



Cultural Safety, Reconciliation, and Anti-Indigenous Racism

National Managers' Community | Government of Canada

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La sécurité culturelle, la réconciliation, et la lutte contre le racism envers les Autochtones

Communauté national des gestionnaires | Gouvernement
du Canada

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of Canada

Canada



The Indian Act (1876)

A person means an individual other than an Indian."

➤Section 12 of the Indian Act (1880).



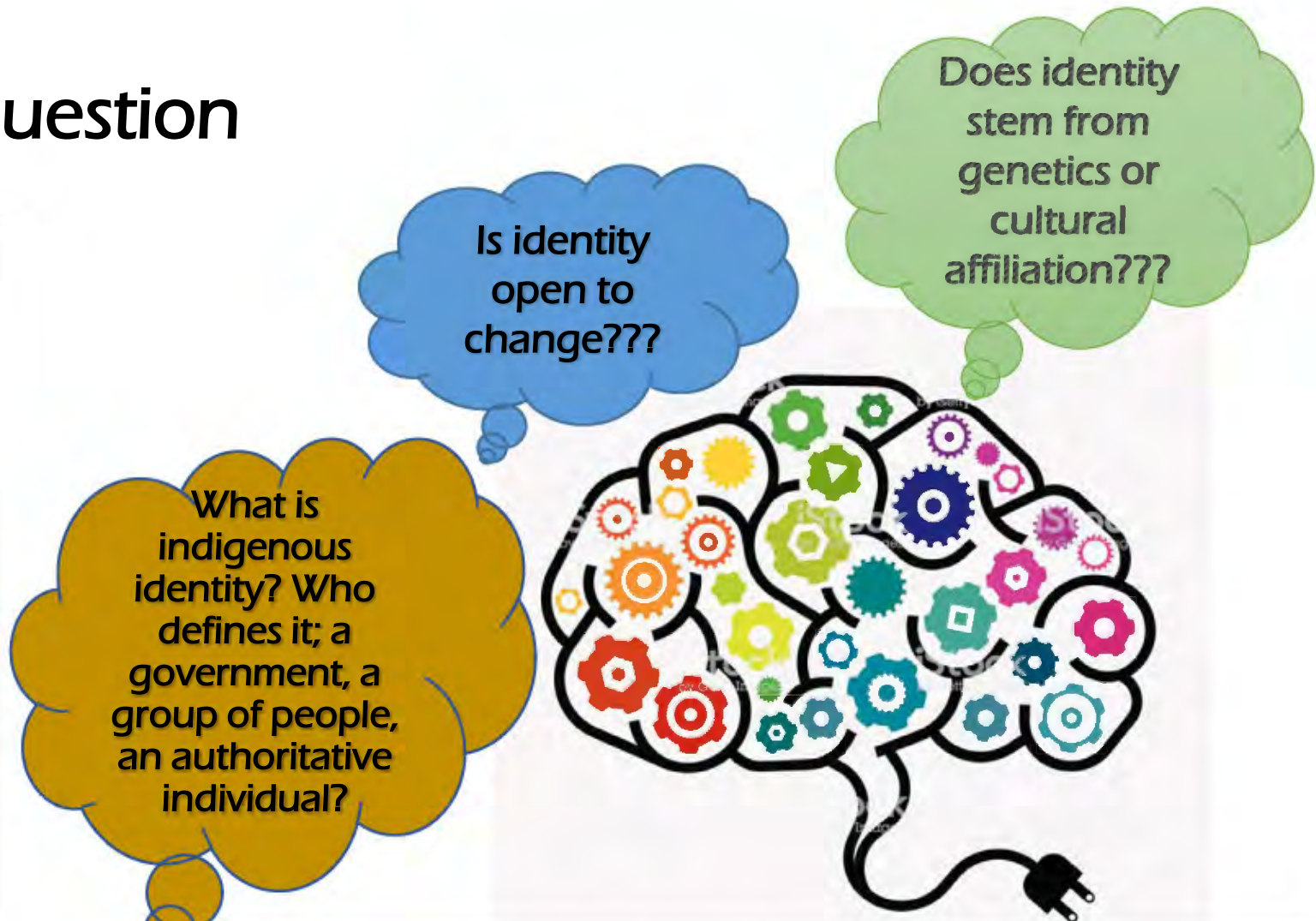
Dehumanization of Indigenous Peoples

Racism is the hierarchical categorizing and organizing of societies in a way that privileges one group to the exclusion of racialized others – Delgado & Stefanic 2017

Culture of a Bad Question

- *Politics of Decolonization* is about having the power to define one's identity.
- One of the most provocative issues is the competing definitions of Indigenous identity (*see Annex A for more details*).
- "There is little agreement on precisely what constitutes an Indigenous identity, how to measure it, and who truly has it" (Weaver 2001).

[Colour Code, Episode 1: Race Card](#)



Problem of Settler Self-Indigenization

Settler self-indigenizers legitimize their existence through flawed and harmful membership criteria rooted in policies and logics of the state and not in Indigenous legal and political orders - *Collective Indigenous Scholars' Statement on Identity and Institutional Accountability, 2021*



Disparate Community Views

- "...libertarian, anarchist, and contrarian lines of thought are found within Indigenous communities...Indigenous people occupy different points along political spectrums. Some are conservative, others are liberal, while yet others resist capitalism and adopt or reject alternative forms of Indigenous political classification" – John Borrows (2016)

Addressing the Moment

Contested “lifeworld” and “worldviews” of land and sovereignty.

The first has philosophical roots in “inherent rights” to land and resources and self-determination that flows from the Creator and not the government.

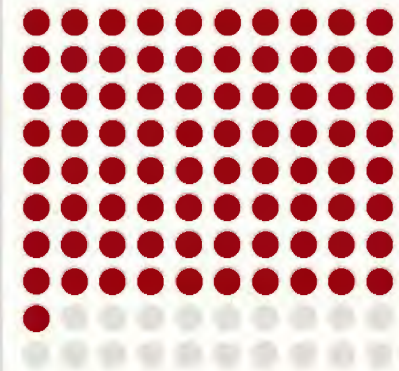
Whereas “settler colonial liberal-capitalist democracy” upholds sovereignty and rights to land through the law and legislative and policy instruments, embedding Indigenous lifeworld.

A situation that suggests Indigenous and settler lifeworlds are “not only different, but different in kind.” (Mills 2016)

Decisions to remove Indigenous peoples from sites of conflict based on the “rule of law” and court injunctions.



“For this court to make a decision that is going to further alienate my people from this process or any other, I think, speaks to the deeply prejudicial nature and the estrangement of Haudenosaunee people from the process,” - Skyler Williams



81% of injunctions filed against First Nations by corporations were granted.



81% of injunctions filed against corporations by First Nations were denied.



82% of injunctions filed against the government by First Nations were denied.

Union backs Indigenous bureaucrats suing feds for systemic discrimination



Black public servants racism lawsuit



Breaking Barriers: Institutional Racism

Systemic or structural racism is “inherent in institutions”.

Canada and other countries have built social, economic and political systems based on dominant norms and values.

The policies, practices, cultural representations and laws of a country are the backbone of these systems.

Even if unintentional, relationships are based on dominance and subordination of one lifeworld over another.

Hughes 2020



Clerk's Call to Action on anti-racism, equity, and inclusion and the 2021/22 Deputy Minister commitment on diversity and inclusion require departments to take actions that address the challenges racialized employee face in relation to representation, harassment and discrimination, and wellness. This includes measuring progress.

Why should Systemic Racism matter to us?

Racialized employees can experience race-based trauma & engage in code switching

I was told that "I needed to leave my Indian status at the door when I came in, because when I was in the department I was no longer an Indian...She also told me that my passion for Indigenous files was going to lead to the death of my career." – Sara, Indigenous employee

Lived Experiences

Sources told CBC/Radio-Canada they felt **humiliated, demeaned, and bullied** in the workplace. One employee sent a letter to Minister O'Regan as "a last resort". She did not receive a response.

"That was probably the worst experience of my life, because I had a college degree, an undergrad degree, a master's degree and I was literally being told I couldn't handle work. Whatever little work there was, it was very small projects, while people a lot younger than me with less education continued to advance in the organization." - Emily, Indigenous employee.

Emily left the department following a mental breakdown.

"Troublemakers, they say, suffer an insidious type of revenge. It takes place through whispers and quiet acts of hostility. There are never witnesses. The recriminations are always impossible to prove." –

Anonymous Indigenous Employee

Many Indigenous employees say they want to speak out about racism and bullying, but don't. They fear they'll be branded a "troublemaker."

"The racism in this workplace is often not overt...It happens in different ways"..."Their spirit has been killed, their emotion has been killed, their mental (health) has been killed. The only thing they haven't done is a physical killing. ..they've been destroyed by this workplace" – Elder Mac Saulis, Wolastoqey, Tobique First Nation

"How do you ever fix systemic racism? How do you ever get to really tackling the problem?

You can't, because they maintain silence and control instead of being honest about what's not working." –

Anonymous Indigenous employee



Achieving Internal Reconciliation: Wise Practices

Reconciliation, Cultural Safety, and Inclusive Language

Language can build relationships, but it can also create barriers and impact on someone's sense of belonging.



It is important for us to:

Use culturally safe, trauma informed, and equitable language to address Indigenous Peoples respectfully.

Ask, does an Indigenous person or group have preferred terms? What might they be?

Seek advice on protocols around terminology – i.e., capitalization, what terms to use and to avoid.

Check your assumptions because Indigenous cultures and identities are fluid, dynamic, and complex.

Use pluralization to recognize Indigenous diversity.

Be careful not to perpetuate paternalistic rhetoric.

Seek guidance on how to respect Indigenous Oral Traditions and Traditional Knowledge.

Learn about systemic racism and the impacts of colonialism.

Exercise 1: Inclusive Language Group Discussion (20 minutes)

Consider the context before a person's
ability

Example 1: Jody Wilson-Raybould was the first Indigenous person and third woman to serve as the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of Canada.

Groups 1 – 6 discussion (for 5 min.):

- Hint: Ask yourselves, does this sentence work as is? Is the detail necessary to make the content clear? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Check-in at the end (2 minutes)

Identify the problems with the following sentences and revise them

Groups 1 – 3 discussion (for 5 min.):

Example 1: The Nisga'a have spent a century demanding Indigenous title to their traditional territory.

- Hint 1: What does the language in this sentence imply with respect to title?

Groups 4 – 6 discussion (for 5 min.):

Example 2: The fur trade swept up Indigenous Peoples in a new economy based on supplying beaver pelts to French and English traders.

- Hint 2: What role did Indigenous Peoples play in the new economy, if at all?

Check-in at the end (3 minutes)

Reconciliation Means Recognizing the Existence of Distinct Worldviews

- Debates on key concepts and terms are often complicated because of different meanings and nuances, which suggest they are contested terms.
- We think about, interpret, and use key terms differently in our work, especially the concept of reconciliation.

“Settler state and its courts understand the term as reconciling the existence of Indigenous peoples’ title, jurisdictions, nationhood, and laws with the sovereignty of the crown.

The state is trying to affirm the principles of the Declaration within the colonial constitution of Canada. In doing so, a fundamental antagonism returns: whose rights are supreme? The way that the chips fall, time and time again, it is Canada’s. And that’s not reconciliation.”

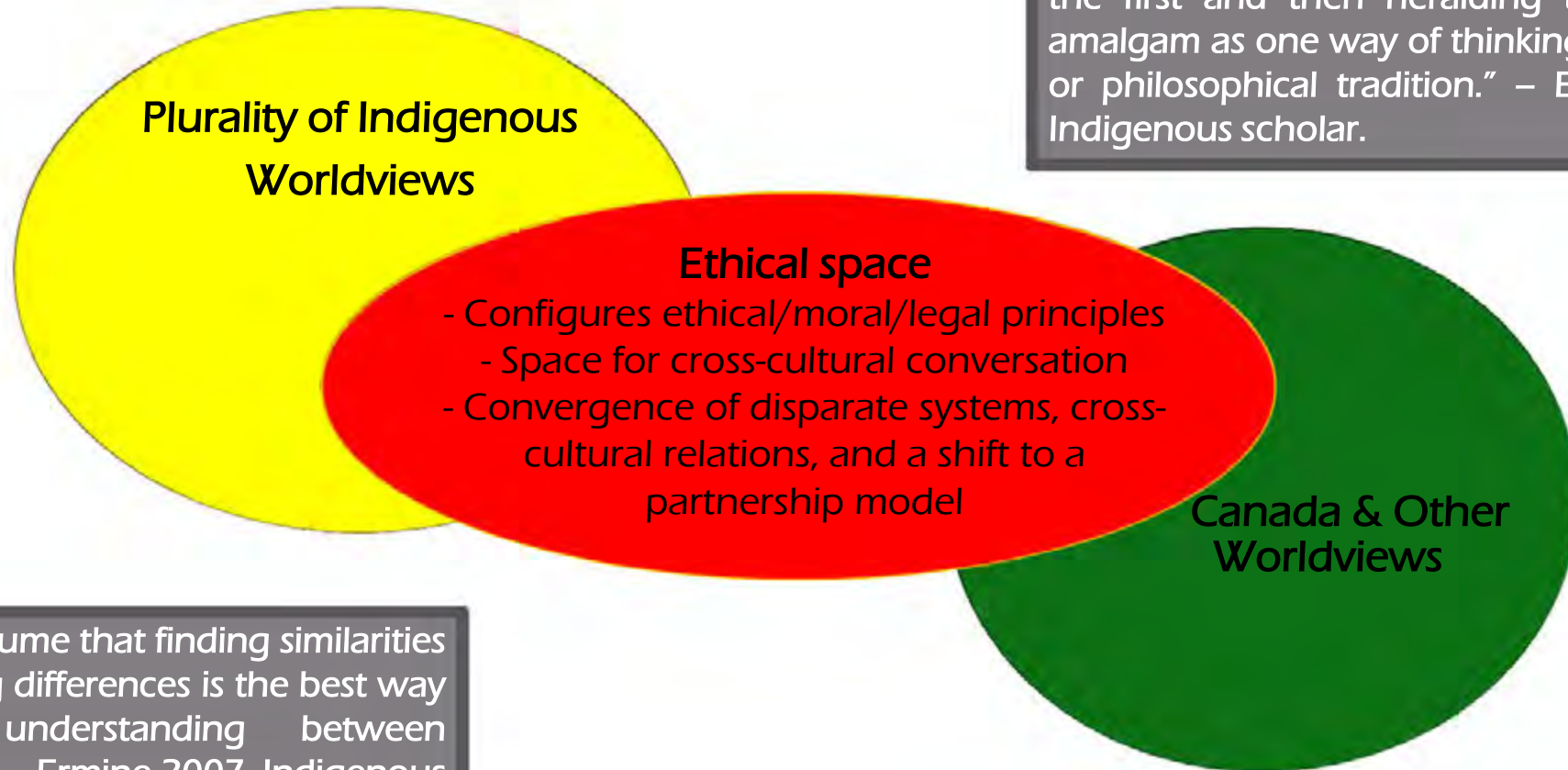
Indigenous scholar, Glen Coulthard

No relationship is more important to me and to Canada than the one with Indigenous Peoples. It is time for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.”

Prime Minister Trudeau

- This means that getting to a shared understanding will require inter-cultural dialogue. To do this, we need to:
 - build ethical spaces that engage with Indigenous knowledge systems and are not solely tied to one-way of thinking.
 - Recognize when you’re engaging in White Talk & Back Talk – e.g., the duel between distinct racial realities and belief systems.

Indigenous Ethical Space



"Ethical spaces guard against assimilation, an approach that would breach the sacred spaces between parties and assume control of the other's vessel, absorbing the distinctions of the other party into those of the first and then heralding the resulting amalgam as one way of thinking, one canon or philosophical tradition." – Ermine 2007, Indigenous scholar.

Often, people assume that finding similarities and downplaying differences is the best way to generate understanding between different groups." – Ermine 2007, Indigenous scholar.

Exercise 2: Developing a Common Language (for 20 minutes)

Things to think
about in your
discussions:

Each lifeworld has different philosophical foundations and cultural and social identities. Recognize the diversity of Indigenous groups/people. Once we're part of a linguistic system, the system often imposes and dictates our orientation in the world and in our workplaces – e.g., how we think, how we understand the world around us. Explain or define terms to avoid confusion in conversations.

In your groups discuss the following questions:

Groups 1, 2 & 3: Reconciliation

- What does reconciliation mean in my workplace? What have I heard Indigenous communities or Indigenous federal employees say about reconciliation? Is it different than my understanding?
- What steps could I/we take to develop a shared understanding of reconciliation in the federal workplace to avoid bias?

Groups 4, 5 & 6: Pluralism and Ethical Space

- How do I understand Indigenous-settler lifeworlds coexisting? How does my workplace incorporate the idea of lifeworld pluralism in its HR policies and practices?
- What steps can I and my department take to create ethical spaces and adopt Indigenous ways of knowing, protocols, and practices in our HR policies, processes and practices?

Think about Cultural Competency Differently

Reconciliation Competence

“Fluency” not just “Competence”

Critical
Consciousness

Relationships to others & place; awareness of differences in power & privilege; & inequities in social relationships

Critical
Thinking

Understanding your assumptions, biases & values; shifting the gaze from self to others; & conditions of injustice

Cultural
Competence

Knowledge of characteristics, cultural beliefs & practices; developing skills for communication & interactions with diverse peoples

Organizational culture committed to

Rehumanization of human relationships & resultant action

Engaged discourse, collaborative problem-solving & conflict resolution

Human rights, anti-racism, gender equity & social justice

New Practice for Success

Reconciliation Competence



Racial Equity Lens



Evolution of Organizational Culture



Knowledge transformation, action, and development of new practices results in 'cultural safety' and humility, and contributes to decolonization of federal legislation, policies, programs, and practices.

Addresses systemic racism by changing policies, practices, cultural representations and other norms that reinforce ways to perpetuate inequity and inequality, in addition to improving mental health and well-being in the workplace.

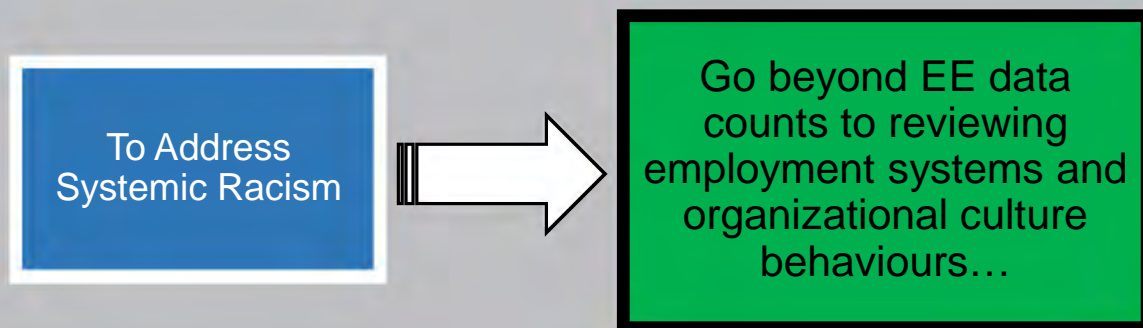
Responds to: Call to Action #57, *Many Voices One-Mind: Action Plan*, DM Directive on diversity and inclusion and Clerk's call to action on anti-racism, equity, and inclusion, Federal Mental Health and Workplace Well-being Strategy, Implementing *UN Declaration Act*, and other policy drivers.

Contributes to 'internal reconciliation' that supports employee and organizational culture transformation, informed program design, a change in approach to HR policy development, and new design/evaluation of people management practices, one that aligns departmental HR policies, programs, and practices with UNDRIP principles.

Example: Deconstructing Systemic Racism in Public Service

Audit of EE Representation in Recruitment indicates:

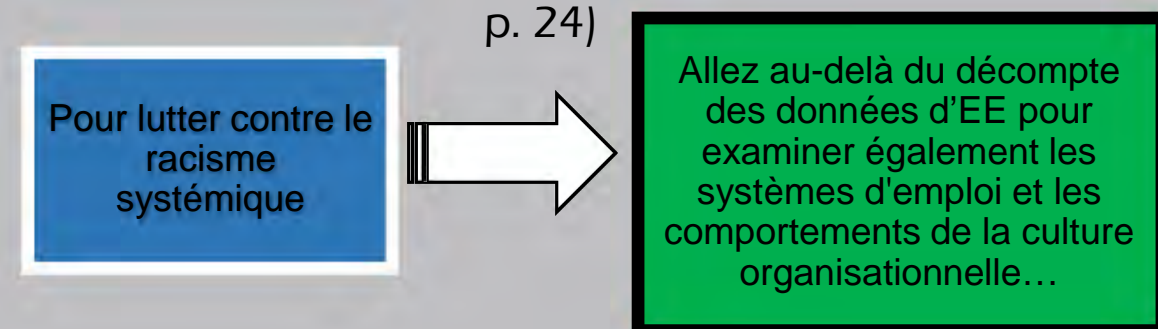
“77% of organizations conducted a workforce analysis and, of these, 90% had identified representation gaps for one or more EE group. However, *only 50% of organizations undertook an employment system review in the last 3 to 5 years.* Of those that did, *62% reported having no systemic barriers in recruitment policies and practices*” - (PSC 2021, p. 24).



Exemple: Déconstruire le racisme systémique dans la fonction publique

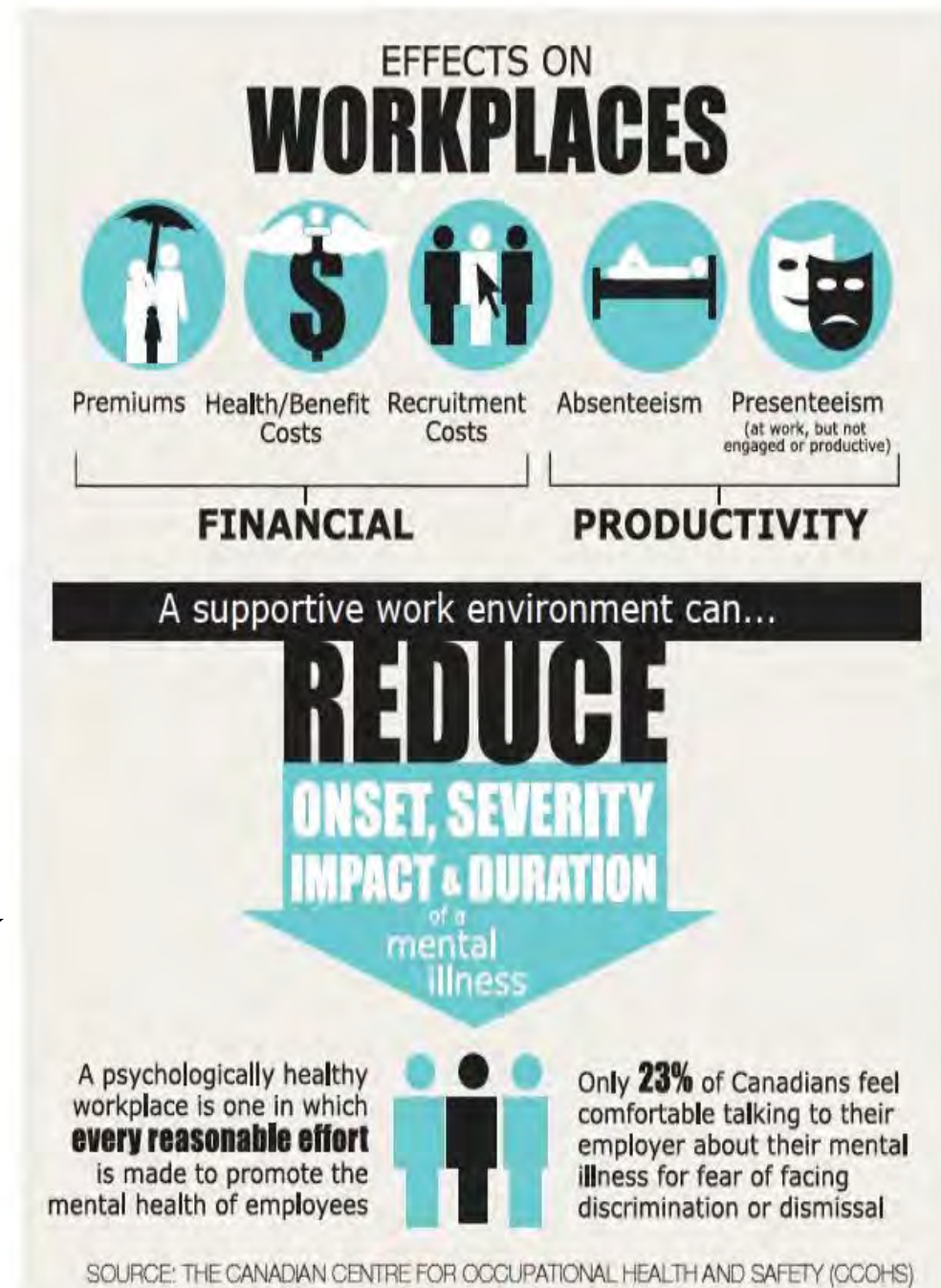
Vérification portant sur la représentation des groupes visés par l'équité en matière d'emploi lors du recrutement indique:

« Grâce au questionnaire de vérification, nous avons constaté que 77% des organisations avaient mené une analyse de l'effectif; parmi ceux-ci, 90% avaient relevé des écarts de représentation à l'égard d'au moins un groupe visé par l'équité en matière d'emploi. Cependant, seulement 50% des organisations avaient mené un examen de leur système d'emploi au cours des 3 à 5 dernières années; parmi celles-ci, 62% ont déclaré que leurs politiques et pratiques de recrutement ne comportaient aucun obstacle systémique. » - (CFP 2021, p. 24)



Making Space for Positive Relationships in the Workplace

- Seek to understand first and listen.
- Engage in open and honest dialogues and don't be afraid to talk about things that may be uncomfortable.
- Demonstrate integrity and transparency.
- Model inclusive and accountable leadership.
- Ask yourself, are there any metaphors, terms, or comparisons I am using that demonstrate cultural misappropriation, bias, or promote a stereotype or negative view of Indigenous persons and groups? What are they? And how will I change it?
- Create a healthy workplace with an established *Psychological Health and Safety Management Framework* to:
 - increase Indigenous employee recruitment and retention rates,
 - improve Indigenous employee engagement, and
 - produce a healthy and safe environment where they would be more likely to stay.



Suggestions for Measuring Success

Diversity as representation is not the solution.

Under-representation is a form of inequity and racism thrives in this environment.

Look at who is applying to your positions versus who you're hiring.

- If your team lacks Indigenous employees or other EE groups but you find your applicants are extremely diverse, there might be bias in your recruitment process.
- Track how this number changes as you hire more employees.
- Look for opportunities to eliminate bias in your hiring process and implement new initiatives to reach Indigenous employees, when hiring.

Measure diversity across the demographic landscape. Ask yourself, is my team diverse? Who are we missing?

- Look at the percentage of women, LGBTQ2II+, men, and the percentage of Indigenous employees in relation to gender identity(ies). Remember you can be inclusive of one demographic while still having bias about other groups.

Satisfaction with one's position is a good way to measure inclusion.

- Although job satisfaction and inclusion are not always directly linked, you can measure happiness, inter-team relationships, and recognition through surveys, pulse checks, talking circles or dialogues to help understand how Indigenous employees feel about their teams, their jobs, and the organizational culture.

Thank you!

Questions?



Merci!

Questions?

Annexes

Annex A: Importance of Recognizing the Diversity Amongst Us...

"New Indians.

- "Self-identified Indian" sometimes refers to "anyone who does not satisfy the requirements specifically of legal definitions." - Garoutte 2003

Born-again
Indians.

- "What it means to 'be Indian' often differs from what 'counts as Indian' for the federal government and even for many Indians themselves." - Archuleta 2005

Hobby Indians.

Wannabe
Indians.

- "Indian non-Indians", three examples: patrilineal and matrilineal rules, tribal recognition but non-Indian by government standards and Indian here, but not Indian over there.

Indians of
convenience.

Generic
Indians

- What to make of those cases of "wannabe Indians"? Clem Iron Wing (Sioux Elder) states: they are "a surge of Indians 'trying to come home.'" - Forte 2013

Compliant
Indians"

- Fragmentation and official authentication – Newfoundland Mi'kmaq
- Indigenous voices the government chooses to hear to the exclusion of other Indigenous voices. – Manuel 2017

Annex B: Safe Spaces - Recognize and Embrace Distinct Worldviews

Espace sécuritaire - reconnaître et adopter des visions du monde distinctes

Indigenous

Western

Relatedness to others, to culture, to ancestors, to land, to roles and responsibilities, to life stages
Sustainable ecological relationship to place
Traditional knowledge – non-rational & subjective

Place-based knowledge - social, spiritual & relational
See all things as living & spiritual
Collectivism

Universal 'truths' are embedded in language & culture
Space-time (sacred places, abstract & symbolic time)

Spiritual and physical aspects of life separated
Progress as change, change as progress
Rational thinking - objective & neutral

Knowledge - academic & formal
Human beings & nature separate
Individualism
Land is tied to improvement & progress

Universal 'truths' predicted through empirical observation, theories & principles
Time-space construct (time & history)

Setting the Stage for Change

- ✓ Reciprocity
- ✓ Collective responsibility
- ✓ Respect
- ✓ Co-learning
- ✓ Recognition of Indigenous knowledges
- ✓ Humility
- ✓ Make space for Indigenous voices
- ✓ Responsabilité collective
- ✓ La réciprocité
- ✓ Respect
- ✓ Co-apprentissage
- ✓ Reconnaissance des savoirs autochtones
- ✓ Humilité
- ✓ Faire de la place pour les voix autochtones

La mise en scène pour le changement

Autochtone

Occidental

Être en relation avec les personnes, avec la culture, avec les ancêtres, avec la terre, avec nos rôles et nos responsabilités, avec le cycle de vie
Relation écologique durable
Connaissances traditionnelles – non rationnelles et subjectives

Connaissances locales - sociales, spirituelles et relationnelles
Voir toutes les choses comme vivantes et spirituelles
Collectivisme

Les « vérités » universelles sont ancrées dans la langue et la culture
Espace-temps (lieux sacrés, temps abstrait et symbolique)

Aspects spirituels et physiques de la vie sont séparés
Le progrès comme changement, le changement comme progrès
Pensée rationnelle - objective et neutre

Connaissances - académiques et formelles
L'homme et la nature sont séparés
Individualisme
La terre est liée à l'amélioration et au progrès

Les « vérités » sont prédites par l'observation empirique, les théories et les principes
Construction espace-temps (temps et histoire)

Annex C: Indigenous Inclusive Language Resources

- *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and About Indigenous Peoples* written by Gregory Younging. CBC Unreserved interview with Younging (5 minutes) - <https://www.cbc.ca/books/elements-of-indigenous-style-1.4701409>
- *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit issues in Canada*, written by Chelsea Vowel, explores the Indigenous experience under five categories: Terminology of Relationships; Culture and Identity; Myth-Busting; State Violence; and Land, Learning, Law and Treaties. CBC Books article - <https://www.cbc.ca/books/indigenous-writes-1.4109190>
- Christi Belcourt, [Reclaiming Ourselves](#) and [Reclaiming Ourselves, One Name at a Time](#)
- Consult departmental lodges (where they exist in your region) or the Knowledge Circle for Indigenous Inclusion, culture and protocols team at cisia-kcii@pch.gc.ca for guidance on Indigenous cultures and protocols.

Annex D: Settler Colonialism & Whiteness

Indigenous Peoples experience double burden of racism and settler colonialism.

Logic of erasure sets Indigenous-state relations in racial-colonial hierarchies, complicating calls to decolonize and Indigenize.

Governance of Indigenous federal employees can be animated by ignorance, bias, and anti-Indigenous racism ideologies and sentiments.

Embeddedness of 'whiteness' conditions how the Public Service addresses bias and systemic barriers in the workplace.

'Whiteness' is often hard to see or recognize and it is tied to how we tell our stories, including in the Public Service.

White Talk & Back Talk, the duel between distinct racial realities and belief systems.



'Whiteness' suggests a "higher rank, quality, or importance", which begins prior to an individual's awareness of it
– Saad & DiAngelo 2020

MVOM 2019-20

DEPARTMENTAL PROGRESS SCORECARD

MANY VOICES ONE MIND
A PATHWAY TO RECONCILIATION



MANY VOICES ONE MIND

The **2019-20 Departmental Progress Scorecard summary report** highlights departmental progress of **45 federal organizations** in regards to the implementation of the **MVOM Action Plan**. With a focus on quantitative results, it provides a consolidated reporting of the quantitative progress achieved in fiscal year 2019-20 following, and statistical analysis of federal Indigenous employees in three categories:

1. Representation, hiring and retention;
2. Training, development and career advancement; and,
3. Executive talent management and advancement.



Interactive Community

100% of 45 departments and agencies surveyed shared key data for analysis and reporting back to Deputy Heads



Proactive Support & Collaboration

Departments encouraged to actively seek support on an ongoing basis to help improve results through MVOM Departmental Progress Scorecards



Collective Impact

Leverage MVOM implementation to mobilize and strengthen enterprise-wide initiatives and promising practices

STRATEGY

PILLARS

1 Recruitment & Retention

Encourage and support Indigenous peoples to join the public service

2 Cultural Competency

Address bias, racism, discrimination and harassment, and improve cultural competency in the Public Service

3 Learning & Development

Address learning, development and career advancement concerns expressed by Indigenous Employees

4 Talent Management

Recognize Indigenous Peoples' talents and promote advancement to and within the executive group

5 Create Safe Spaces

Support, engage and communicate with Indigenous employees and partners

WHAT THE NUMBERS TELL US

- Indigenous Employee Networks are particularly beneficial when supported by a designated senior level executive Champion
- Student recruitment programs help increase representation as does student bridging
- Exit interviews programs should be leveraged to gain more insight on the reasons behind Indigenous employee departures
- The rate of representation of Indigenous employees in organizations surveyed decreased when compared to the 2019 MVOM Summary Report results
- The Creation of external recruitment pools for the Executive ranks is required to help reduce the EE gaps for Indigenous employees at all levels

- Organizations are moving to more bias free selection and assessment processes
- Integration of cultural competency training in performance agreements for managers is an emerging practice
- Indigenous employees need to be offered opportunities to share lived experiences and contribute to policy and program development
- Leaders at all levels need to demonstrate commitment to truth and reconciliation

- Whether offered by the Departments themselves or by the CSPS, Departments must ensure that their Indigenous employees are participating in developmental programs
- Language training is key to aspiring to higher levels and to obtain management positions and Departments must ensure their Indigenous employees are strongly supported in their language training goals
- Mentorship programs need to be more widespread and supported

- Existing Indigenous talent pools must be leveraged and departments should share their pools once their staffing needs have been met
- Indigenous employees are not getting the equitable access to leadership development programs and acting opportunities, when compared to non-Indigenous employees, and organizations should find ways to increase their access to such opportunities

- Engaging and communicating with Indigenous employees and partners is foundational to organizational success in implementing the MVOM action plan. Without participation there is no real culture change nor progress and development.
- Every organization needs to ensure it supports individuals and engages Indigenous employee networks to define its way forward for Indigenous inclusion.

