

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion – Discussion Series

Tuesday, December 7th 2021 3:00-4:00 p.m.

To prepare for the conversation, participants were asked to watch one short video, and one movie.

1. Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) CEO Lynne Groulx speaks to how we can reach reconciliation in Canada, followed by singer Cindy Paul's song, "He Can Fancy Dance," and finally Grandmother Roberta Oshkawbewisens speaks to her family's personal experience with residential schools. [WATCH IT HERE \(~16min\)](#)
2. Movie: Indian Horse on Netflix (or read: Indian Horse by Richard Wagamese)
 - Opened meeting with Land Acknowledgement
 - Followed with video <https://youtu.be/xlG17C19nYo>
 - Technical Guidance for the meeting provided
 - Discussion – purpose of the EDO discussion series: Safe space to discuss, learn, become comfortable with topics that are not as familiar to most of us.
 - Broadening perspective
 - Listen without judgment
 - Education
 - Learning how to connect with underserved communities

Discussion questions:

- Did you enjoy the film/ book 'Indian Horse'? Why or why not?
 - o Found it moving and incredibly disturbing, wasn't sure I could get through
 - o Appalled to find out residential school still open in 1996
 - o Felt like someone sitting on my chest the whole time, upset and moved and astonished about the dates of how recent
 - o Book and movie are a little different, the book describes in more detail and captures more stories of abuse in the school, movie uses traditional Ojibway language
 - o Book is in curriculum in Ontario high school
 - o When the Actor cut his hair in the movie – that was real. He was hesitant to do the movie at all because of it but wanted to honour the stories and what his family went through. The emotion in that scene – is real
 - o Movie was well done, practical, factual and very emotional
- How do you react to Saul? Do your attitudes to him change during the story, and if so, what brings about these changes?
 - o Struck so deeply that someone's life can be fully and deeply filled with despair
 - o How does someone recover from a life of despair?
 - o That level of despair cycles through one generation after another
 - o Personal note: was sent to boarding school and has been resentful about that but watching the movie makes me realize I had nothing to complain about.
 - o Watching Saul through the years, made me relate to where I was in that year and I knew nothing about residential schools, I realize how my life was completely different
 - o Wasn't surprised that he left hockey, it became another place he was beaten down

- I grew up in Northern Ontario, I had been in that arena, I grew up down the road, I had no idea this was happening, I feel heart ache that my eyes were closed
 - In BC I was aware there were residential schools but it was spun in a *positive way* 'Indians would receive what the governments at the time felt was the right schooling'
 - This makes us realize what we did not know, learn what the truth is and what happened
 - It's important to sit with the magnitude of that intergenerational trauma
- What do you think "reconciliation" means? How can we as individuals, be part of the healing?
 - First thing is increasing our knowledge
 - 94 very specific actions were agreed upon from the Truth and Reconciliation report, very few have been actioned
 - We must forgive ourselves for not knowing, and build from there – learn
 - I realize I am part of a system that is benefiting me, inequities are not a thing of the past, and they are present today
 - Raised to believe in the government and believe what we were being told
 - Not unique to Canada, Australia, US and other parts of the world had similar treatments of Indigenous peoples

Video, Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)

Learnings, notes:

- Day of Truth and Reconciliation – Sept 30th
- Lynne Groulx explains reconciliation means: (from the Truth and Reconciliation commission)
 - We need to establish and maintain a mutually respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada by
 - Be aware of the past
 - Acknowledge the harm that was inflicted
 - Atone for the causes of the harm
 - Take action to change the behavior.
 - LEARNING IS THE FIRST STEP IN THE PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION.
- Residential Schools were in place for 150 years, estimated that at least 150,000 Indigenous children attended
- The goal of the schools was to assimilate Indigenous people and to kill the Indian in the child
- Could not speak their language, practice their culture, or form critical loving, bonding relationships
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada published their report in 2015, (after 6 yrs of hearings and testimony from more than 6,000 residential school survivors) inside of that report was 94 calls to action (Child welfare, education, language and culture, health, justice, reconciliation)
- STATUS on action (June 2021): completely enacted (13), those for which the government has taken some steps (60) and those where no real steps have been made (21).

Resources for continued learning:

- Teacher resources guides: <http://www.fnesc.ca/irsr/>
- Indigenous Canada free course (~21 hours) <https://www.coursera.org/learn/indigenous-canada>
- Article: <https://thetyee.ca/Analysis/2021/11/09/Why-Not-Talking-About-Declaration-Rights-Indigenous-Peoples/>
- Question to sit with: Where do you think your privilege might intersect with someone else's oppression?