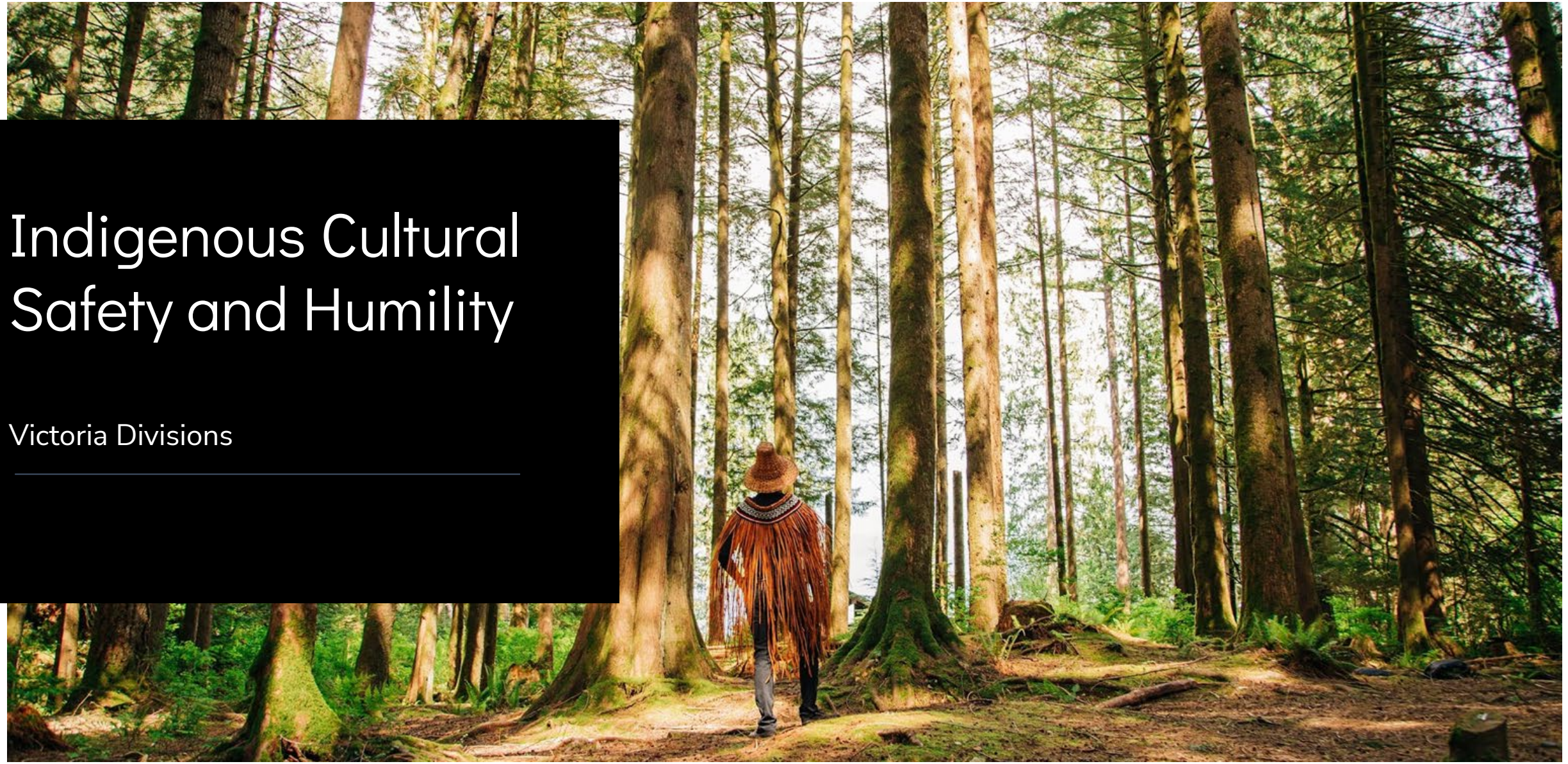

Indigenous Cultural Safety and Humility

Victoria Divisions

LEN PIERRE CONSULTING

Welcome & Introduction

Intention Setting

My intention is to create a safe space for exchanging knowledge, conversation, and to support one another in solidarity. I come with an open heart and open mind and hope to be received in the same way.

I welcome questions throughout the session but will also leave time to address them at the end as well.

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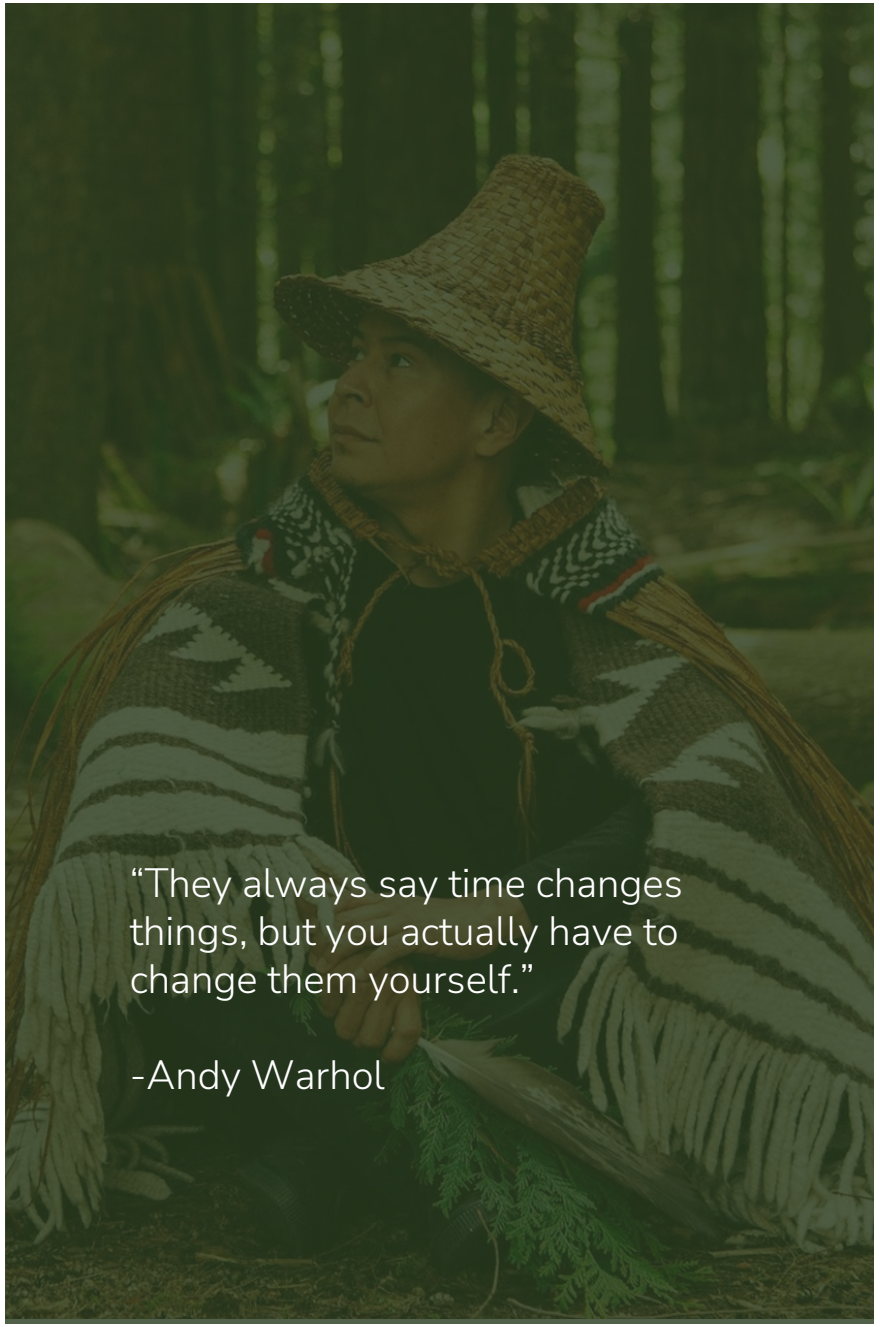
PART 1
Why Indigenous Cultural Safety?



Terminology

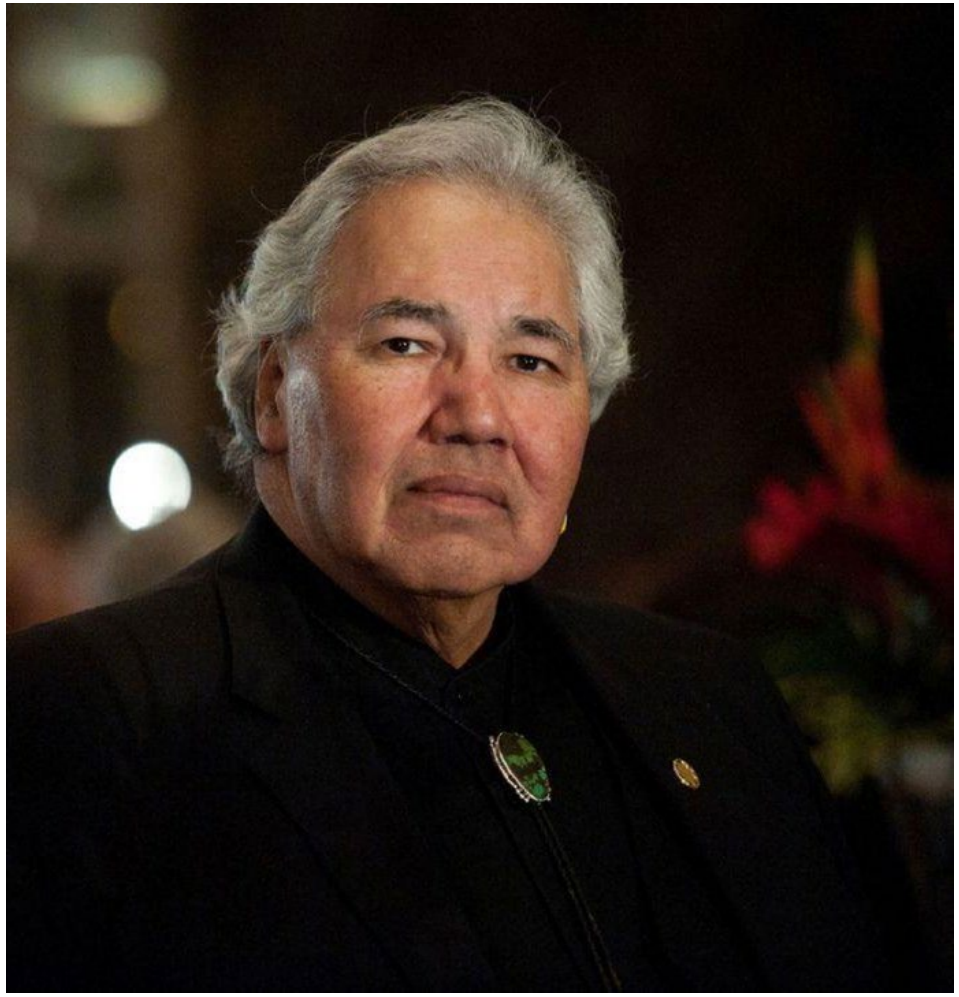
- **Indigenous & Aboriginal Peoples** in the Canadian context are both used to describe the original peoples before the colonial country was formed

- **First Nations** peoples is a term that eventually replaced the term "Indian" in the 1970's. First Nations peoples are land-based nations that trace their heritage back to their traditional territory

- **Metis** Nation is made up of the descendants of Indigenous women and Euro-Settler men. The Métis are a distinct Indigenous nation with their own history, culture, languages and territories with deep historical roots in the three Prairie provinces

- **Inuit** live in communities across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (northern Quebec), and Nunatsiavut (northern Labrador). The Inuit call this vast region Nunangat.

The Context for Indigenous Cultural Safety is about undoing Canadian Socialization



“While Indigenous children were being mistreated in residential schools by being told they were heathen, savages and pagans and inferior people -- that same message was being delivered in the public schools of this country.”

-Justice Murray Sinclair

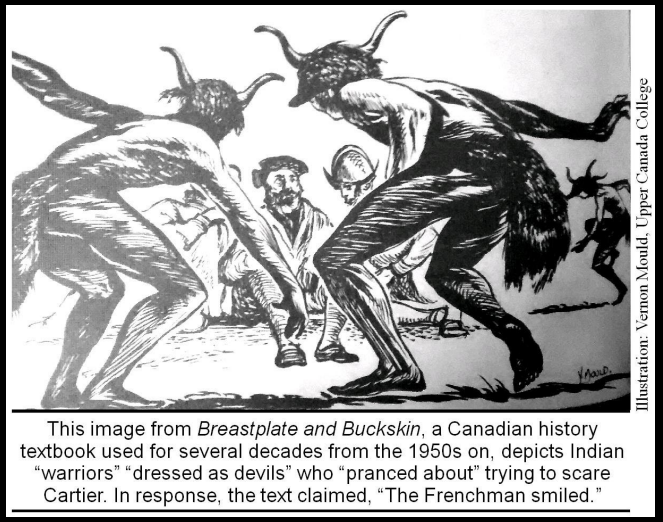


Illustration: Vernon Mould, Upper Canada College

This image from *Breastplate and Buckskin*, a Canadian history textbook used for several decades from the 1950s on, depicts Indian "warriors" "dressed as devils" who "pranced about" trying to scare Cartier. In response, the text claimed, "The Frenchman smiled."

Cultural Safety & Anti-racism tools

Prejudice

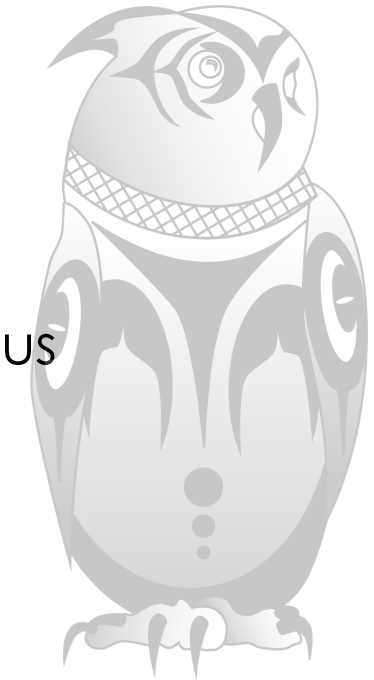
- Fear of Indigenous peoples
- Disgust towards Indigenous peoples

Discrimination

- Being ignored
- Treated with aggression

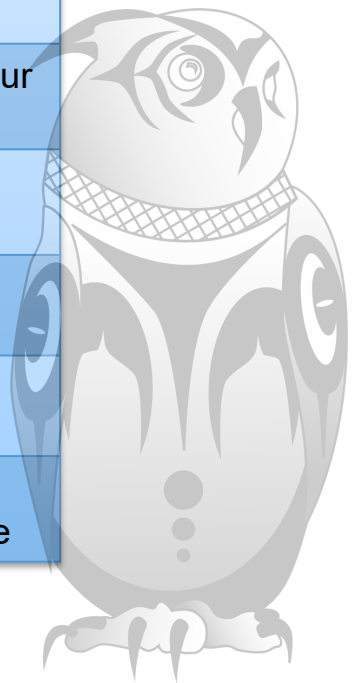
Canadian Socialization:

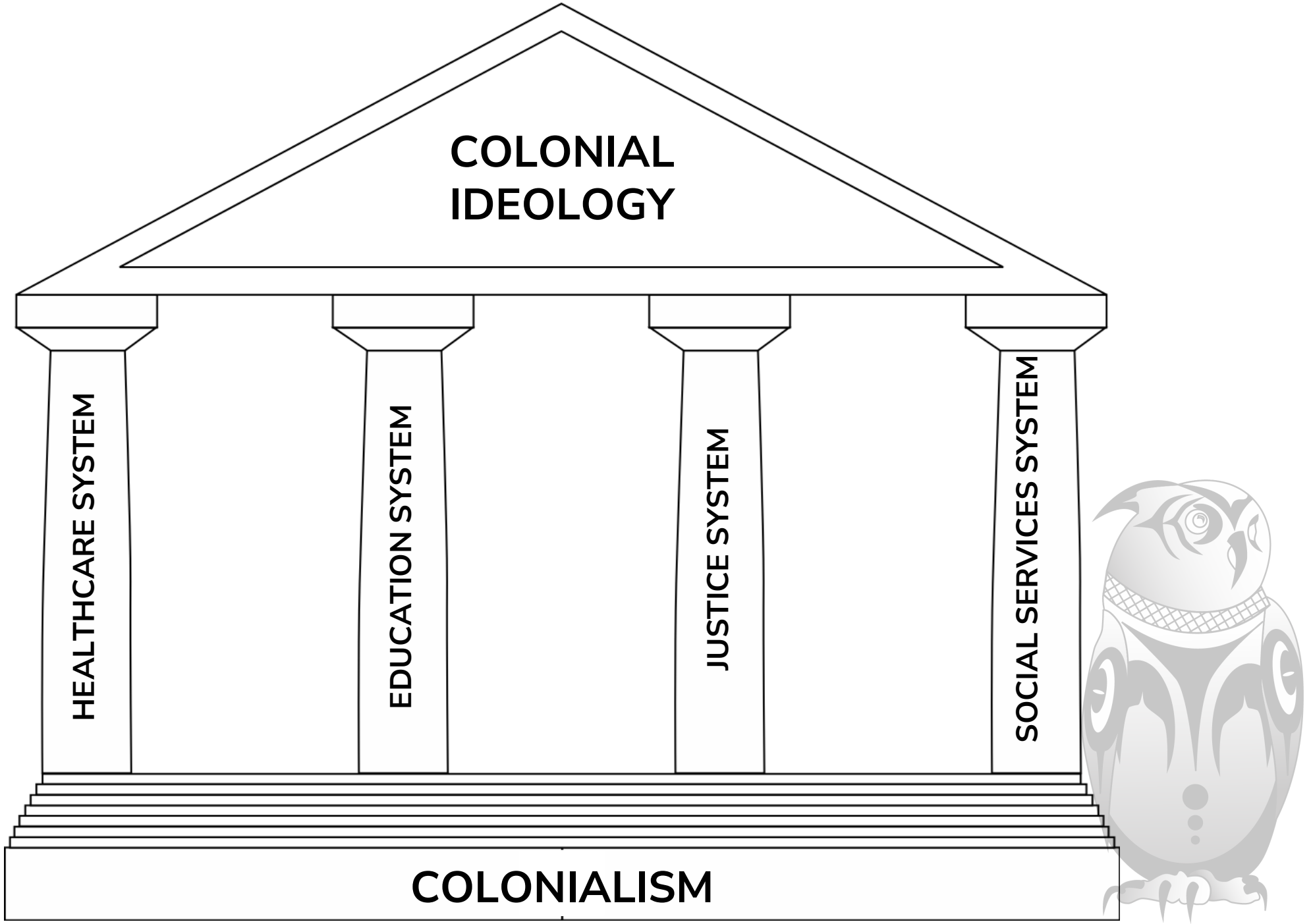
- School
- Peers
- Friends
- Media: news & TV
- Social media
- Myths
- Family narratives
- Segregation
- Erasure of Indigenous peoples

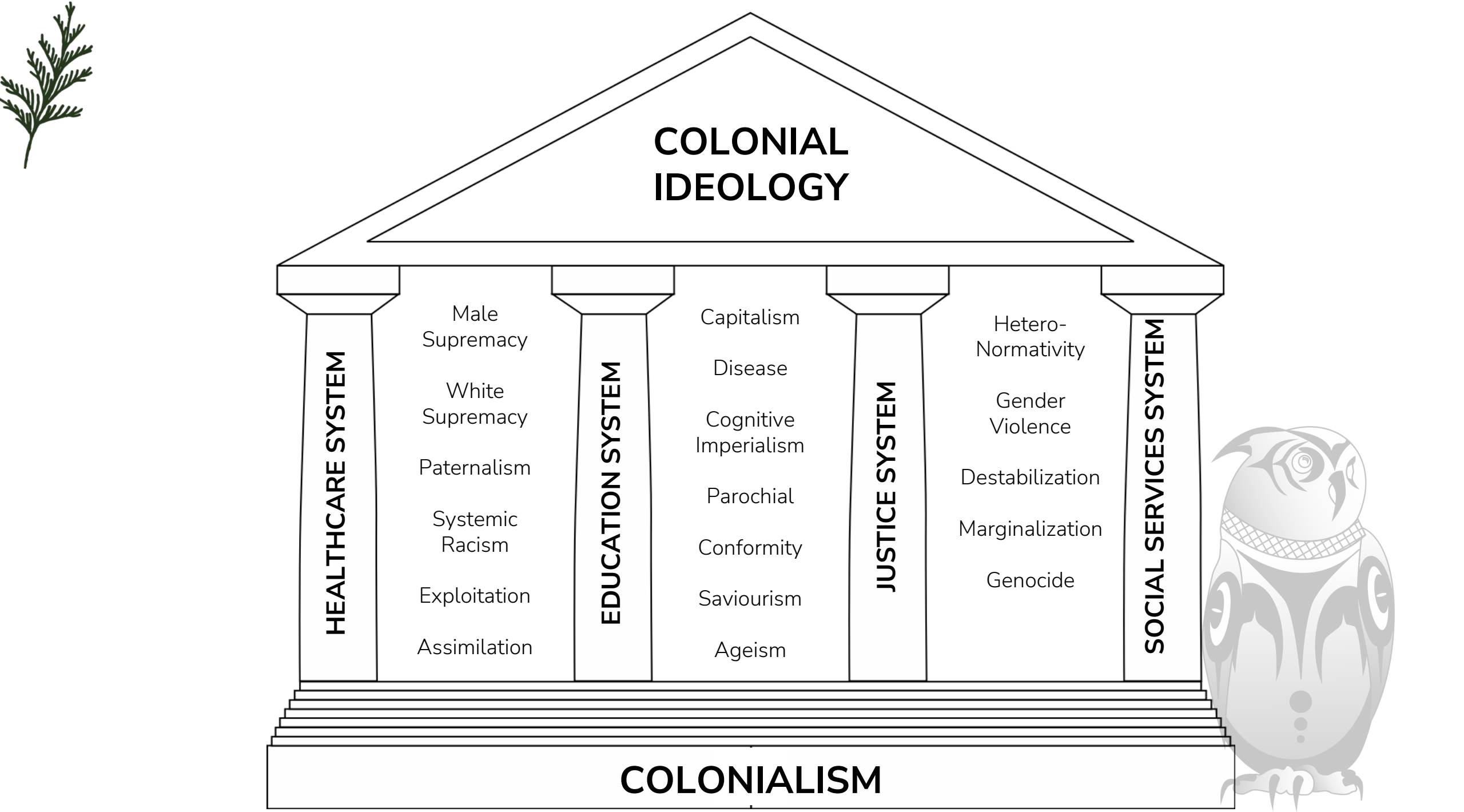


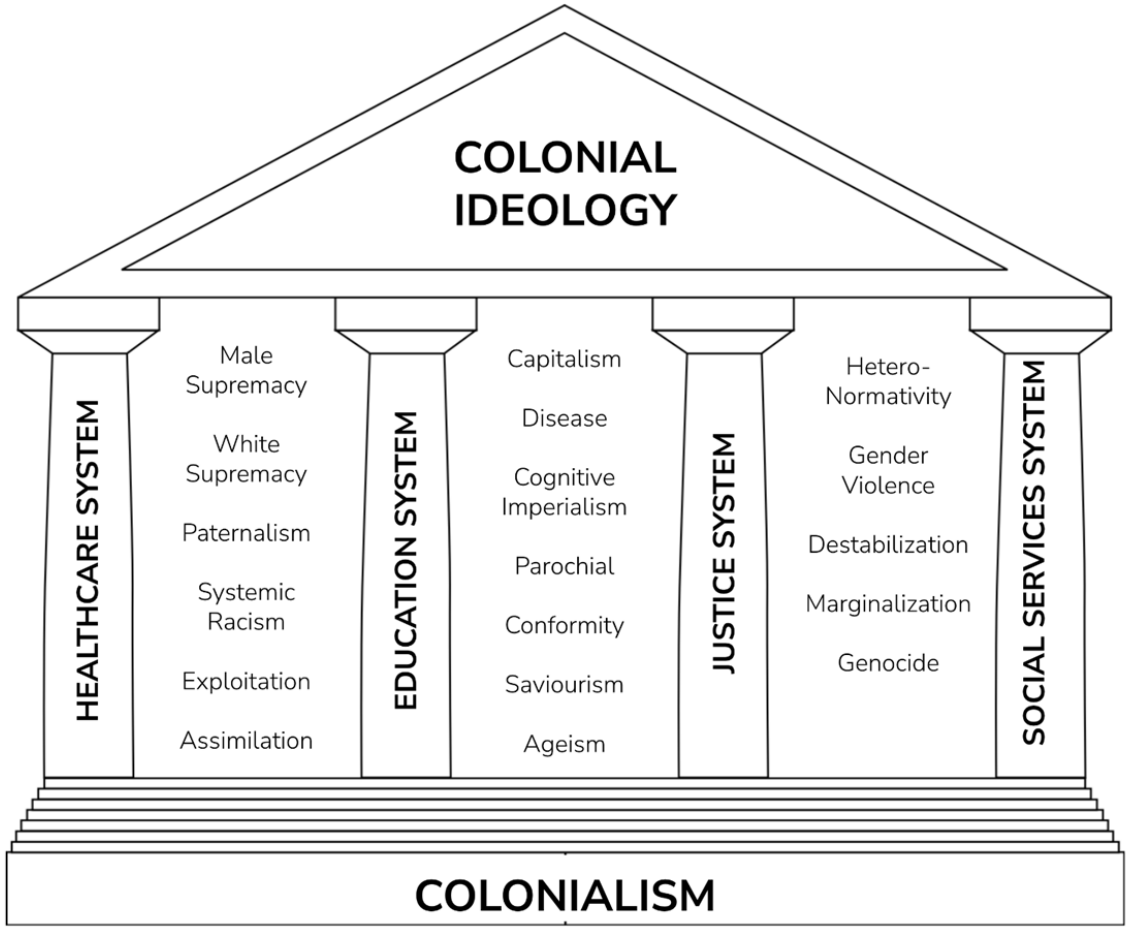
Institutional oppression

Mechanism	Example
Unacknowledged trauma	Color blindness, multiculturalism, “regardless of culture”
Institutions	Buildings and sites are named after white heterosexual upper class males
Reward for conformity	Equality vs. Equity for people and communities
Ideology	Pathologizing cultural values (i.e. communication)
Invisibility	No visual representation of the local First Nations communities on which your site is built
Burden of representation	“The Indigenous people won’t engage with us…” or asking Indigenous staff people to speak on behalf of all Indigenous cultures publicly
Internalized racism	Denial of ancestral heritage to gain structural advantage of privilege
Microaggressions	“Everyone can succeed if they work hard enough…” (meritocracy)
Isolation	Hiring an Indigenous staff person to take on all Indigenous patients and clients without social, emotional, cultural, and professional supports in place

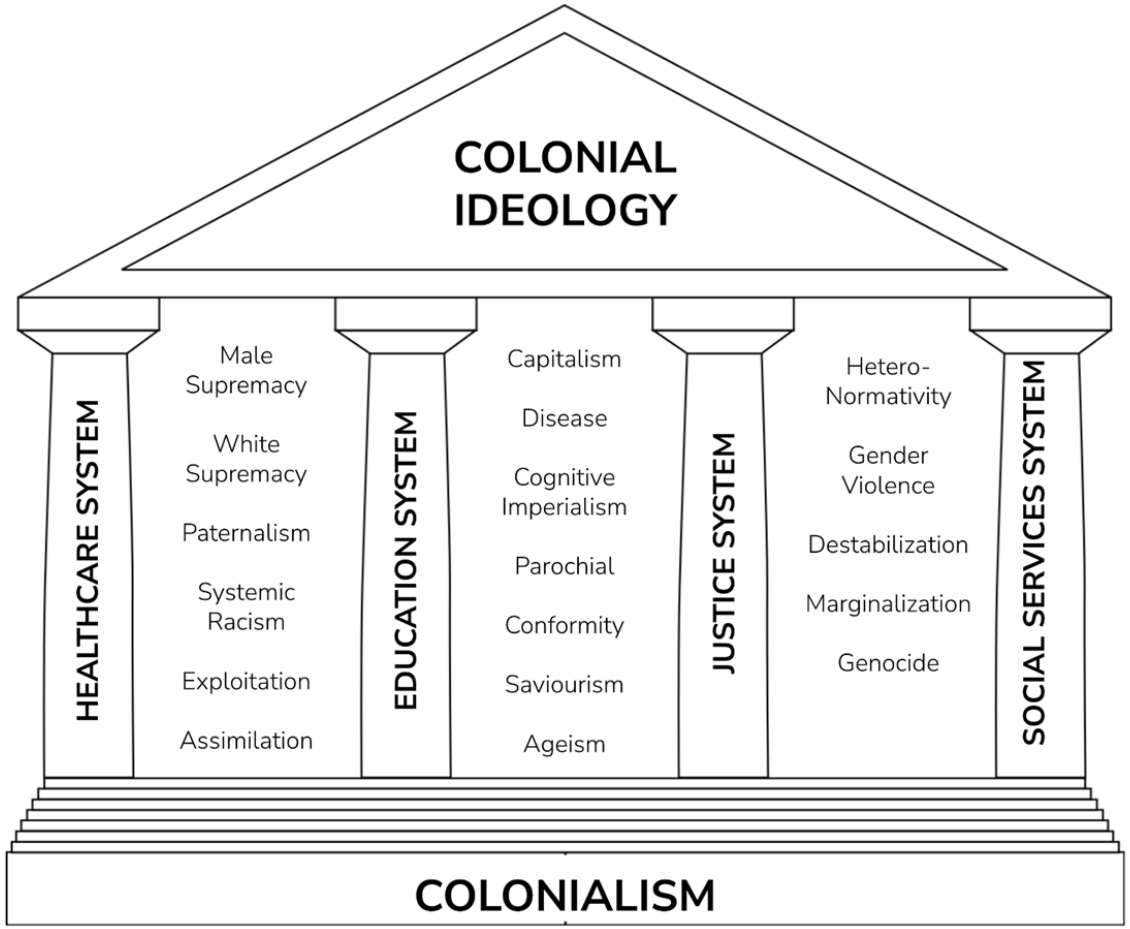



COLONIAL IDEOLOGY
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
EDUCATION SYSTEM
JUSTICE SYSTEM
SOCIAL SERVICES SYSTEM
COLONIALISM


COLONIAL IDEOLOGY
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
Male Supremacy
White Supremacy
Paternalism
Systemic Racism
Exploitation
Assimilation
EDUCATION SYSTEM
Capitalism
Disease
Cognitive Imperialism
Parochial
Conformity
Saviourism
Ageism
JUSTICE SYSTEM
Hetero-Normativity
Gender Violence
Destabilization
Marginalization
Genocide
SOCIAL SERVICES SYSTEM
COLONIALISM



The Indian Act	**The Civilization Act**	**The Bill of Rights**
The Residential Schools	**The 60's Scoop**	**Land Theft**
The Electoral Franchise Act	**Beast of the Land**	**Prohibition**
STATE & STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES		



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Indian Hospitals

- Segregated hospitals
- Opened due to fear that "Indian TB" posed a greater danger to the non-aboriginal population
- Late 19th to late 20th century
- Used as long-term holding after residential school

Steps toward reconciliation

- BC K-12 Transformation
- Health Standardization
- ICS Education and Training
- Decolonization of the Academy
- BCDRIPA

2

PART 2
Bringing it all together

SECTION 03

What is cultural safety?

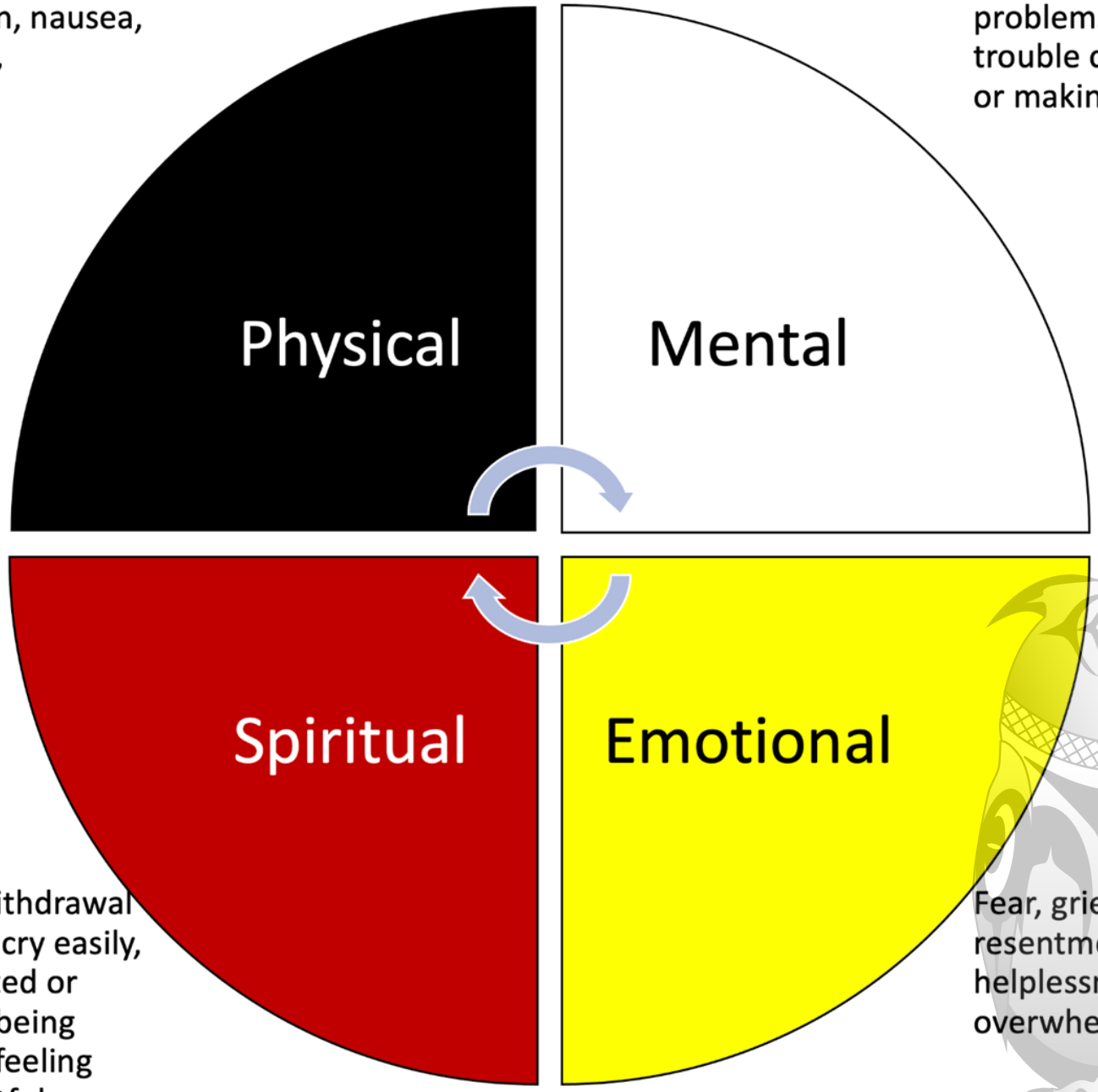
Cultural safety is an outcome based on **respectful engagement** that recognizes and strives to **address power imbalances** inherent in the healthcare system. It results in an environment **free of racism and discrimination**, where people **feel safe** when receiving health care.

Trauma Responses 101

	Fight	*"It's all your fault!"* feeling anger or rage	Talking back to authority, storming out, showing aggression towards self or others, showing defiance, blaming others
	Flight	*"I've got to get out of here!"* feeling anxious or overwhelmed, feeling the urge to flee	Leaving the space unexpectedly, spacing out or seeming not to listen, being intentionally or unintentionally distracted, missing class or work
	Freeze	*"I can't,"* feeling panicked, overwhelmed, or numbed-out	Giving up quickly, spacing out/ seeming not to listen, showing frustration or overwhelm
	Flop	*"It's all my fault" or "It's not worth it"* feeling sad, depressed, hopeless, apathetic	Appearing disengaged, showing little emotion, missing class, work, events
	Friend	*"Please help me! I can't do it."* Feeling helpless or powerless, low confidence	Not taking responsibility for oneself, relying on others (peers, adults others) to help solve problems

-Sexual Assault Crisis Centre 2022

Trauma Responses As Forms of Communication



- Tension, aches, pains, hypertension, nausea, restlessness, headaches

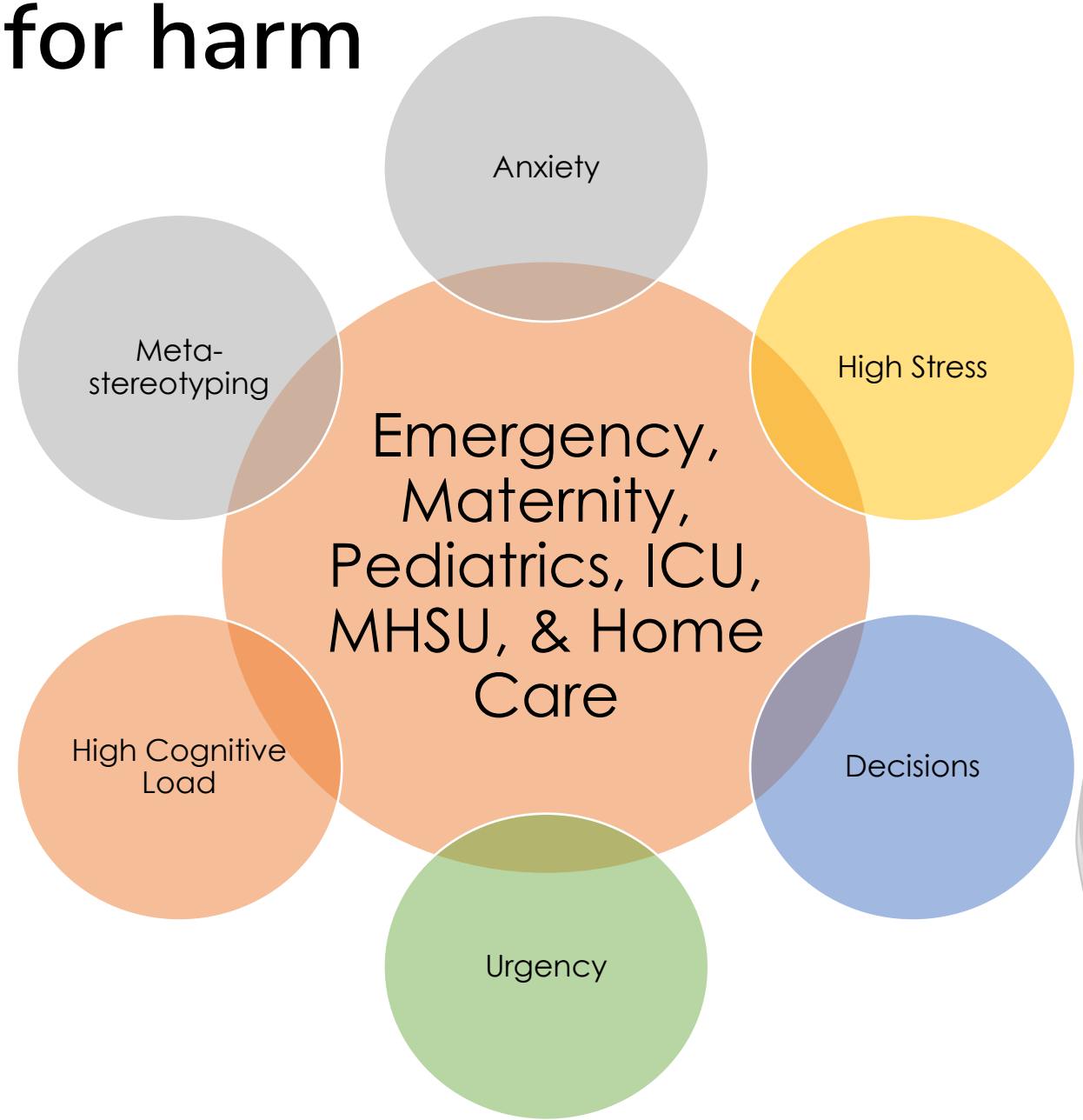
- Confusion, memory problems, self-blame, trouble concentrating or making decisions

- Irritability, withdrawal from others, cry easily, feeling rejected or abandoned, being judgmental, feeling more distrustful

Fear, grief, anger, guilt, resentment, helplessness, overwhelmed

SECTION 03

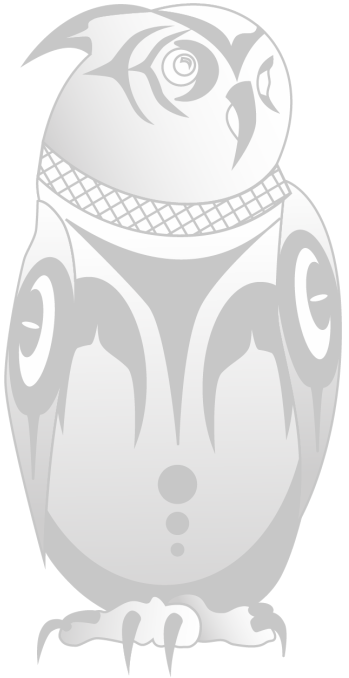
Common areas for harm



SECTION 03

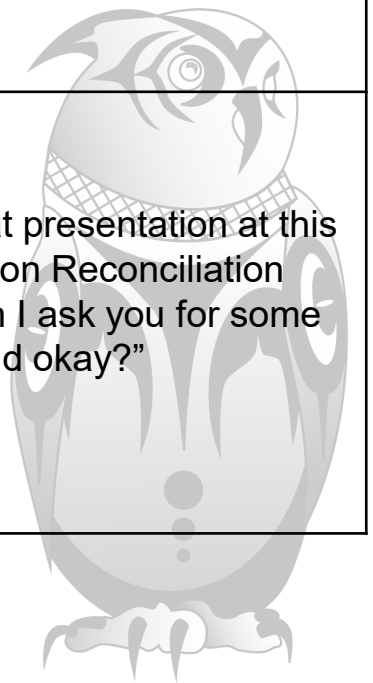
Locating racism

Interpersonal	Institutional	Systemic
• Between individuals • One person makes a racist comment towards another	• Organizational policies, practices, & workplace culture • All leaders of an organization are from the dominant racial group	• Societal norms, public policy, media, & public discourse • Indigenous people are overrepresented in the poverty & incarceration

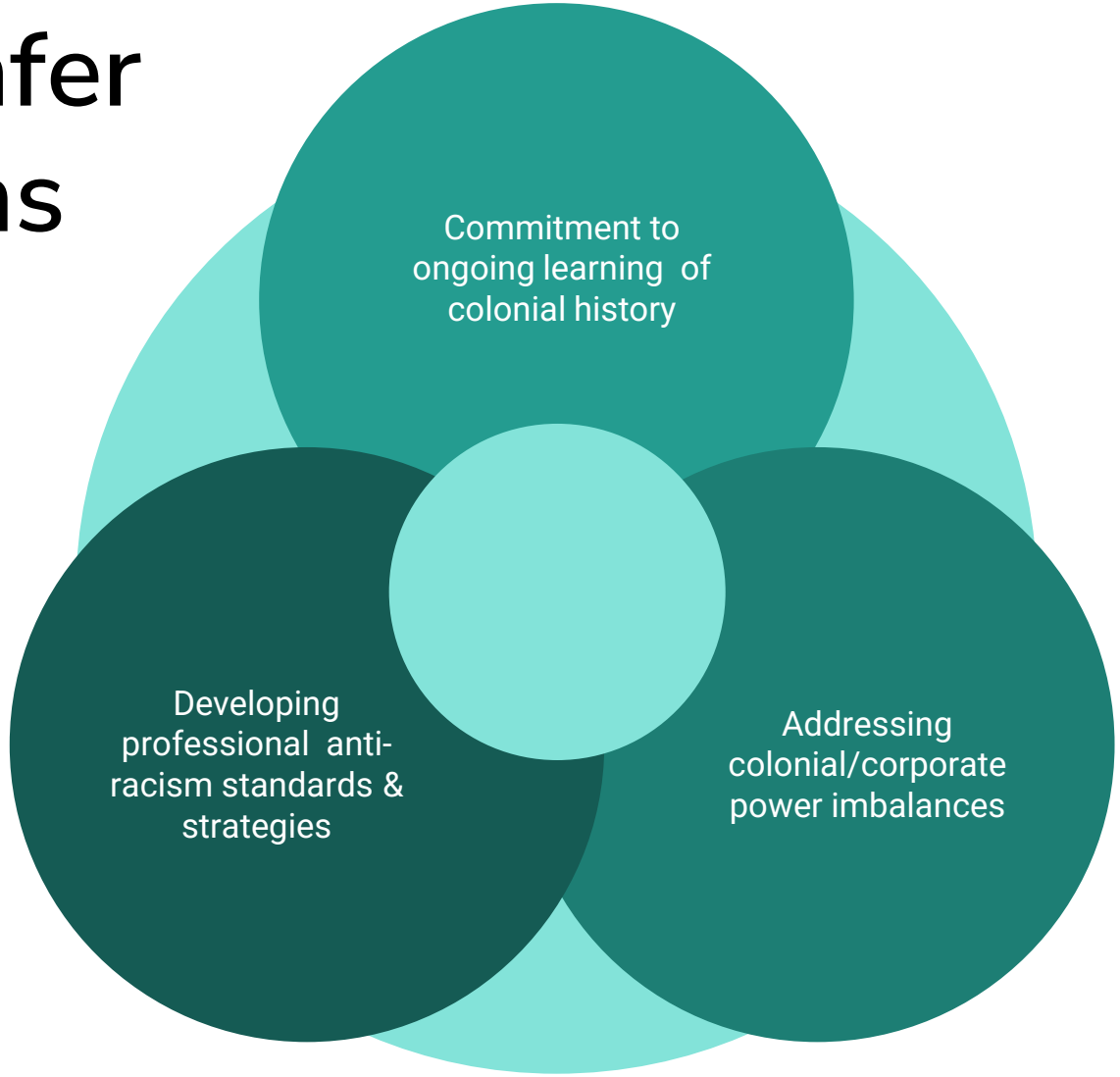


Addressing Racism

Call-out culture	Call-in culture	Lean-in culture
When you abruptly call-out racist behaviour and actions you witness in other. This is good to immediately end the behaviour but can have a deconstructive impact on your working relationship with a colleague.	When you wait for a more subtle time to call your colleague in to talk about what you observed them do as racist. You do not make it about the person, but rather their behaviour in a respectful manner.	When your team and leadership establish and practice regular means of feedback, communication, and reporting on all forms of safety, including cultural safety.
For example: “Hey! You can’t say that! That is racist”	**For example:** “Hey, can I talk to you for a moment privately. I thought I heard you say _____ back there, I wanted you to know that came across as prejudice or racist. Knowing you, you probably did not intend it to come across that way, but I wanted to give you that feedback so you know..”	**For example:** “Hey, I just delivered that presentation at this mornings team meeting on Reconciliation and Cultural Safety. Can I ask you for some feedback? Did that sound okay?”



Culturally safer Organizations look like:



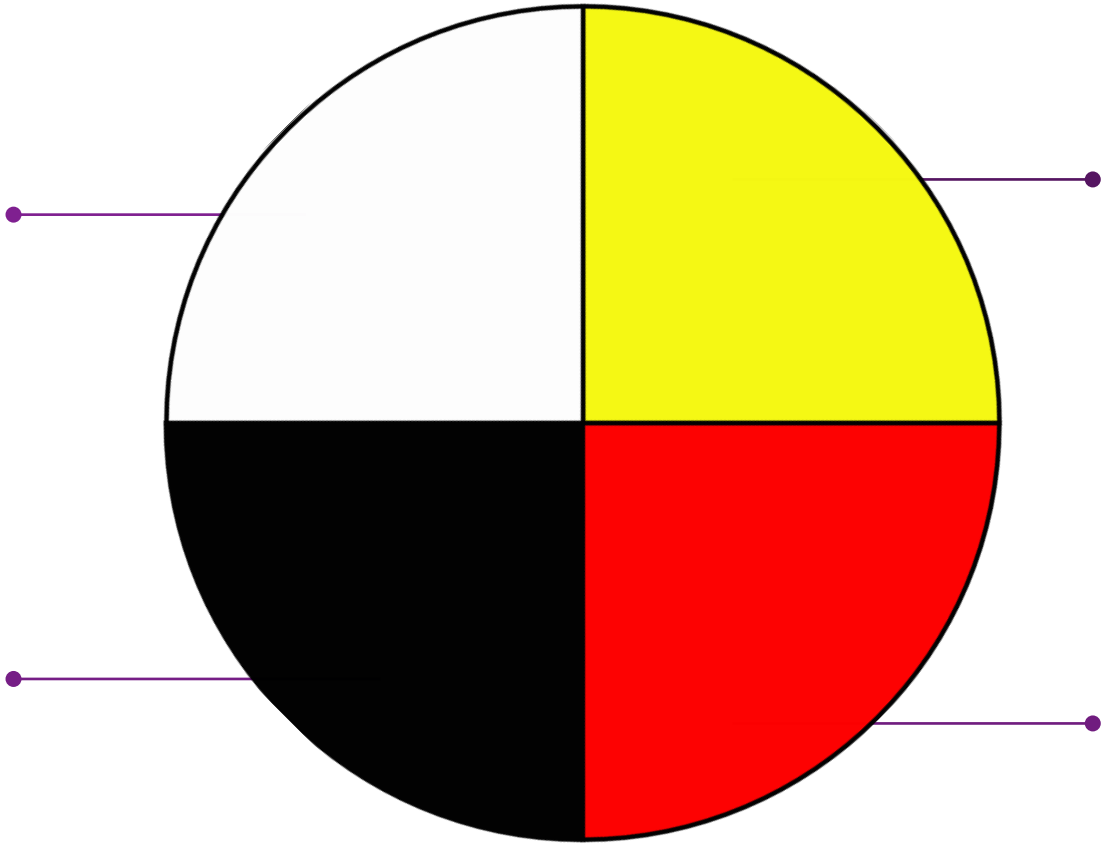
Reconciliation practices

STAY INFORMED

Follow Indigenous news stories, podcasts, authors, social media influencers, scholars, and activists

THINK INDIGENOUS

Embrace decolonial methods, apply Two-Eyed Seeing, think in 7-Generations, respect Indigneous laws, protocols, and approaches

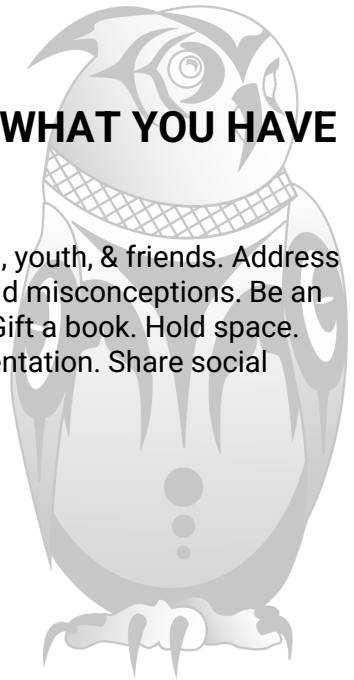


BUY INDIGENOUS

Invest in Indigenous businesses both at a personal and institutional level: tourism, events, non-profit charity, consultants, contractors, artists, Elders, entertainers, entrepreneurs, youth, etc.

PASS ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

Teach children, youth, & friends. Address stereotypes and misconceptions. Be an ally in action. Gift a book. Hold space. Deliver a presentation. Share social media posts



“Safety is not the absence of threat… it is the presence of connection”

DR GABOR MATE

THANK YOU

kʷukʷscémxʷ

LEN PIERRE CONSULTING

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marissa.mcintyre@live.com