

NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION



Welcome.

It's important to remember that this work will feel uncomfortable at times.

Sit with it and reflect on where it's coming from. The key is to listen to Indigenous Peoples, inform yourself and seek to understand. From there - take action with Indigenous Peoples. There's nothing for us, without us.

Indigenous Peoples and communities have a long, painful history with Canada. National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30 is a day for Canadians, communities and organizations to reflect and demonstrate their commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.

We hope the information in this document provides some general guidance for your organization to begin creating a respectful, meaningful and appropriate plan for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation or Orange Shirt Day.

Remember, Indigenous Peoples are not homogeneous. Teachings and knowledge may be different across communities, or even for individuals within a community.

We welcome you to use the knowledge in this resource as a starting point for your work. We encourage you to approach your knowledge growth with humility and an open heart!

Grammar & Language

-  Capitalize - capitalize Indigenous, First Nations, Métis and Inuit. It is the same as capitalizing Canadian, or English
-  Capitalize - capitalize positions of respect in the community, such as Elder, Chief, or Knowledge Keeper. It is the same as capitalizing Premier or Doctor.
-  Capitalize - capitalize both Indigenous and Peoples when making general reference to Indigenous Peoples or groups.
-  Person First Language - use person first language and avoid possessive use such as "Canada's Indigenous Peoples". Instead use Indigenous People of Canada.
-  Remove Apostrophe - the plural possessive for First Nations or Indigenous Peoples is not used like in English. You would not write "First Nations' land", it is First Nations land.
-  Proper Names - use the proper name of the people or community instead of generalizing. For example: Blackfoot, or Whitefish First Nation
-  Understand Places - If you are visiting Indigenous communities, understand the differences. For example: Métis people do not live in reserves, they live in settlements or may not have a land base. First Nations people live on reserves, not reservations.
-  Consider - Be trauma informed. Sept. 30th should not be referred to as a celebration.

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Building your Communications Plan

Reconciliation is often messy and uncomfortable work. Here are some questions to work through and prepare your organization to go about this work with intentionality. The answers will help inform your goals, objectives, key messages, strategies and tactics.

Why are we doing this work?

What do we want to accomplish?

Where is our audience at in terms of understanding?

What is our goal, awareness, education, a day of reflection/participation?

Then the big question, What role does our organization/client/company play in this space?

Which TRC Calls to Action relate to our organization?

How is our organization supporting reconciliation efforts? Hiring, fundraising, training, partnerships?

If you aren't currently supporting reconciliation, how prepared are you to answer those questions from staff or community?

What supports will we have in place for staff before, on and after Sept. 30th?

What communication tools and messages will we use to engage leaders and managers?

Does our external communication align with our internal messaging?

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Protocol

Protocol is a term that covers a variety of traditional practices for Indigenous Peoples, such as placing yourself or land acknowledgment. It goes beyond being a 'rule' or 'requirement'. For Indigenous people, protocol is done as a representation of the culture's **deeply held ethical system** which embodies values such as humility, consent, collective knowledge, and respect.

Tobacco

Tobacco is a sacred gift from the Creator. For many Indigenous Peoples, it is known as one of the four sacred medicines. Traditional tobacco was given first because it creates a direct connection between the human and the spirit worlds.

Tobacco has many uses and is used in ceremonies, rituals, prayers, and offerings. The most powerful use of tobacco is when it is smoked in the Sacred Pipe Ceremony.

Tobacco is offered for many reasons, in many different contexts.

Offering Tobacco

One protocol used is offering tobacco to an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, or Indigenous person when making a request for assistance. That request may be a song, blessing, advice, teaching or guidance.

Ceremonial tobacco differs from commercial tobacco. If possible, it's typically preferred to obtain tobacco (or semah) from an organic and traditional producer as it has been grown and picked with traditional practices.

It is important to remember that different communities may have different protocol. For example, some Métis Elders may require tea for protocol. Take the opportunity to ask the Elder what protocol is needed, preferred, and appropriate. Make a small offering of tobacco when you ask for this guidance.

Activity Ideas

Below is a list of activities you may wish to consider for September 30th. Remember, your acts of reconciliation do not have to be exclusive to the day, you can work toward a plan before and after.

- Complete cultural awareness training - or have an organization develop training specific for your team. One opportunity is the [Indigenous Canada course](#) through the University of Alberta which is free (certificates available for a cost).
- Provide [Truth and Reconciliation booklets](#) to staff and participants. Ask staff to bring forward some Calls to Action that they feel are relevant to their work.
- Honour the day with observance and reflection. Allow staff to participate or support community as they feel called to.
- Volunteer for an Indigenous organization - for the day, or even a commitment for the year.
- Visit an Indigenous Cultural site or museum in your area.
- Host a blanket exercise.
- Organize a documentary screening -- have participants watch together followed by a tea and bannock. The [CBC](#) and the [National Film Board](#) offer relevant content.
- Provide orange shirts from an Indigenous organization or artist.
- Hire an Indigenous beading artist to teach and create Orange Shirt Day pins.

Remember, all Indigenous Peoples should be paid and compensated for their knowledge and time. Plan to include this in your activity budgets.

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Resources

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation:

<https://nctr.ca/>

94 Calls to Action (PDF):

ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Orange Shirt Society

<https://www.orangeshirtday.org/>

Gaudet (2019) Keeoukaywin: The Visiting Way - Fostering an Indigenous Research Methodology

<https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/aps/index.php/aps/article/view/29336>

Thorpe-Moscon, J. & Ohm, J. (2021). Building inclusion for Indigenous Peoples in Canadian workplaces

<https://www.catalyst.org/research/inclusion-indigenous-peoples-canada-workplace/>

University of Alberta - Indigenous Canada Course

<https://www.ualberta.ca/admissions-programs/online-courses/indigenous-canada/index.html>

National Association of Friendship Centres

<https://nafc.ca/?lang=en>

Reconciliation in Action: A National Engagement Strategy

<https://reconciliationcanada.ca/programs-initiatives/reconciliation-in-action-a-national-engagement-strategy/>

Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business

<https://www.ccab.com/>
