



RESOURCE GUIDE

Honouring Truth and Reconciliation in the Workplace

A guide for organizations, highlighting key considerations and resources to help make Truth and Reconciliation work meaningful and intentional.

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“Together, Canadians must do more than just talk about reconciliation; we must learn how to practice reconciliation in our everyday lives – within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.”

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Report

In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the need to address historical injustices faced by Indigenous peoples. Here we offer guidance for organizations, highlighting key considerations to help make this work meaningful and intentional.

History & Context

Truth and Reconciliation efforts in Canada center primarily on the Residential School System, when government-funded and church-operated schools forcibly removed Indigenous children from their families and cultural heritage, causing profound intergenerational trauma.

Key moments in this commemoration include:

- 2008 The Canadian government formally apologized for its role in the system. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was established to document the experiences of survivors and provide recommendations for reconciliation.
- 2015 The TRC released its final report, which included 94 Calls to Action, urging various sectors—including workplaces—to take meaningful steps toward reconciliation.
- 2021 The Canadian government officially designated September 30th as National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a statutory holiday in federally regulated workplaces.

September 30, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, is a federal statutory holiday established in 2021 in response to Call to Action #80 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It is a day to honour the Indigenous children who never returned home, survivors of residential schools, and their families and communities.



Honouring Truth and Reconciliation in the Workplace

The month of September, and particularly September 30, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, offers an important opportunity for organizations to be intentional about reflecting, learning, and taking action. This is a time to honour survivors, acknowledge the ongoing impacts of residential schools, and create space for education and dialogue.

While this has inspired many to act in support of reconciliation, a consistent message from these voices is clear: meaningful reconciliation requires fully engaging with the “truth” first. Reconciliation is an active, ongoing process that stems from truth. Truth comes from listening to Indigenous Peoples’ stories and personal testimonies about their experiences of systemic oppression, discrimination, and colonization.

Furthermore, to be meaningful, this work must be built into the everyday practices and culture of an organization that extends well beyond a single day.

Reconciliation is not an event,
it is a process.



Meaningful Ways to Recognize September 30th

Organizations can approach National Day for Truth and Reconciliation with intention and respect by:

- **Educating your team** – Offer resources, readings, or workshops on the history and legacy of residential schools.
- **Creating space for reflection** – Hold a moment of silence and share learnings.
- **Encouraging participation** – Support employees in attending local events, ceremonies, or community-led activities.
- **Acknowledging visibly** – Encourage wearing orange shirts and explain their significance, or recognize the day through internal communications and signage.
- **Providing time** – Where possible, give employees the day off or flexibility to participate in reconciliation activities.



Beyond September 30th - Committing to Truth and Reconciliation

True reconciliation requires consistent effort. Here are ways organizations can extend action beyond one day:

- ➔ **Cultural Learning** – Offer training and workshops on Indigenous history, rights, and cultural safety.
- ➔ **Partner with Indigenous-led organizations** – For organizations ready to deepen this work, we strongly recommend connecting with Indigenous-led organizations who specialize in Indigenous cultural safety and reconciliation strategies.
- ➔ **Policy Review** – Evaluate workplace policies and practices to ensure they support equity and inclusion.
- ➔ **Territory Acknowledgements** – Go beyond scripted statements; learn about the local Nations, their history, and how to form genuine relationships. **Resource:** [Len Pierre Consulting “Transformative Territory Acknowledgments”](#)
- ➔ **Support Indigenous Voices** – Invest in Indigenous initiatives, amplify Indigenous leaders, and make space for their stories in your organizational culture.



A few additional resources we’ve found helpful along the way

- ➔ **Education Resource List** - National Centre for Truth & Reconciliation ([Link](#))
- ➔ **Learn about First Nations, Métis and Inuit across Canada** - Government of Canada ([Link](#))
- ➔ **Culturally Safer Terminology** - Len Pierre Consulting ([Link](#)): This guide is intended to support professionals in culturally safer and more appropriate use of terminology in the Indigenous and Canadian context.
- ➔ **Microaggressions Against Indigenous Peoples and the Impact** - The Indigenous Foundation ([Link](#))
- ➔ **Transformative Territory Acknowledgments** - Len Pierre Consulting ([Link](#)): This guide is designed to help professionals understand the history and purpose of territory acknowledgements as well as enhance their acknowledgements to go beyond the status quo.
- ➔ **Indigenous Allyship** - Inclusivity & Len Pierre Consulting ([Link](#)): This article summarizes the principles and key actions for effective allyship.



Some questions to help us reflect...

Personal & Identity

- Do you have relationships with Indigenous peoples? If so, what are those relationships? If not, why not?
- Who are you in relation to the land — visitor, guest, settler, or something else?
- How do you practice decolonization, and are you doing this with Indigenous peoples or without them?

History & Impact

- Do I understand how Indigenous peoples were treated as “wards of the state,” denied rights, land, and voice?
- Do I understand the dispossession of Indigenous peoples who were forcibly removed from their traditional territories in the name of “progress”?
- Do I understand how residential schools stripped children of culture and language?

Today's Realities

- How do colonial policies continue to shape present issues affecting access to health, education, housing, and clean water for Indigenous communities?
- Am I aware of how the harms of colonization and residential schools continue to affect Indigenous families across generations?
- How do I understand intergenerational trauma and its impact on Indigenous peoples today?
- How can our workplaces better support Indigenous colleagues and partners?

Action & Responsibility

- What am I doing to learn about Indigenous histories and current realities?
- How can I use my voice and privilege to amplify Indigenous voices?
- How can I be an ally without centering myself?
- How can our organization move beyond symbolic gestures to sustained action?
- What barriers may exist in our workplace that prevent Indigenous participation and leadership, and how do we dismantle them?

10-Year Anniversary of the 94 Calls to Action

- What progress have we seen since 2015, and what remains unfulfilled?
- Which Calls to Action resonate with me or our workplace? How can we implement change based on these actions?
- What would meaningful reconciliation look like in another 10 years?

Transform culture from the inside out by
empowering people to learn, lead, and belong.



At Inclusivity, we support organizations to build inclusive and high-performing workplace cultures.

Whether you're just getting started or ready to deepen your impact, we're here to help you build a culture where everyone can thrive.

Let's connect:



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