

Reconciliation in the Workplace

Indigenous peoples in Canada have been wronged historically and continue to suffer from the intergenerational impacts of the Residential School System and other colonial systems that have resulted in inequality and poor outcomes for Indigenous peoples of Canada.

RECONCILIATION encompasses a set of principles that, when followed, maximize a group's sense of belonging, dignity and respect. Reconciliation is about building inclusive workplaces, where we view each other using a HUMANITY lens drawing on and learning from our diverse life experiences. In practising the principles of Reconciliation, we break down barriers and create equalizers in people. More importantly, we increase our moral courage to treat others the way we would like to be treated in the workplace.

Relating

- Working together to create safe, dignified and respectful work environments

(Sweat lodge ceremony, October 2014)

Truth Telling

- Telling about the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada

(Sisters in Spirit Vigil, October 2014)

Restoring

- Doing what we can to redress the challenges faced in the workplace and creating work environments that are open to change

(Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams initiative, June 2015)

Acknowledging

- Learning from each other's past, seeing one another with a new understanding (a human lens), and recognizing the need to move forward in a new path

(Reconciliation exercise, UFCW Canada Growth Summit, April 2015)



Principles to Guide Reconciliation in the Workplace

Self-Determination

- Non-Indigenous workers must understand the importance for self-determination for Indigenous peoples in the context of Canadian history.
- Honouring our differences means respecting each other in the workplace.
- Non-Indigenous workers need the capacity and understanding to work effectively with Indigenous communities.
- Indigenous and Non-Indigenous workers must feel safe in their workplace. All challenges of adversity or race are to be addressed.
- Acknowledging our ability to be a part of change to government policy and legislation that does not uproot human rights.
- Workers know the name of the Indigenous territory where they live and work

Non-Discrimination

- Indigenous workers should not receive inferior treatment or inferior services because they are Indigenous.
- All workers, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous are entitled to a workplace that is responsible to their needs and is accepting of the unique cultural context of their experience.
- No worker shall be subjected to any discrimination in their workplace by virtue of their race or gender identity.
- Indigenous ways of knowledge must be taken into consideration in all situations relevant to the workplace.

Holistic Approach

- Looks at how we help our co-workers in a way that looks at all of their needs. In Indigenous communities you learn a lifestyle instead of a specific discipline (i.e. psychology, business, etc). The Medicine wheel represents the different aspects of a person.
- Safe workplaces means workers' needs are being met in the long-term and short-term.
- Embracing each other's worldviews allows for a more inclusive workplace and the ability to create strong work environments.
- We have a responsibility to take care of one another as human beings and as workers.
- Means taking advantage of opportunities to build community

Structural Interventions

- Protecting the rights of all Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples in Canada means standing up to injustice in the workplace.
- Supporting culturally-based equity initiatives including Shannen's Dream, Jordan's Principle and I am a Witness campaigns, all aimed at increasing equitable access to services for First Nations children in Canada.
- Legislation that fits the needs of the various groups in Canada is an important step to equality.

Culture and Language

- Language is the essence of culture. Respecting each other's spoken languages is pivotal in creating inclusive workplaces.
- Every effort should be made to serve communities in their spoken languages.
- Honouring each other's cultures means respecting each other's days of observances (i.e. hunting, fishing, trapping, berry-picking).



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(Poster adapted from Reconciliation in Child Welfare, 2006)