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The historical record provides clear evidence of perspectives and stereotypes that supported the intention behind residential schools. In 1847, Egerton Ryerson's report to the Canadian government stated:

Agriculture being the chief interest, and probably the most suitable employment of the civilized Indians, I think the great object of industrial schools should be to fit the pupils for becoming working farmers and agricultural labourers, fortified of course by Christian principles, feelings, and habits (p. 74).

In 1883, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald stated:

When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. It has been strongly pressed on myself, as the head of the Department, that the Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men (Historic Canada, n.d., p. 2)<sup>15</sup>.



*Figure 35: Deliver Us From Evil, corn husk doll by Elizabeth Doxtater*

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<sup>15</sup>[Residential Schools in Canada, Education Guide](#)

Years later, Duncan Campbell Scott then-deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs stated:

“I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that the country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone...”

Our objective 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...”.

*(Facing History and Ourselves, n.d., paragraph 3).*

## Rhetoric and Discourse within Current Understandings

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Some have argued that what is described in this resource is simply historical. However, it is not uncommon to hear and read misinformation or perspectives that reinforce stereotypes and perpetuate a sociopolitical culture that supported residential schools, Federal Indian Day Schools, the Sixties Scoop, and other similar policies. These include

- *Canadians honour all cultures equally, treaties are not necessary*
- *Treaties can only be made between nations, and First Nations treaties should be rescinded*
- *It is unpatriotic that some First Nations people refuse to stand for the national anthem*
- *First Nations do not pay taxes*
- *Residential schools were a product of a particular era. They no longer exist, and we should move on*
- *Residential schools were not all bad. We should recognize that good things happened there as well*
- *The intent of residential schools was simply educational*
- *The Sixties Scoop happened in the 60s and we need move on*
- *The Federal Indian Day School system was not intended to support cultural genocide*
- *The Federal Indian Day School was something of the past and we need to move on*



Figure 36: Uncle Louie's Alarm Clock, painting by Elizabeth Doxtater



## Uncle Louie's Alarm Clock

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Uncle Louie was well-known as a muskrat hunter. His mother would arise at around 4:30 am to start preparing white corn that would be used for the day's cornbread. The pounder would echo through the neighbourhood.

In those days there was no electricity buzzing white noise through the house. There was no radio or television playing in the background to break the natural silence. The faint smell of coal-oil lamps and woodsmoke from the stove lingered in the air, but at this house there was always the strong smell of muskrat pelts that hung drying in the back porch. It was a humble home, before the time of artificial light from anyone's cellphone or laptop. There

was just the sunlight. It crept in gradually like it was repainting the life of this house every morning of every day. The sunlight accompanied the monotone solo created by the corn pounder, which doubled as Uncle Louie's alarm clock.

We can celebrate the memory of Uncle Louie's Alarm Clock as our own wake-up to our calls to action.

## Federal Indian Day Schools

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The TRC report sporadically calls upon provincial bodies to implement some of the calls to action. As the Ontario College of Teachers' contribution to this journey toward wellness, and with intent to create a clear delineation between injustices suffered in Native communities under the guise of education, we will practice and encourage self-efficacy, critical leadership, and inquiry by implementing our objectives.

In 2018, the federal government announced a class action lawsuit on behalf of survivors of Federal Indian Day Schools<sup>16</sup>. A definitive number of applicants is not currently known, and the deadline for application is in 2022.

We remind members of the three areas we identified for critical reflection:

- Commemoration
- Education
- Healing/Wellness

True reconciliatory actions must be meaningful. To be meaningful, they must be consistently infused into all aspects of our journey. We begin with commemoration.

In 1996, the last Federal Indian Day School named in the lawsuit was closed. In 2014, residential schools were removed from the *Indian Act*. As a result of the 2014 changes, we must acknowledge that the current Indigenous student population represents the first generation to not live under these policies. We also want to acknowledge that many of these students are intergenerational survivors of residential schools, Federal Indian Day Schools, or both.

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<sup>16</sup><https://indiandayschools.com/en>

## Section 3: Reflective Inquiry

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1

**Critically reflect on how the ethics of integrity and trust are fundamental to the resilience and hope expressed in the narratives and poetry.**

The statements by Macdonald, Ryerson, and Campbell delineate a biased political rhetoric that inspired and supported educational policies designed as cultural genocide to assimilate Indigenous students into a worker and labourer class.

These statements are in stark contrast to the intent of the [Ontario Education Act](#).

2

**Explore the correlation between learner dropout rates, youth suicide rates, unemployment rates, and poverty within Indigenous communities.**

Board responsibility for student achievement and effective stewardship of resources:

169.1 (1) Every board shall,

(a) promote student achievement and well-being;

3

**Explore the relevance of child welfare policies on Indigenous education and well-being.**

(a.1) promote a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting of all pupils, including pupils of any race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability;

4

**Explore how the biases and assumptions within hegemonic practices are still inherent in educational policies and practice.**

Provincial code of conduct

301 (1) The Minister may establish a code of conduct governing the behaviour of all persons in schools. 2000, c. 12, s. 3.

Purposes

(2) The following are the purposes of the code of conduct:

2. To promote responsible citizenship by encouraging appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community.

## Section 4: Reframing the Discourse of Indigenous Educational Wellness:

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### A Language within a Language

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Figure 37: *Like Smoke that Rises*, acrylic on canvas by Elizabeth Doxtater  
“Syncretism: We blend our tools with care as we walk forward together”.  
Elizabeth Doxtater – Art of Peace, 2016 pg. 62-64

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Indigenous languages are still spoken in many communities. They are instinctively protected and taught. In other communities, there are immersion schools for children and adults. Teachers work toward repatriating endangered or at-risk languages, as identified by UNESCO, back into families, communities, and Nations.

Indigenous languages classes are now available at all levels of education, as well as via grassroots initiatives in communities that are either on-reserve or off-reserve.

Many language teachers work tirelessly to protect ancestral words. These words represent honour and respect for the ancestors, traditional culture, and sovereign nationhood. These languages represent the cultural deprivation that produced intergenerational trauma experienced by many families.

We are thankful for the work of these teachers who assist healing a monumental part of our collective trauma. Appreciation and gratitude are extended to families and students who work to gain, protect, and preserve this ancestral knowledge.

There are some Native people who still speak their Indigenous language as their first language. Many Native peoples speak both their Indigenous language and English, while many have only English. When the English language is the only means available to describe our historic experiences, there are limitations. The English language offers many words and terms, but the concepts found within them often reinforce a victim state, rather than a state of resilience, empowerment, hope, or healing.

Medical science has long understood that poisonous venom can be extracted and used to make antivenom to cure poisonous bites from the same species. This can be used as a metaphor to understand how the English language, which was often violently forced on Indigenous people, can be part of the cure.

There are many words in the English language that provide context for the collective Indigenous experience. The list includes assimilation, colonization, exploitation, genocide, intergenerational trauma, manifest destiny, oppression, and subjugation. Initially these words can be misleading, in that they seem empowering. They also name profound injustices and expose hidden truths.

Although these words draw attention to the experiences inflicted on North American Indigenous peoples, they don't convey a sense of empowerment, healing, resilience, strength, or hope. This limits our ability to fully describe our lived experiences.

Despite the ongoing trauma many Indigenous communities endure, important facts get lost in the tendency to exploit stories of suffering that too often neglect the spectrum of healing. Beyond the overwhelming disparities that are presented lies a truth about our communities. Indigenous peoples are resilient. Indigenous peoples are healing. Indigenous peoples are getting stronger.

Acknowledging this reality comes with a need to develop new terms that express a subtle but powerful language-within-a-language.

These terms will be blended into an updated vernacular that will be more meaningful and relevant. They will better represent a language of empowerment, resilience, and strength that reflects being dissimilated Indigenous Nations within a larger nation.

Indigenous peoples do not need to passively learn and then recite English terms that limit cultural understanding, community development, individual aspirations, and pedagogies. Instead, we can co-create a form of reverse colonialism that finds empowerment in the language that defined and limited Indigenous peoples' collective potential.

Gestures toward reconciliation in accordance with the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report* are at risk of being reduced to the requirement of a recital of a land acknowledgement mentioning the 94 Calls to Actions from the TRC, and possibly referring to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Indigenous peoples reaffirm and maintain a distinct sovereign status and are the only group of nations who have nation-to-nation treaty relationships with the Crown. As Indigenous nations and communities become stronger and recognized as native to these shores, not mislabelled as minority or ethnic groups, it is important to include true reconciliatory actions in any education model.

Within this model, reframing the discourse of Indigenous education enables us to work toward restorative Indigenous educational wellness. This monumental time of truth and reconciliation affords us the opportunity to work as treaty partners and create models that honestly strengthen our relationships. We are at a place in history where we can reframe the discourse to commemorate the past, educate the present, and contribute to the wellness of the current and future generations of all treaty partners.

# Intergenerational Indigenous Educational Healing **REVILLAGIZED** Wellness Intergenerational Survival **COLONIOCID** Devillagize Indigenous Resilience **INDIGENISTANCE** Dissimilation

## *Continued... Reframing the Discourse.*

Suggested terms for this resource:

- **Devillagized:** being removed from the village model of life and its related systems of interdependence and cooperative living
- **Dissimilation:** will displace assimilation, it means that Indigenous individuals will be able to maintain their identity, despite colonialism and while participating in mainstream society.
- **Indigenous Educational Wellness:** There is opportunity to create space for this initiative. We can work collaboratively to develop an understanding of the relationship between education and wellness, and the historic legislative abuses that our communities continue to heal from. We can use the frame of mind of our ancestors when they were

in the ancient villages. Then we foster understanding that education is a part of total wellness and reframe Indigenous education discourse using rich Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies.

- **Palisade Model:** Our message to learners is that we each represent a pillar in the palisade that surrounds our ancient village. Even though we don't live in the ancient villages anymore, we can understand they are homelands where we can still carry ourselves with the dignity of our ancestors. We are responsible for individual contributions to protecting what our ancestors placed in that canoe as part of the Two Row Wampum treaty of eternal peace and friendship: language, culture, ceremony, governance, and territory. We are also responsible for fulfilling the original instruction "to help the people."

- **Restorative Indigenous Education:** We celebrate Indigenous knowledge, pedagogies, ways of knowing, ways of celebrating, ways of expressing and applying that knowledge while no longer living in fear from reprimand or punishment. This restorative education model offers a tempered learning environment that reflects true reconciliatory actions and the reemergence of Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies that communities were deprived of for so long.
- **Reverse Colonialism:** Taking the language and culture of colonialism and using them as tools of empowerment for Indigenous peoples

**This is a list of suggested terms as identified in *Art of Peace* (Doxtater, 2016):**

- **Coloniocide:** putting an end to colonization
- **Indigenistance:** will replace genocide with Indigenous resistance and resilience
- **Indigenous Resilience:** will displace Manifest Destiny
- **Intergenerational Healing & Intergenerational Survival:** will displace intergenerational trauma. Although struggles still exist, we can celebrate our resilience and the strides Indigenous peoples continue to take
- **Revillagize:** will displace decolonize and is the next step toward healing. The people will have the frame of mind our ancestors had when living in the ancient villages.
- **Peace, Power and a Good-mind, sometimes called Righteousness:** an expectation of each member of this group. This will counter the current survival tactics associated with lateral violence.





*Figure 38: Tesakarhateni (Turn Around) by Elizabeth Doxtater*

*This photo was taken in front of the Mohawk Institute residential school in Brantford. The Mohawk Institute was one of 18 Canadian residential schools that operated in the province of Ontario. The Mohawk Institute closed as a residential school in 1970 and reopened in 1972 as a Cultural Education Centre*

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## Section 4: Reflective Inquiry

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1

Reflect on and discuss how “thinking outside the box, thinking inside the circle” may shape your personal understanding and inform your professional practice.

2

The author models how reinvented words and terminology can help us reframe the discourse toward emancipatory and empowering language within a language. Explore the language you use within your personal and professional practice.

3

Reflect on how the artwork in this resource allows for multiple interpretations and new insights into Indigenous teachings, pedagogies, and epistemologies.

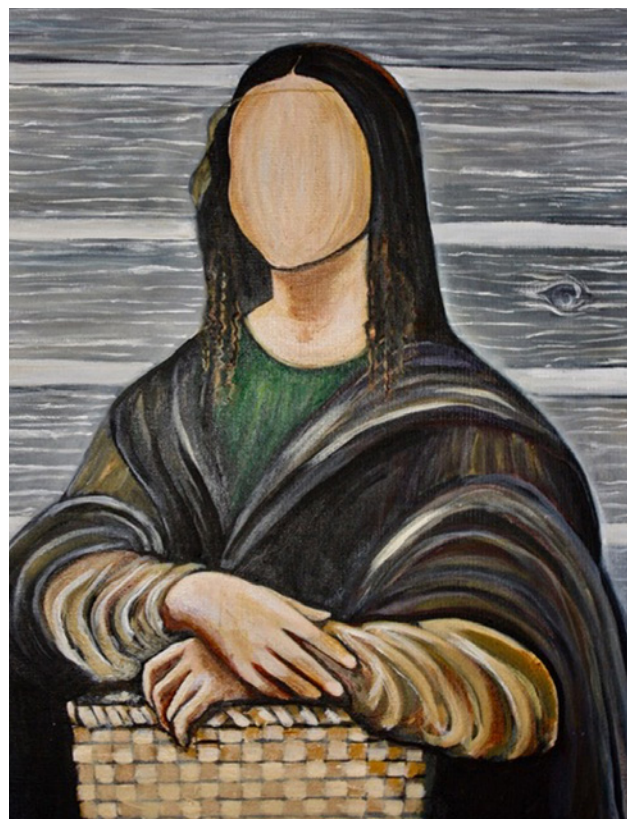


Figure 39: *Mona Lisa Made a Basket*, by Elizabeth Doxtater

## Section 5: Wellness and Moving Forward

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*“Our Children have their strong and resilient ancestors behind them, they have our songs, ceremonies, and our languages, our Children will overcome and they will thrive. I hope that as educators we do our part to support our Children on that path towards true reconciliation.”*

– Ursula A. Doxtator, B.A., B.Ed.  
Oneida Nation, Bear Clan  
Oneida Nation of the Thames  
Indian Reserve #41

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## Voice & Perspective

Elizabeth Doxtator

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### Solstice and Storytelling

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Did you ever wonder why the older people of the modern villages say it is so important to take your children to ceremonies?

Many years ago, in one of the ancient villages, eight boys were born around the same time. These boys were kindhearted and strong. They were quick to learn many important skills, and they were always agreeable to help with cooking. They learned by asking questions. A lot of questions!

These boys would often go on long hikes together exploring the woods and terrain that surrounded their village.

When they got a little older, the boys noticed that at certain times of the year their parents and other adults would leave the village together. They noticed that they would all be dressed in their fancy clothes, and they would carry their best baskets. Many times, the men would carry the drums and rattles needed for singing and they would be wearing their most elaborate headdresses.

This made the boys curious. They decided they should follow the adults to see what they were doing. Time passed and then one day they saw that the baskets in their lodges were filled with special foods; bean



Figure 40: Corn Husk Dolls, by Angel Doxtater



Figure 41: Corn Husk Dolls, by Angel Doxtater

cakes, corn bread, deer meat. Some boys noticed that their parents' baskets had special goodies that were sweetened with dried berries and maple candy.

The boys saw that some of the adults had prepared strawberry juice and others had made a delicious corn-mush. They also noticed that they weren't being offered to anyone. They knew that the adults were preparing to leave.

One of the boys then organized the other seven, and together the eight of them carried out their plan. They quietly followed their parents through the woods, being careful not to be seen or heard. They thought they were familiar with the whole landscape, but they were not prepared for what they saw.

High on a hill, further from the village than they had ever been, was a beautiful place they had never seen before. There were mature trees around a large area that was cleared out. In the centre were benches.

The baskets that were filled with foods were placed in the centre.

When all the adults were seated, some of the men took turns speaking and singing. The other men and the women would dance. The boys listened to the most beautiful songs they had ever heard and saw the most beautiful dances they had ever witnessed.

As the ceremony ended, the people shared all their foods. Soon after, they packed up their baskets and drums and rattles and left the area and returned to their village.

The boys remained at the clearing. They repeated the songs and the dances they just had seen. The only thing they didn't have was food.

The next day the boys each approached their parents. They asked why they were not allowed to attend ceremonies. Each boy was given an answer that didn't make sense.



Figure 42: Corn Husk Dolls, by Angel Doxtater

“It would be too hard for you to sit and listen,” said one parent.

Another parent explained, “It would be too much work for you.

The boys became tired of hearing excuses. They made another plan. They would prepare food and go to the ceremony place and perform their own ceremony.

Early the next morning, the boys woke and prepared the food they needed for their ceremony. They quickly and quietly left the village.

They reached the clearing. It was so majestic to them. They stood in awe. None of them could understand why they weren’t included. They then began setting up for their ceremony.

In the village, the parents were going about their daily chores when they realized the boys had left the village without first telling anyone where they were going. Some sensed that the boys might have gone to the ceremony place.

The parents were embarrassed, now believing they should have included their children in the ceremonies. They hurried out of the village to go speak to their sons.

One of the boys had begun to sing and the others joined in and danced. As they danced, they could hear movement in the nearby woods. They would soon hear the calls of their parents. “Come home, we will bring you to the ceremonies with us.”

As the boys danced and the parents cried to them, something amazing started to happen.

The boys' feet began to lift off the earth.

One of the boys had a mother who was yelling very loudly at her son to come back. Her voice was wavering with emotion. The singer kept singing and the boys kept dancing.

But her son looked back. When he saw his mother and father he fell back to the ground.

The other boys continued to dance, and their dance raised them higher and higher. Soon they were dancing in the skies and soon they danced into the heavens.

One night in the middle of the next winter, the eighth child looked up, and to his surprise, he saw them dancing straight above where he stood. He understood that it was once again time for the people to begin the cycle of thanksgiving ceremonies.



*Figure 43: Corn Husk Dolls, by Angel Doxtater*

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To this day when we see the Seven Stars dancing in the sky, they remind us that the cycle of ceremonies will begin once again. We also remember that our children understand the importance of the ceremonies, and that we should include them each time that we gather to give thanks.

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*Orihwí:yo ki ná:'a tsi yorihowá:nen onkwehonwe'néha ahontá:ti' ne onkwehón:we. Shi'kenikénhteron, takatáhsawen akewén:na akà:ronke' ahse'kén watyé:sen 'tho shikahá:wi akataweya'tá:ne' tsi nón:we shakotirihonnyén:ni's na Kanyen'kéha. Táhnnon nón:wa, ihsi nón:we oyé:ri niyohserá:ke yotohétstonh, táhnnon shè:kon wake'nikonhrahserón:ni' tsi éhtho niwakatyé:renh.*

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**Translation in English:**

*Of course it's important for Native peoples to know their language. When I was a teenager, I started to learn my language because I had access to a community-based language program to learn Mohawk. Now, 10 years later, I'm still quite pleased with what I've done.*

– George Doxtater\*  
BA in Linguistics,  
McMaster University, Canada  
MA in Multilingualism,  
University of Groningen, Netherlands  
Mohawk, Turtle Clan,  
Six Nations Indian Reserve #40  
Grand River Territory.

*\*George attended a Federal Indian Day School on Six Nations from kindergarten to Grade 8.*

## Calls to Action

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The 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation were released on June 2, 2015



Figure 44: Aubree Kanoranó: ron General,  
Photo courtesy of Vanessa McNaughton  
Mohawk, Turtle Clan

### *United Nations Rights of a Child<sup>17</sup>*

*It was agreed way back  
In the year '59  
Since adults have Rights  
I should have mine.*

*UN's Rights of a Child  
Is very long too  
To start you off  
We'll name just a few.*

*To be safe and to learn  
Be heard and to play  
And be able to grow  
And have a safe home to stay.*

*Access to health  
And nutrition for growth  
A Doctor or Dentist?  
I should have both.*

*I have a Right to my name  
And Nation of birth  
A Right to be free  
For my young years on Earth.*

*A Right to clean air?  
And water to drink?  
If you're polluting the Earth  
Please stop and think.*

*Each year on June 2  
We need you to say  
Rights of a Child  
On our own special day!*

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<sup>17</sup> Inspired by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



## From Where the Fire Burns

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*Indigenous knowledge produces unique and specialized understandings of all areas of thought and inquiry recognized and valued within Western knowledge systems, including STEM fields. Nevertheless, Indigenous knowledge has long been denied as a legitimate knowledge system, seen as “primitive” and subservient to Western knowledge.*

*While this history of open hostility and epistemic violence has been slow to transform, mainstream acknowledgment of the value of applying Indigenous ways of knowing to contemporary contexts is slowly emerging.*

*Today, Indigenous knowledge continues to make monumental contributions to the advancement of understandings in history, law, linguistics, politics and governance, women and gender, medicine, nursing, social work, human rights interventions, public health, technology, education, pharmacology, psychology, astronomy, architecture, chemistry, biology, physics, environmental and ecological sciences, resource and wildlife management, agricultural studies, among others.*

*In many ways, Western sciences are just beginning to catch up to what Indigenous peoples have always known. Indigenous knowledge is also imperative to research and education supporting social justice and ecological sustainability. These endeavours must be informed by Indigenous expertise drawn from the frontlines of struggles against settler colonialism, loss of biodiversity, and corporate resource extraction. Indigenous expertise, drawn from relationships to the lands, have existed for millennia.*

– Theresa McCarthy PhD  
Onondaga Nations, Beaver Clan  
Six Nations Indian Reserve #40

– Dr. McCarthy is Associate Professor of Indigenous Studies,  
University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY

## The Group of Six

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The Group of Six is a grassroots group of six youth artists from the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory.

We use the symbol of six paintbrushes tied together. We adapted this from the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace, Power, and the Good Mind where 5 arrows were bound together to symbolize the strength that we have when we unite.

We find unity through art!



*Figure 45: Unity through Art.  
Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Doxtater*

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***We are the coming faces to the world of Indigenous art as part of the Global Village.***



*Figure 46: Group of Six Youth Artists: DaeLynn Doxtater, Mya Warner, Imani Mitten, Sydnie Thomas, Josy Thomas. Missing from photo: Emily Pitts. Photo by Elizabeth Doxtater*

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Figure 47 : DaeLynn Doxtater, Oneida Turtle



Figure 48: Mya Warner, Cayuga Turtle



Figure 49: Imani Mitten, Mohawk Bear



Figure 50: Sydnie Thomas, Mohawk Turtle

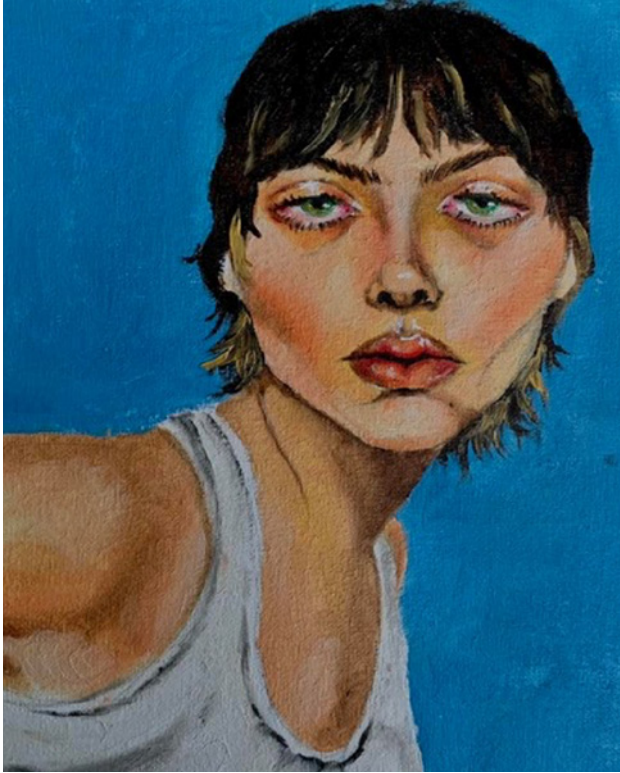


Figure 51: *Good Days* by Josy Thomas, Mohawk Bear

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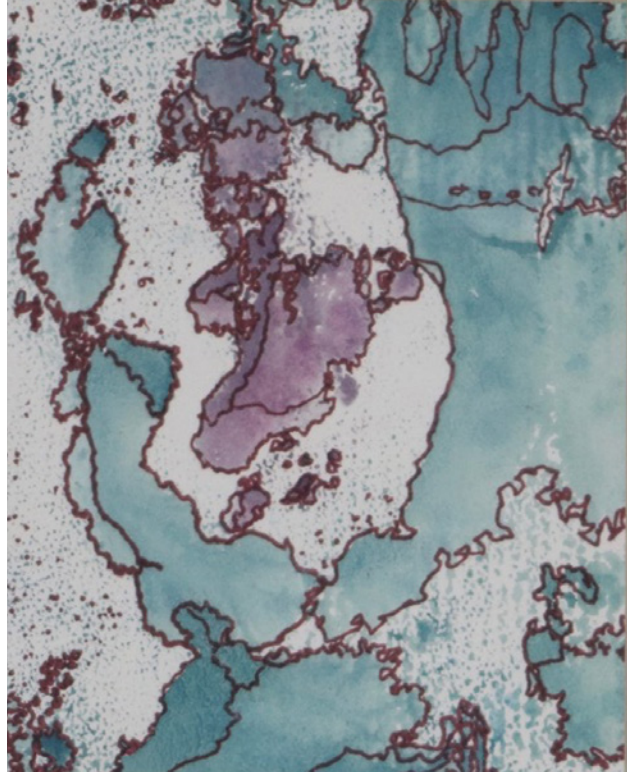


Figure 52: *Mohawk Turtle* by Emily Pitts

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## Elizabeth Doxtater Shares her Cornhusk Dolls

Currently, the buzzword is decolonize. Within the healing patterns associated with decolonizing, the focus remains on “them” (the colonizers). Healing is provided to us by “them.” This maintains the understanding that we are passive recipients of healing, we are waiting for healing, and creates the illusion that we are powerless.

(*Art of Peace*, Doxtater, 2016)

### The Three Sisters



Figure 53: *The Three Sisters*, currently among the collection at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, QC. Corn husk and mixed media by First Nations artist, Elizabeth Doxtater

I challenged myself to make the fanciest cornhusk dolls I could and show them in public. My idea was that everyone might be reminded of the beautiful things we can create. Sometimes our minds can become tangled, so weighed down by unending grief. When we try to straighten our minds, it can seem impossible. If we do nothing, we risk allowing the trauma that manifests in our communities to be mistaken as our identity. It is easy to feel bad, too powerless to try to contribute to collective healing. It can be so overwhelming that it feels like placing a tiny drop of water on a huge blaze. What can I possibly do to help?

The cornhusk dolls in the photo represent the Haudenosaunee trinity of sustenance known as *Tsyonhéhkwén* (the Three Sisters):

*ó:nenhste* (corn)  
*osahé:ta* (beans)  
*onon'ónsera* (squash).

When the seeds are planted and grown together, each plant plays an essential role in replenishing what the others take from the soil. They are a model for working together. The tall stalks of corn reach for the sun while supporting the intertwining beans and small squash runners that weave this trio together.

The bigger squash vines stretch out and stay low to the ground. The tiny prickly thorns on the leaves and vines act as a protector to all three, discouraging small predators. *Tsyonhéhkwén* remind us that if we identify each other's strengths and value each other for our differences, we all benefit.

*Ó:nenhste* is the tallest of the three. She was given her own protection. Each cob would be wrapped in husks that protect every kernel on each cob, on every stalk, in every field, every year, for too many years to count. The husk has protected the seed since the time of Creation and continues its duty to this day.



Figure 54: *The Ethical Standard of Integrity*, painting by Elizabeth Doxtater



Figure 55: Ó:nenhste, by Elizabeth Doxtater

*Tsyonhéhkwen* form the base for a healthy diet in Haudenosaunee life. They are still celebrated for maintaining their duty to sustain the health of the people who have protected the seeds and continued the harvest.

Approximately 1,000 years ago, Peacemaker came to the people to teach the *Kaienarakowa* (Great Law). At that time, corn was used as a tool to manipulate hungry warriors in exchange for their warfare secrets. This perpetuated wars between nations.

As the people started to accept the Great Law, *ó:nenhste* could be used to ensure that every nation member was properly nurtured in order to have a healthy body and a healthy mind. Each were essential principles in the Great Law that contribute to one's peace. Instead of war, the people would now work together to promote and protect peace by planting, harvesting, and storing their harvests together. Cornhusk was a vital part of this process.

The husk has many uses. It is used for ceremony, cooking, mats, and toys. Husk, when pulled back from the ear of the corn but still attached, is then braided with husk from other ears to create strings of corn that are hung to dry, making it convenient for storage during the winter months. Many families still have 100 braids of corn hanging from rafters after every harvest.

I use the cornhusk to make traditional faceless cornhusk dolls. I create dioramas with the dolls to represent stories and teachings. The husk that protects the seed now protects the stories and teachings. These dolls are always faceless. They remind us of humility from this traditional story:

A beautiful cornhusk doll was sent to entertain the children when their parents had to work. She would travel from village to village to carry out her duties. The children loved her, and she loved the children. People from the villages would say that she was very beautiful. She became curious, and one day while she was travelling between villages, she sat by the water to see exactly what everyone was talking about.

“WOW!”

She couldn't believe her eyes. She was the most beautiful thing she had ever seen! She tried to return to her work but was so distracted that she soon spent more time admiring her reflection than fulfilling her duties. The adults become frustrated and found other arrangements for their children. The beautiful doll was sternly reminded that she had an important job, but she neglected it. She would be given a new job. Her face was removed as a reminder that fulfilling her duties is more important than how she looks. This was done more as medicine for the people than as a punishment for the

doll. Although the children could still play with her, she would now remind everyone that true beauty is found in fulfilling one's responsibilities and sharing the gifts they were given. To this day, she is still admired for her beauty even though she has no face.



Figure 56: No Face by Elizabeth Doxtater



## Towards Wellness

The ancestors lived a life of constant gratitude for the strength they were given to provide for their families and villages. They gave thanks for what was provided naturally, and what was provided in their gardens. They agreed to share Earth's bounty and harvest only what was needed, and to protect the Earth to ensure that future generations could do the same. This ancient perspective was to be an endless inheritance for "the coming faces."

Indigenous communities continue to recover their inheritance from cultural genocide that was enforced through legislative abuses designed to deprive us of everything that defines nationhood.

There were deliberate attempts to quietly tuck away and erase these policies from public knowledge and memory.

Despite that, we now recognize many cases where individuals claiming to be teachers and holy people came to Indigenous communities and committed harmful acts against children and families under the guise of Western education. These acts were condoned by churches, funded by the federal government. For many Indigenous peoples, the education system represents everything from excellence in academic achievement to ongoing intergenerational trauma.

Recovery from generations of trauma inflicted on Indigenous communities is not an Indigenous issue. This is recovery from intentionally designed abuses that targeted children, tore families apart, damaged, and left long-lasting impacts on our collective humanity.

Since before Confederation, political leaders have advocated for these abuses.

Meanwhile, Indigenous communities heard few advocates who openly dismissed abusive rhetoric and associated claims of privilege based in racism. This continues to affect the development of trusting relationships between Indigenous communities and the education system.

Educators need to be aware of the positionality of Indigenous students, families, and staff in relation to historical context and ongoing legislative implications.

You might feel overwhelmed by wondering what you can do to contribute to the healing.

## A Tiny Drop of Water

A huge forest fire was burning. All the large forest animals watched in disbelief. Some were crying. Some were complaining. A tiny hummingbird appeared. She fluttered her wings and listened to the animals for a moment. She then flew away. When she returned, she had a tiny drop of water in her beak. She flew to the fire and placed the drop on the very top of the blaze. Some of the animals started laughing, “What do you think you’re doing?” The tiny bird replied, “I’m doing everything I can!”

The *Tsyonhéhkwen* dolls were my tiny drop of water. They remind whoever sees them that we come from a beautiful and rich culture that celebrates our values, knowledge, and pedagogies in our interactions with each other and all of Creation.



Decolonizing is commonly used to describe this monumental journey toward wellness. However, this asserts that Indigenous communities require healing strategies to be produced, provided, and sanctioned by the colonizers. It ensures that colonizers remain at the centre.

Like *Tsyonhéhkwen*, we draw strength from each other. As our journey continues, Indigenous peoples and treaty partners can work in a restorative manner toward true Indigenous educational wellness.

With treaty partners as allies and witnesses, we move forward together knowing that we are resilient. We will always be here, and we define ourselves. We know we can do anything. We move forward to a brighter future, knowing our collective potential.

*Our Restorative Journey Together continues...*

– Elizabeth Doxtater  
Mohawk Turtle Clan  
Six Nations Indian Reserve #40  
Grand River Territory

## Section 5: Reflective Inquiry

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**1**

Reflect on Indigenous peoples' right as sovereign nations to fully in meaningful discussions and develop recommendations for reconciliation and wellness

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**2**

Reflect on the diversity of contributions from Indigenous peoples across domains of knowledge (e.g., sciences, health, education, law, and medicine)

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**3**

For additional information about the Sixties Scoop, watch the 2016 National Film Board documentary *[Birth of a Family](#)* by Tasha Hubbard. How do the biases and assumptions that made the Sixties Scoop possible continue to exist today?

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## Reflection and Inquiry: Identifying Call(s) to Action and Personal Principles for Professional Life

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We extend thanks to all who are working toward an understanding of the Federal Indian Day School experience. Indigenous educational wellness requires restorative steps based on hope, honesty, love, mutual respect, and trust.

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**1**

**Think about personal and professional experience, context, relationships, and understandings**

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**2**

**Reflect on how this resource exposes history that has been hidden or omitted from curriculum**

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**3**

**Reflect on how the Ethical Standards and the Standards of Practice can be used to engage in ongoing professional learning to guide teaching**

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**4**

**Consider individual and collective ethical responsibilities as treaty partners**

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**5**

**As a treaty partner, generate and contribute to calls to action that enhance accessible professional and personal knowledge in support of commemoration, education, and healing/wellness**

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A group of education professionals identified the following guiding reflections as part of their personal and professional calls to action in response to Restorative Journey.

**“The way we educate our children and ourselves must change.”**

*– (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015)*

They are intended to inspire new calls to action within your educational community.

College members represent a blend of cultures and traditions that includes Indigenous educators within Indigenous communities. These distinctions might shift the participation of educators from participants to witnesses.

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### **I start my Restorative Journey:**

As a treaty partner and educator, I am called to nurture/build/grow/rekindle this relationship. I know there will be discomfort, but this will be outweighed by growth and reconciliation.

- What is my understanding of my role as a treaty partner?
- How am I engaging in this partnership?
- How will my calls to action support this relationship?
- How do the intended outcomes of my calls to action align with commemoration, education, and wellness?
- Who do these calls to action involve?
- What do I need to move forward with my calls to action?

### **My calls to action are:**

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### **I continue my Restorative Journey:**

- How will I know if I am contributing?
  - What insights and growth have emerged from calls to action?
  - What are my next steps?
  - Do my calls to action contribute to Indigenous educational wellness?
-

## THE GOOD MIND

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The teachings of the Good Mind have taught  
We should give thanks for all that we've got  
When we tap the maple trees  
Or feel the cool spring breeze  
When we see the stars glisten  
When the thunders roll, we listen  
When we see the sun or moon  
Or pick strawberries in June  
When we plant our seeds all in a row  
And have the strength to care as they grow  
We give thanks for this but that's not all  
We give thanks for the harvest in the fall  
Then we come together as one  
And give thanks for all that's been done  
We give thanks for all of the seasons  
And many more, so many more reasons  
We give thanks when a new baby is born  
But know we'll have days when we'll have to mourn  
But still we give thanks for what our lives bring  
And keep giving thanks for everything  
The teachings of the Good Mind are gifts  
That we can only repay,  
By conducting ourselves in a Good-Minded way  
Integrity, care, trust, respect and love  
Are the ways of the Good Mind that we must think of  
And those who try to embrace this way  
Are practicing what the teachings would say  
The teachings of the Good Mind have taught  
We should give thanks for all that we've got

## Closing Address

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Now the time has come where you will all listen once again to the thanksgiving address. It is of one mind that shall be used by all of us to give thanks to our Creator.

Now is the time where we once again give thanks to all the different peoples. We send our prayers that all will be of peace among us. That is how it shall be in our minds.

Now is the time where we once again give thanks to our Mother Earth. We send our thanks for all the natural entities she carries on her body. That is how it shall be in our minds.

Now is the time where we once again give thanks to him, the one who completed our bodies. That is how it shall be on our minds.

Now is the time where we all ask upon the Four Sky Dwellers to watch over all of us while we all make our return to our households.

Now our minds are free to return to our own matters. Now it is time for the unbinding of our many minds.

That is all – *onen ehto*

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***We define ourselves.***

***We walk forward, to a brighter future knowing our collective potential.***

***We know that we can do anything.***

***We are still here.***

***We will always be here.***

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## Appendix 1

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The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth*, Reconciling for the Future lists 94 calls to action. The below relate to education:

6. We call upon the Government of Canada to repeal Section 43 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*. (p. 320).

*Every schoolteacher, parent or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances. Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada.*

7. We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. (p. 320)

8. We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves. (p. 320)

9. We call upon the federal government to prepare and publish annual reports comparing funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves, as well as educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non-Aboriginal people. (p. 320)

10. We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:

- i. Providing sufficient funding to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation.
- ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates.
- iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula.
- iv. Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.
- v. Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems.
- vi. Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children. (p. 320)

11. We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education. (p. 321)

12. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families. (p. 321)



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## Education for reconciliation

62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators to:

- i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for kindergarten to Grade 12 students.
- ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
- iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms. (p. 331).
- iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.

63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

- i. Developing and implementing kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.

- ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.

- iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.

- iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above. (p. 331).

64. We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders. (p. 331).

65. We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation. (p. 331).



Figure 57: From Chief Dan George's 1967 speech *Lament for Confederation*.  
Cornhusk and mixed media by First Nations artist, Elizabeth Doxtater

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