

Residential Schools of the 19th. & 20th. Centuries: Impacting the 21st. Century ...Or Not?

OCSWSSW ANNUAL MEETING & EDUCATION DAY

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Cheryle Partridge / Baybaamoosay-Kwe

Introduction

- Aanii, Boozhoo, Wachiya, Sago, Tansi, Kwe Kwe, Kia Ora, Bonjour, Greetings!
- Baybaamoosay-kwe n'dizhnakaaz – “Woman who leaves healing tracks”
- Migizi n'dodem – Eagle Clan
- N'winiishoo Midewiwin - Second Degree Midewiwin
- Anishinaabe miinwaa Potawatomi n'dow – I am Anishinaabe & Potawatomi
- Wasauksing miinwaa N'Swakamok n'doonjibaa – Wasauksing F.N. & Sudbury
- AKA – Cheryle Partridge

Introduction

- This presentation will touch on one of the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 94 Calls To Action which included the areas of Child Welfare, Education, Language & Culture, Health and Justice.
- I will address parts of Call To Action #63 under Education & Reconciliation. Specifically;
- “(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” (TRC, 2015, p.6).

Introduction

- I will speak about the **past**, or the historical aspect;
- The **present**, or what is currently being done,
- And the **future**, will the recommendations be implemented?

Introduction

- This session will serve as an awareness to those who are not familiar with the era of residential schools in Canada and what former Justice Minister Irwin Cotler labeled, “*the single most harmful, disgraceful, and racist act in our history*” (Warry, 2008, p. 62).
- The knowledge acquired today should address the information and awareness gap.

The Past or The Historical Aspect

- First Contact – ‘culture shock’ for all involved, not the least of which was the language barrier, appearances (on both sides); including clothing, colour, and hair.
- Colonization – rapidly followed, with all that entailed; settlers saw ‘unoccupied’ land, forests, fur-bearing animals and sweet, clean water.

The Past or The Historical Aspect

- The introduction of diseases such as small-pox which was devastating to Indigenous Peoples (I.P.).
- The introduction of alcohol, which was devastating to I.P.
- Warfare came to the New World and Indigenous Peoples had no defence against the weaponry used. Genocide and extermination were the order of the day.

The Past or The Historical Aspect

- Government Policies such as the British North America Act of 1867 – Section 91(24) – stated that the Federal Government, “has jurisdiction over Indians and lands reserved for Indians.”
- Next was the Indian Act of 1876. British policy toward the ‘protection’ of Indian people was based on two principles;

The Past or The Historical Aspect

- (i) Indians were considered incapable of adaptation and thus must be kept away from bad influences.
- (ii) the gradual integration and assimilation of Indian people through education and Christianization was to be encouraged.
- These fundamental attitudes have continued from the early days to the present.
- Subjugation was next with the relocation of Indigenous Peoples to 'reserves' and the forced dependency on the oppressors.

Residential Schools were next and those children who 'attended' faced many losses & many abuses (SEPM)

SPIRITUAL, EMOTIONAL,	PHYSICAL, & MENTAL
<input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF CONNECTION	<input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF FEELINGS
<input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF CHILDHOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF LANGUAGE
<input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF PRIDE	<input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF IDENTITY
<input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF COMMUNITY	<input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF TRUST
<input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF CONFIDENCE	<input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF SPIRIT
<input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF SKILLS	<input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF LIFE
<input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF MEANING	<input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF FAMILY

Intergenerational Trauma: A Definition

Intergenerational or multi-generational trauma happens when the effects of trauma are not resolved in one generation. When trauma is ignored and there is no support for dealing with it, the trauma will be passed from one generation to the next. What we learn to see as “normal” when we are children, we pass on to our own children....The unhealthy ways of behaving that people use to protect themselves can be passed on to children, without them even knowing they are doing so. This is the legacy of physical and sexual abuse in residential schools.

(Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 1999:A5)

The Present: What is Currently Being Done

- I am going to talk about my experience of teaching in the Indigenous Social Work program which is part of the School of Indigenous Relations at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario.
- Our program has been in existence since 1988. It is an Indigenous culture-specific social work program.
- We do practice our culture through ceremony and Elders are on campus.
- The Faculty and Staff are all Indigenous.

The Present: What is Currently Being Done

- The true history of the Original Peoples of this great land are taught.
- For many, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, this is their first introduction to what happened during colonization.
- It is a shock when they hear of the Residential School System (R.S.S.) and that children were ripped from their parents arms and taken many kilometres away and some were even taken to different provinces to residential schools!
- My father and two brothers went to Residential School in Northern Ontario. Only two survived. I am a Second Generation Residential School Survivor.

The Present: What is Currently Being Done

“(ii) sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history;”

- We educate the students about Residential Schools through reading materials written by residential school survivors.
- We have also had students who experienced residential school themselves.
- Although we don't have a specific course called 'Residential School,' the information is woven throughout the social work curriculum.
- One of the Role Models in 'Indian Country' is Phil Fontaine, a former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations who famously disclosed that he was sexually abused when he was at residential school.

The Present: What is Currently Being Done

“(iii) building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect”

- The Indigenous Social Work program’s foundation is based upon the Social Work Code of Ethics as well as the Indigenous Code of Ethics also known as the Seven Grandfather/Seven Grandmother Teachings.
- We teach from the Indigenous Theoretical Framework of the Medicine Wheel as well as ‘mainstream’ methods. We are accredited by CASWE.
- The Medicine Wheel is **inclusive** as shown by the four colours, which are Red, Yellow, Black and White. These colours are also known as the Four Races of Man & we all have our place on the wheel, no one is excluded.

The Present: What is Currently Being Done

“(iii) building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect”

- At one time or another, we have had all colours of the Medicine Wheel graduate from the Indigenous Social Work program.
- All were welcomed and all learned about the processes that brought us to where we are today.
- Learning the background and history of Indigenous peoples has brought intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect to the students.
- They emerge from the Indigenous social work program with a new and enlightened perspective of the Original peoples of this land.

The Present: What is Currently Being Done

- Since 1988 the Indigenous Social Work Program, has been;
- “(ii) sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history;” and
- “(iii) building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.”
- Sudbury is located on Anishinaabe territory and it is surrounded by F.N. communities which is probably why we are already implementing some of the calls to action in one way or another.

The Future

- Faculty and staff of Indigenous Social Work have just piloted a course on the language this spring. It will be offered more widely in the near future.
- An interdisciplinary course on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) will be offered on campus in the next academic year.
- There are many initiatives being discussed at Laurentian University regarding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action.
- Now that you have the information it is your responsibility to share what you learned with others, and so on. In this way more people become aware.

The Future

- My hope is that I have piqued your interest in an era of the past that you had little or no knowledge of, but now that you know a little, you want to learn more.
- I also want to draw your attention to an interesting fact. In spite of all that has gone on in the past, Indigenous Peoples have survived.
- We are still here in the 21st. Century! I would call that *resilience* of the first order.

Final Questions

- Can you share with me any initiatives that are happening in your area?
- What is your answer to the question posed by the title of my presentation?
 - **Miigwech / Merci / Thank you!**