

Gender Based Violence Work in Context: Addressing Structural Violence and Promoting Agency Knowledge – October 2019

Indigenous women and Safe Spaces

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It is observed with alarm that the holding of dances by the Indians on their reserves is on the increase, and that these practices tend to disorganize the efforts which the Department is putting forth to make them self-supporting.

I have, therefore, to direct you to use your utmost endeavours to dissuade the Indians from excessive indulgence in the practice of dancing. You should suppress any dances which cause waste of time, interfere with the occupations of the Indians, unsettle them for serious work, injure their health or encourage them in sloth and idleness. You should also dissuade, and, if possible, prevent them from leaving their reserves for the purpose of attending fairs, exhibitions, etc., when their absence would result in their own farming and other interests being neglected. It is realized that reasonable amusement and recreation should be enjoyed by Indians, but they should not be allowed to dissipate their energies and abandon themselves to demoralizing amusements. By the use of tact and firmness you can obtain control and keep it, and this obstacle to continued progress will then disappear.

Patriarchal, social control and assimilationist policies, practices, and agents of the federal government targeted Indigenous women

Except where further information is desired, there will be no necessity to acknowledge the receipt of this

colonialism

- Patriarchal forms enforced 1876 *Indian Act*
- Erasing of Indigenous knowledge(s) of Women and Land
- Cultural understandings and practices outlawed
- The forced removal from land and continued dispossession of Indigenous lands

Structures of dominations

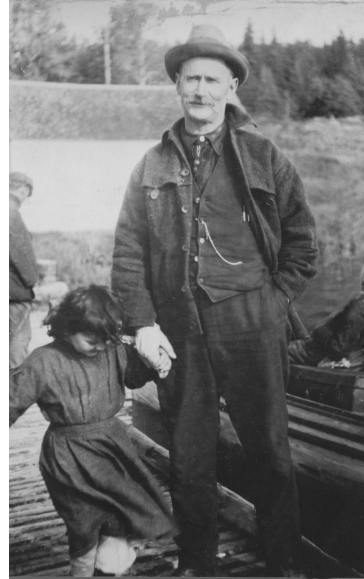
Removal from origin stories, knowledges, governance structures, erasure of history,...

Removal of children and destruction of families



vulnerability of Indigenous women in Canada

- The on-going physical, social, emotional, and mental health challenges faced by Indigenous women are tied to their lived experience of colonialism in Canada, (ONWA, 1989, TRC 2015).
- Violence and health equity are intricately linked in a damaging relationship...worsen the quality of life for victims of violence.
- There is a recognition of the distinct relationship between violence-related outcomes and systemic issues.



Historical trauma and soul wounds:

- how our lives affected by social and cultural processes within colonial structures
- until recently, the *social positioning of women* in many Indigenous communities erased, forgotten, seen as against church and state
- according to scholars and academic researchers “who constructed their identities and histories for them” (Brady 2009: 33).

power differential in place concerning the construction and use of Indigenous knowledge(s)

Need for safety and safe spaces

Other stories exist : Anishinaabe Gíikeedaasiwín



Nii Nookomisag

Land and Territorial Integrity

- Land - material, cultural, spiritual dimensions
- Required for survival
- *Linked to identity, existence as “peoples” and to Indigenous women*
- *...under their responsibilities of stewardship and preservation*



Our Understandings of Our Worlds

Conceptual knowledge(s) based on Indigenous Being

- Collective nature of resiliency founded upon Indigenous knowledge(s) and
- stories about the land and relationships to the land are foundational; Responsibilities to the land;
- Maintenance of these stories and respect for ancestor histories
- Paths for social transformation for collective future

Revitalize Indigenous Knowledge(s) of Women

Colonial processes, agents, and violence meant Western, knowledge(s) were legislated and enforced.

The impact of colonization has been on Indigenous peoples' sense of who they are and the rupture between their sense of self and their relationships with their respective lands.

Indigenous women were and are targeted as part of colonialism, yet, despite centuries of violence, resilient Indigenous women continue to exist.

