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CANADA DAY

# WHY DO WE NEED ALTERNATIVES?

This zine has been made by settlers who are on our own journeys towards learning the true history of the place where we live - Calgary, Alberta, Canada also known as Mohkinstsis, Treaty Seven, and Turtle Island. Part of this work is an attempt at unsettling the idea of Canada Day for ourselves and others, while exploring our roles and responsibilities as uninvited inhabitants here.

Here are a few ways you and your family can further your learning, wrestle with the emotional discomfort of what it means to be a Canadian or a settler, and move into action and support of Indigenous rights in so-called Canada.

We've used a head, heart, hands model to break each section up into learning, emotions, and action because we recognize that we must engage with our whole selves to begin to come into relationship with the difficult truths of what it means to live on this land.

Each section has a mix of reflection questions, ways to learn, and ways to grapple with the harmful legacy that Canada has had in the lives of the Indigenous nations who have lived in relationship with this land for centuries.

Many of us are used to hearing about colonization as a historical event. But colonial harm to Indigenous communities on this land is ongoing. Some ways colonial violence is still happening and reasons for rethinking Canada Day include:

- Many Indigenous people experienced abuse by the religious orders that ran residential schools, which contributed to and still contributes to cultural and physical genocide of Indigenous people. One of the many horrific consequences of residential schools is it's affects on many survivors' ability to parent their own children in a good way by causing intergenerational trauma.
- The epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirited (MMIWG2S+) people across Canada. These cases regularly go un-investigated by police.
- A lack of access to clean drinking water, housing, and culturally safe education, both on and off reserve.
- The targeted policing of the child welfare system towards Indigenous families and communities (as evidenced in the sixties scoop and is ongoing today).
- Governments regularly supporting and financing resource extraction projects built on and across Indigenous lands without the consent of the nations whose land it is. This contributes to the forcible displacement of Indigenous people from their traditional lands and the MMIWG2S+ epidemic.



# HEAD HEAD HEAD

Take a moment and spend some time thinking about what you know about Indigenous history, Indigenous leaders, artists, etc. Then make a list: What do you and your family want to learn about Indigenous culture and history? Are there gaps in your knowledge? Things that you are curious about? What do you know about the history of Canada before it was Canada, and those who lived here? What is colonization? How has colonization been harmful to Indigenous communities? How has it benefitted those of us who are settlers? How is colonization also harmful for us?

Indigenous people have written a lot about their experiences & there are many books, podcasts, articles, stories, etc. for you to check out. Don't ask them to teach you - support their work. You can start with a quick Google search!

- Look up where the story of Turtle Island comes from and why Indigenous people refer to North America as Turtle Island.
- Learn about the history of colonization on Turtle Island, the Indian Act, Residential Schools, the Sixties Scoop, and current efforts to continue to colonize Indigenous people.

- Learn about Indigenous resistance movements such as Idle No More, Fairy Creek, Wet'suwet'en, Tiny House Warriors, the Red River Rebellion and the Mi'kmaq fishing rights defenders
- Look up whose land you are on - how do you pronounce the names of the nations? What are their traditional languages?
- Visit Blackfoot Crossing to learn about the signing of treaty 7
- Read the TRC Calls to Action, MMIWG2S+ report, and the White Goose Flying Report
- Watch "First Contact" on APTN
- Join the Indigenous Book Discussion Group through the library
- Join the Settlers' Book Club
- Calgary Public Library's Indigenous Reading List on Truth & Reconciliation
- Take the Indigenous Canada Course created by the University of Alberta
- Listen to these podcasts
  - Native Calgarian
  - Two Crees In a Pod
  - All My Relations
  - Missing & Murdered
  - Coffee with My Ma
  - Indigenous Action
- For Kids:
  - Look up Baby Librarian's "Indigenous Canadian Children's Books to Read to your Children"
  - Listen to the Warrior Kids podcast

**LEARN MORE  
ABOUT  
INDIGENOUS ISSUES**



# HEART HEART HEART

If thinking about the way violence has shaped the country we live in is uncomfortable, that's okay. It should be.

If, like us, you have bought into the myth that Canada is primarily a multicultural and an inclusive place, it can be hard (to say the least) to reckon with the fact that it is also a country built on and perpetuated by the genocide of and violence towards Indigenous communities.

These unsettled feelings might include shame or grief for the harm that has been caused, fear about what it means to truly address these harms, uncertainty about our role in reconciliation, and other hard emotions.

If we don't make space and time to feel these feelings on our own, we might end up looking away, responding in ways that aren't helpful, are straight-up harmful, or are flat-out denying of the truths of our shared history. When we don't do this, we stay stuck in the harmful cycle of colonization.

Some practices we like to use to process these feelings include; journaling, going to therapy, sharing our feelings with other settlers we trust, spiritual practices, and connecting to nature.

What helps you process difficult emotions?

Questions for reflection:

- How did you and your ancestors come to be on this land?
- What connection might they have had to residential schools, taking land to farm, etc?
- When you explore how you feel about Indigenous issues in Canada, what feelings surface? How does your body feel?
- What commitments have you/will you make towards supporting Indigenous justice?
- What does it mean to you to be a "good" Canadian? How might reconciliation fit into this for you?

## BRING YOUR HEART INTO THIS PROCESS



# HANDS HANDS HANDS

Take action to support by:

- Looking up Indigenous-led organizations and research how you can support them. Good places to start are: Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Urban Society for Indigenous Youth, Awo Taan Healing Lodge, Bear Clan Patrol, Calgary Alliance for the Common Good's Healing Tipi partnership, Niitsitapi Water Protectors, Treaty 6 Outreach and Beaver Hills Warriors.
- Writing to your elected officials:
  - Ask them for perpetrators of crimes against Indigenous children to be held accountable (clergy, staff in schools, RCMP, etc).
  - Demand a comprehensive search for unmarked graves at all school sites (TRC call to action #75).
  - Ask for places to be renamed if they bear the names of individuals involved with residential schools - EG. John A. McDonald
  - Ask your city councillor to take action on the recommendations in Calgary's White Goose Flying Report.

- Demand action from the Catholic Church:
  - Demand an apology from the Pope (an actual apology) as per the TRC call to action #58
  - Demand lands owned by church be returned to Indigenous people.
- Donate to orgs that support residential school survivors. Some you could donate to include:
  - Indian Residential School Survivors Society
  - Orange Shirt Society
- Think about safety of survivors and families when sharing information - offer trigger warnings and provide support services information.
- Talk to non-Indigenous friends and family about Canada's history and speak out when you hear misinformation and racism.
- Attend memorial events that are open to non-Indigenous people.
- Connect with the Reconciliation Action Group on Facebook.
- Google the 150 Acts of Reconciliation and commit to practicing them.

**MAKE COMMITMENTS AND**  **SUPPORT INDIGENOUS RIGHTS**

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Some other resources you could look up include:

- A free "Indigenous Canada" course through the University of Alberta
- A Decolonize Workbook from nahaneecreative.com
- Chief Lee Crowchild's "Making Wolf" video on Youtube
- "There's Something in the Water" on Netflix
- The National Film Board's section of films by Indigenous creators

Victoria, British Columbia, St. Albert, Alberta and several communities in New Brunswick have cancelled their Canada Day celebrations to reflect on the atrocities of residential schools and the recent uncoverings of the mass graves of children. We invite you to google and attend the alternative Indigenous led events happening in the city and make the choice not to celebrate Canada Day.

You can also follow these Indigenous-led accounts on Instagram and Tiktok to keep your leaning and action going:



@theindigenousfoundation @pam\_palmater  
@igpyyc @indigenousclimateaction  
@decolonizemyself @indigenous\_baddie  
@tiplerteaches @notoriouscree  
@decolonizefirst @idlenomoreyyc  
@autumnpeltier @larissa\_speaks  
@wetsuweten\_checkpoint @inclusivecanada  
@treaty6outreach @angela\_sterritt  
@niitsatpiwaterprotectors @bearclanpatrol



@native\_calgarian  
@thatnativeguy



# WE ALL NEED TO DO OUR PART TO END RACISM & COLONIALISM.

# NOTES & REFLECTIONS