Healthy Communities Forum Island Region
Understanding Aboriginal Cultural Safety and Context for Collaboration: A Call to Action
Learning Objectives of Session

- Develop foundational understandings about Cultural Safety in the Island Health context and its importance to cross cultural collaboration
- Why the need for Canadian reconciliation with First Nations people is necessary
- Review the Canadian Indian Residential School Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its Calls to Action
- Discuss Health Care organizations and professionals can incorporate Cultural Safety practices and how they can respond to the TRC Calls to Action
An environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together with dignity, and truly listening (Williams, R. 1999)
For Aboriginal patients...Cultural Safety is about:

- Feeling respected
- Feeling understood
- Feeling honored
- Feeling cared about
- Feeling who you are is important
- Feeling included in your care
- Feeling safe to share
Main Themes of Cultural Safety for Island Health

- It is recognizing there are differences and respecting those differences. It is gaining knowledge about self and others in order to understand those differences.

- Requires acknowledgement that we are all bearers of culture—and there are skills in self-reflection about one’s own attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and values.

- Aims to shift the power differentials inherent in health service delivery, the institutional discrimination, and the need to fix these inequities through education and system change.

- Incorporating Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) in our work.
History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.

Dr. Maya Angelou
Canadian Indian Residential School System

- Date back to the 1870s. Over 130 residential schools were located across the country, and the last school closed in 1996.
- Government-funded, church-run
- Policy was to remove children from the influence of their families and culture, and assimilate them into the dominant Canadian culture.
- During this era, more than 150,000 Aboriginal Children were placed in these schools often against their parents' wishes.
Estimated 80,000 former students living today, however ongoing impact is felt throughout generations as well and extends into community contributing to social problems that continue to exist.

June 11, 2008, Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government of Canada, formally apologized to former students, their families, and communities for Canada's role in the operation of the residential schools.
In 1909, Dr. Peter Bryce, general medical superintendent for the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) reported to the DIA that from 1894–1908, mortality rates at some IR schools in Western Canada ranged from 30% to 60% over five years. Report never released to the public until 1922, when recently retired Bryce, published *The Story of a National Crime: Being a Record of the Health Conditions of the Indians of Canada from 1904 to 1921.*
The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement

- In the 1990’s former residential school students took the federal government and the churches to court.
- Their cases led to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history.
- Along with compensation to former students, it called for the establishment of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada with a budget of $60–million over five years.
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

- Mandate to learn the truth about what happened in the residential schools and to inform all Canadians about what happened.
- The Commission will document the truth.
- Hopes to guide and inspire Aboriginal Peoples and Canadians in a process of truth and healing leading toward reconciliation and renewed relationships based on mutual understanding and respect.
TRC Objectives?

- Prepare a complete historical record on the policies and operations of residential schools.
- Complete a public report including recommendations to the parties of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.
- Establish a national research centre that will be a lasting resource about the IRS legacy.
To redress the legacy of IRS the TRC has issued 94 calls to action

Divided into sections of Legacy and Reconciliation
Principles of Reconciliation

1. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* is the framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society.

2. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, as the original peoples of this country and as self-determining peoples, have Treaty, constitutional, and human rights that must be recognized and respected.

3. Reconciliation is a process of healing of relationships that requires public truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms.

4. Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples’ education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.

5. Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
6 All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.

7 The perspectives and understandings of Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers of the ethics, concepts, and practices of reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation.

8 Supporting Aboriginal peoples’ cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential.

9 Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust building, accountability, and transparency, as well as a substantial investment of resources.

10 Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal rights, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society.
What is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP)?

“The UNDRIP is the most comprehensive international human rights instrument to specifically address their economic, social, cultural, political, civil, spiritual, and environmental rights......it sets out the minimum standards necessary for the dignity, survival, and well-being of Indigenous Peoples. (article 43)”
Sept. 13, 2007: The UN General Assembly adopts the declaration but Canada joined the U.S., Australia and New Zealand in opposing it. One of the concerns was that "free, prior and informed consent" could be used as a veto.

Nov. 12, 2010: Canada endorses UNDRIP, but refers to it as "an aspirational document" and notes it is not legally binding: "... confident that Canada can interpret the principles expressed in the declaration in a manner that is consistent with our Constitution and legal framework."

Sept. 22, 2014: Canada is the only UN member to refuse adopting the "outcome document" affirming commitment to UNDRIP, again citing concerns over "free, prior and informed consent". (WCIP)

Nov. 2015 "That means starting out right, such that everything has been considered before a decision is taken so that you can find that win–win of ‘you can develop there but not there,’ ” INA Minister Bennett’s reply when asked about plans to make good on their promise to implement the UNDRIP.
CBC Mansbridge One on One: Cindy Blackstock Feb. 14, 2016
Open Discussion

- Comments, Thoughts and Questions?
- What are the possibilities you see looking at the TRC Calls to Action?
- What does Reconciliation look like for you?
- For your role as Health Care Practitioner?

ACTION: On sticky note, list:
1. A personal action for reconciliation
2. An idea for a organizational action
Thank You!!