

# Indigenous Issues in Health

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TB Screening Training Module

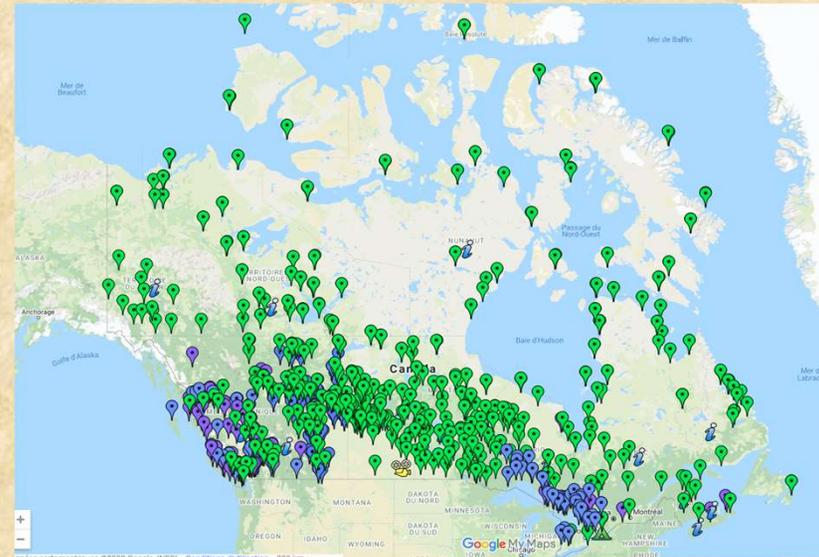


# Indigenous People: Who are we?

- Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Indigenous peoples: Indians\* (more commonly referred to as First Nations), Inuit and Métis.



\***Indian Act** is still in force, so you will still see the designation as Indian in legal definitions, however more commonly referred to as First Nations.



# Inuit Nunangat

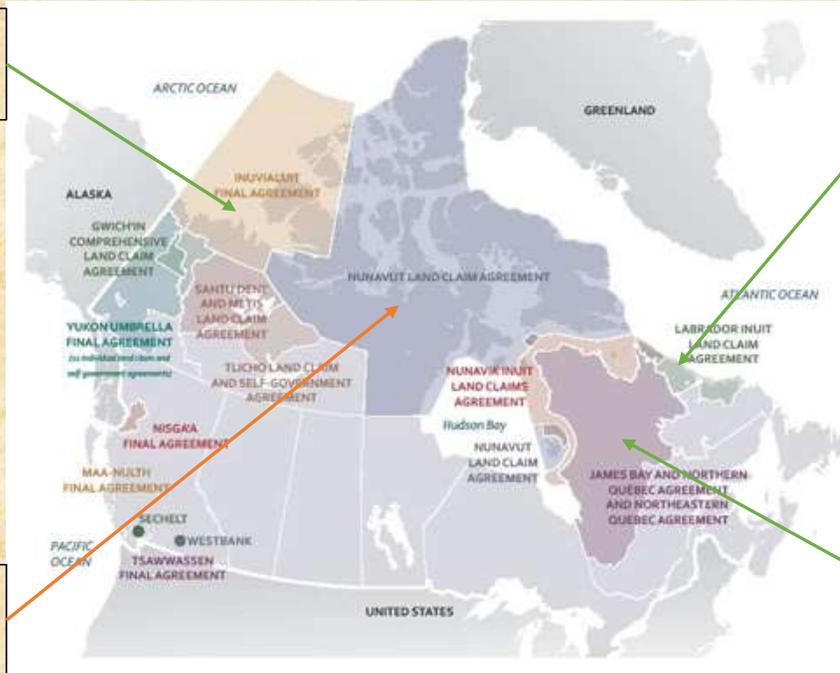
- Inuit have their own system of governance, represented by the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)
- 53 Inuit communities in 4 regions
- Approximately 64,235 Inuit live in Canada





# Land Claims

Inuvialuit: Western Arctic Claims Settlement Act (1984)



Nunatsiavut: Land Claims Agreement between the Inuit of Labrador and Her Majesty the Queen (2005)

Nunavut: Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act (1993)

Nunavik: James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (1975)



# The 11 Nations

55 Communities

- Abenakis
- Anishnabe
- Atikamekw
- Eeyou
- Innu
- Wolastoqiyik
- Naskapi
- Huron-Wendat
- Kanyen'kehà:ka
- Mi'kmaq
- Inuit (14)



# First Nations and the Indian Act

*Treaties were signed as a sign of mutual respect and goodwill between Indigenous people and Settlers.*

Then...Sir John A. MacDonalD said:

« The great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to change." John A. Macdonald (1887)



# Assimilation Attempts

Indian Act: (still in function today)

- Introduction of Reserve System

“Indians and Lands reserved for Indians,” providing exclusive authority of the Federal Government over Indian affairs

- Inuit were not part of this until 1939, because there was a lack of interest from the government to their lands.

<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Walking%20Together/PD-WT-16o%20-%20Inuit%20Experience.pdf>



# Assimilation Attempts

- Enfranchisement was mandatory (until 1961)
  - Forced to give up status if you wanted to get educated, to vote, join the military, or a veteran.
- Not allowed to hold meetings, seek legal advice, fundraise for legal matters (until 1951)
- Ceremonies and Ceremonial clothing banned (until 1951)
- Residential Schools became official policy
- Sixties Scoop



# Inuit

- « Eskimo Tags »: numbered identification used to identify Inuit, used until the 1980's. (Family Allowance Act)
- Traditional names were replaced with Euro-Christian names/Translated
  - Taking away the importance of family, spirits, animals, environment from traditional names.
- Slaughter of Sled dogs in order to force relocation



<https://thediscoverblog.com/2016/06/22/the-inuit-disc-numbers-and-project-surname/>



# Residential Schools

- Government mandated, Church administered.
- Children were taken away from their families with the goal of killing the « Indian in the Child ». Many were taken away far away from their homes as a strategic move to alienate children from their families.
- Many died from negligence and maltreatment or during attempt to run away,
- Many suffered physical, sexual, abuse, experimentation.
- Punished for speaking language and performing ceremony.



# Residential Schools

- Canadian Government gave official apology for its hand in these schools (2008)
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission report and Calls to Action released (2015)
  - National Day of Truth and Reconciliation September 30
- Last school closed in 1996



# Sixties Scoop

- Children were taken from their parents as newborns, by child welfare services and placed/adopted out into non-Indigenous homes.
  - Loss of culture
  - Loss of Identity
  - Loss of Language



# Intergenerational Trauma

- Parenting skills ripped from future parents
- Bonds broken
- Traumas inflicted upon survivors passed on to the next generation
- Loss of identity and culture
- Loss of Language



## What is Intergenerational Trauma?

If people don't have the opportunity to heal from trauma it's likely that their experiences and negative behaviours will start to impact on others, particularly children who are susceptible to significant developmental impact when they experience trauma at a young age. This creates a cycle of trauma, where the impact is passed from one generation to the next, creating a snowball effect of cumulative damage.

In the case of the Stolen Generations, parents might also pass on the impacts of institutionalisation finding it difficult to know how to nurture their own children because they were denied the opportunity to be nurtured themselves.

Research has shown that people are not just effected by the traumatic events that they directly experience. Witnessing or hearing about trauma for their family or community also has a direct impact.





1944 - Pastoral Visit.





# Kamloops Residential School



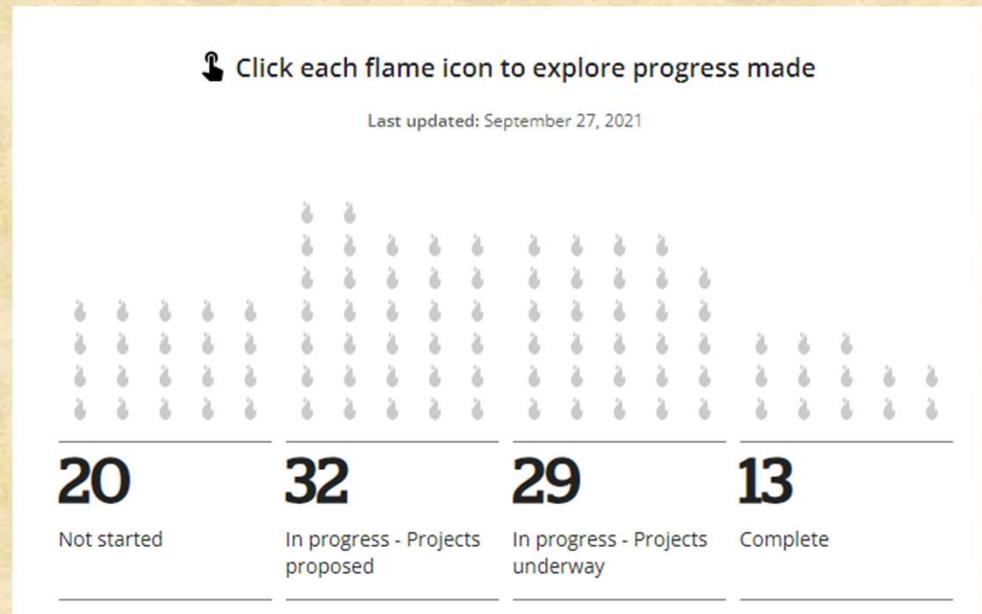
- May 28, 2021, discovery of 215 unmarked graves at the site of former residential school in Kamloops, BC.
- Other searches up until now have found thousands more at other residential school sites

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/canada/remains-of-215-children-found-at-former-residential-school-in-british-columbia-574512722.html#&gid=null&pid=1>



# Commissions, Inquiries, etc...

- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996)
- TRC (2015): 94 Calls to Action
- Viens Commission (2019): 142 Recommendations
  - 68 are being worked on
- MMIWG Inquiry (2020): 231 Calls for Justice
- Coroner Géhane Kamel's Investigation report on the death of Joyce Echaquan (2021)



# Systemic Racism

- a form of racism that is embedded through laws and regulations within society or an organization that leads to disadvantages to Indigenous people.
- Has a direct impact on social determinants of health: housing, employment, education, health status, access to affordable food, transportation issues etc.



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# Examples:

- Brian Sinclair: Homeless double amputee, sat in an emergency room in Winnipeg for 36 hours and died because staff thought he was drunk.
- Kimberly Gloade: Turned away from Montreal hospital because she didn't have a RAMQ card.
- Joyce Echaquan: Died in Joliette hospital as staff shouted racist slurs.
- BC Emergency Hospital staff allegedly betting on blood alcohol levels of Indigenous patients



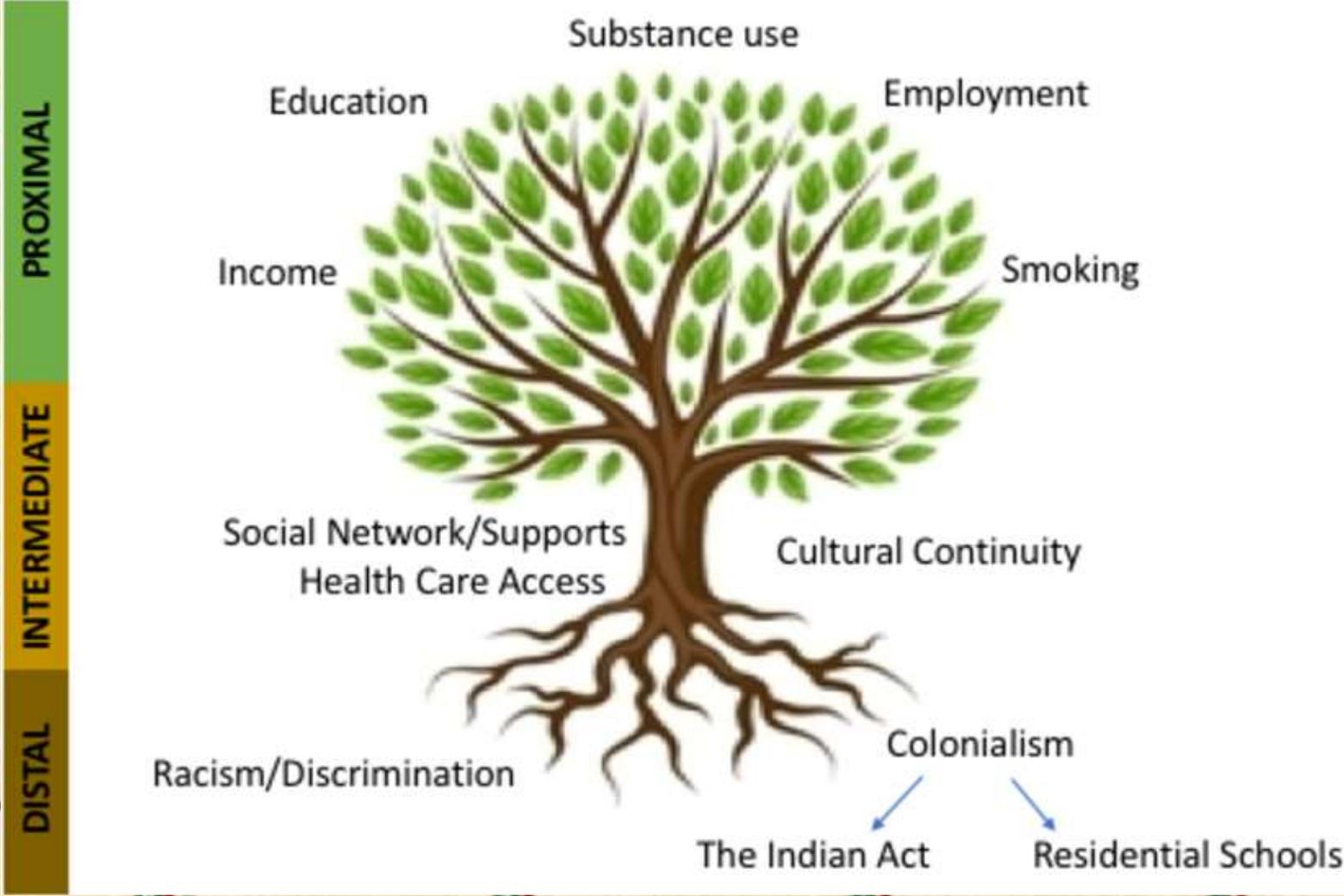


Image Credit: Stephanie McConkey, *The Indigenous Determinants of Health as Predictors for Diabetes and Unmet Health Needs Among Urban Indigenous People: A Respondent-Driven Sampling Study in Toronto, Ontario* The University of Western Ontario, 2018) [unpublished], fig 1.



# Public Health

- Present-day policies have been considered to be a repeat of historical policies imposed onto Indigenous People:
  - Residential Schools and Youth Protection
  - C.D. Howe TB Ship and TB Treatments in the south
    - Trudeau's government formally apologized for this in March 2021.
  - Years spent in southern sanatoria
  - Family members lost during TB-era, buried in the south.
    - Nanilavut (Let's find them)
  - Medevac's for children on EVAQ: Parent's not allowed on-board.



# IQI Model

**Ilusirsusiarniq:** Physical well being

**Qanuinnngisiarniq:** Mental well being



**Inuuqatigiitsianiq:** Mental well being

# PHAC Social Determinants of Health

- Income and social status
- Employment and working conditions
- Education and literacy
- Childhood experiences
- Physical environments
- Social supports and coping skills
- Healthy behaviours
- Access to health services
- Biology and genetic endowment
- Gender
- Culture
- Race / Racism



# Reconciliation

- Learn the true history, acknowledge the past.
  - Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report
  - Viens Commission Report
  - MMIWG Report
  - Coroner's Report into the death of Joyce Echaquan.
- Be aware of the ongoing realities that impact Indigenous people today.
- Recognize strengths of people and your place in the community.
- Be an Ally.





Thank you!  
Merci!  
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