

# CULTURAL RESPECT—Intro to terms and issues

British Columbia is home to 203 First Nations. See the [map at this link](#) to view BC First Nation community profiles. –*BC Assembly of First Nations*

## Indigenous People in British Columbia

BC is home to 270,580 Indigenous people as of 2016. According to [census data](#), close to two-thirds identified as First Nations, one-third were Métis and less than 1% were Inuit. First Nations people live both on- and off-reserves. Métis and Inuit live in urban and rural communities. Indigenous people have distinct cultures, worldviews, languages and traditions.

[Historical timeline](#) –*Union of BC Indian Chiefs*

**Colonialism** is the extension of a nation's sovereignty over territory beyond its borders. This happens by establishing either 'settler colonies' or 'administrative dependencies.' Indigenous peoples are directly ruled or displaced. Colonizing nations generally dominate resources, labour, and markets of the colonial territory, and may also impose socio-cultural, religious and linguistic structures on [Indigenous] populations. –*New World Encyclopedia*

**Decolonization** requires non-indigenous Canadians to recognize and accept the reality of Canada's colonial history and how it continues to subjugate Indigenous Peoples. Decolonization requires non-indigenous peoples, governments and organizations to create spaces and supports for Indigenous peoples to reclaim all that has been taken from them. Some Indigenous peoples think this is almost impossible and believe "decolonization" to be an empty word. "[Anti-colonialism](#)", meaning to stand against colonial supremacy and power, is an important concept.

**Indigenization** requires non-indigenous people to be aware of Indigenous worldviews and to respect those worldviews as equal to other views. Indigenization is about incorporating worldviews, knowledge and perspectives into education, health and other social systems.

## Anti-Indigenous Racism

To better understand racism experienced by Indigenous peoples in Canada – in historical context, how it affects people and communities, and what programs, policies and strategies exist to combat it, see the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health [fact sheets at this link](#).

## Unceded territory

"Unceded" means not signed away through a treaty or surrendered in war. In British Columbia most of the land is unceded and without treaty. According to British law dating back to the [Royal Proclamation of 1763](#), First Nations retain jurisdiction, or rights to their lands.

## Aboriginal Title

Aboriginal Title is held collectively by an Indigenous group for the present and all future generations. Title is legal recognition that the Aboriginal group holding Aboriginal title is the true owner of the land. The Supreme Court of Canada has confirmed Aboriginal Title in a number of modern instances, including the 1973 [Nisga'a Calder case](#), the 1997 [Delgamuukw-Gisday'wa](#) decision, and the 2014 [Tsilhqot'in](#) decision.

## Words matter

*Aboriginal, Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, Inuit, Inuvialuit, Innu, Indian, Native, First Peoples...*

What terminology is or isn't appropriate to use? It's not always the same!

Some helpful references:

- [Terminology](#) –*Indigenous Foundations, UBC.*
- [Elements of Indigenous Style](#) –*Greg Younging, Brush Education (2018).*
- [A Note on Indigenous Terminology](#) –*CanLit Guides (2013).*
- [Writing about Indigenous Peoples](#) –*Canadian Press Stylebook (2017).*

## Self-determination

Self-determination is a broader right than self-government. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) states in

Article 3: “Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

### **Self-government**

UNDRIP Article 4 states: “Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs...”

**How the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples can be implemented in BC** –*Union of BC Indian Chiefs and Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-BC (2018).*

### **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**

The UN General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in September 2007 with a majority of 144 states in favour, four votes against (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States). The four countries voting against have since reversed their position and now support UNDRIP. This Declaration establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous peoples.

### **Indian Act**

The Indian Act is a Canadian federal law that has governed Indian status, bands, and Indian reserves for 143 years. Throughout history The Act has been highly invasive and paternalistic as it authorizes the Canadian federal government to regulate and administer the affairs and daily lives of registered Indians and reserve communities. This has ranged from imposing governing structures on Aboriginal communities in the form of band councils, to control over the rights of Indians to practice their culture and traditions. The Indian Act has enabled the government to limit the land base of these groups in the form of reserves, and even to define who qualifies for Indian status. –*Indigenous Foundations, UBC*

**21 things you may not know about the Indian Act** –*CBC News (2016).*

### **Truth and Reconciliation in Canada**

Indian Residential Schools were created to separate Indigenous children from their families in order to weaken family ties and cultural linkages, and to indoctrinate children into Euro-Christian Canadian society. The schools were government-funded and Church-run for over 100 years, the last one closing in 1996. As a result of abuses suffered by generations of Indigenous children, Canada’s relationship with Indigenous people has suffered and healing and reparation is needed.

### **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada**

The TRC was established as part of the Indian Residential Schools (IRS) Settlement Agreement in 2007. The Commission spent six years travelling to all parts of Canada documenting the truth of survivors, families, communities and anyone personally affected by the IRS experience. A key finding was that Indian Residential Schools facilitated cultural genocide.

On December 15, 2015, the TRC released its **final report** and **94 calls to action** (recommendations) to advance the process of reconciliation in Canada. The calls to action include on child welfare, education, language and culture, health, and justice.

The Prime Minister outlined a 5-point plan towards a new relationship with Indigenous people in Canada, which involved action to:

- implement all 94 recommendations from the TRC,
- make significant investments in First Nations education,
- lift the 2% cap on funding for First Nations programs,
- launch a national public inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women, and
- repeal all legislation unilaterally imposed on Indigenous people by the previous government.

**National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation** now houses the work of the TRC at University of Manitoba.

### **Sixties Scoop to today**

The “Sixties Scoop” describes a period in Canada in which thousands of Aboriginal children were removed from their birth families and placed in non-Aboriginal environments. The Canadian government has agreed to implement a \$875-million settlement. A second wave of apprehensions, the “**Millennium Scoop**”, followed. A crisis in child welfare persists in BC today: 64% of 6,804 youth in care identify as Indigenous, even though they make up less than 10% of the population under age 19.

**Report: Indigenous Resilience, Connectedness and Reunification - From Root Causes to Root Solutions**

–Grand Chief Ed John, special advisor on Indigenous children in care, made 85 recommendations to better support the needs of all Indigenous children (2016).

**Cultural Safety**

The goal of cultural safety is for all people to feel respected and safe when they interact with the health care system. Culturally safe health care services are free of racism and discrimination. People are supported to draw strengths from their identity, culture and community. See local cultural resources at this link. –Northern Health Indigenous Health

**Truth and Reconciliation Statement – BC Association of Family Resource Programs (2017).**

**BC’s government has adopted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action** and introduced **Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia’s Relationship with Indigenous Peoples.**

**BC Indigenous Child and Family Development**

Based on the New Relationship, the provincial and federal governments, and other agencies, are working together to improve government-to-government relations with First Nations.

The **Recognition & Reconciliation Protocol on First Nations Child, Youth & Families** outlines the commitment between the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) and the BC government to define clear goals and actions to help improve the well-being of First Nations children, youth and families in BC.

In March 2016, the BC government and the First Nations Health Council (FNHC) signed a memorandum of understanding on a collaborative approach to address the social determinants of health for First Nations peoples of BC.

The **Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework** (APPF), endorsed in 2015, is intended to improve outcomes for Indigenous children, youth, families and communities through restorative policies and practices on- and off-reserve, regardless of whether they’re being served by a Delegated Indigenous Agency or the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development.

**Toolkit for Reconciliation/Decolonization of Social Work Practice at the Individual, Workplace, and Community Level**

–Indigenous Working Group of the British Columbia Association of Social Workers (2011).

**Jordan's Principle** –Canadian Human Rights Tribunal

**WATCH**

- **Cultural Safety video** – Indigenous Health
- **Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN)**
- **National Film Board of Canada indigenous films free online**

**LISTEN**

- CBC Radio **Unreserved**

**READ**

- **Cultural Safety booklet** – Indigenous Health
- **Theytus Books** –The oldest Indigenous publishing house in Canada, Theytus Books is First Nations-owned and operated in partnership with the En’owkin Centre in Syilx Okanagan territory.
- **Whose Land is it Anyway? A Manual for Decolonization** –Peter McFarlane & Nicole Schabus, *Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC (2018)*.
- **Reconciliation Book Club** –*Federation of Community Social Services of BC, Reconciliation Action Group*
- **108 Indigenous writers to read** –CBC Books
- **Indigenous reading list** –*Vancouver Public Library*
- **Canadian Indigenous Books for Schools** – *Association of Book Publishers of BC (2018)*

