

Definitions

From Bearhead, Charlene. *Their Voices Will Guide Us: Education Guide*. National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. www.mmiwg-ffada.ca

Assimilation: Assimilation is the process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture of a society. The process of assimilation involves taking on the traits of the dominant culture to such a degree that the assimilating group becomes socially indistinguishable from other members of the society. Assimilation may be compelled through force or undertaken voluntarily.

Bias: Bias is holding a prejudice in favour of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

Blood Memory: Blood memory is a term often used by Indigenous Peoples to refer to memories stored in one's body cells and passed on genetically. It is also referred to as genetic memory or cellular memory. Blood memory is often described as one's ancestral or genetic connection to one's language, songs, ceremonies, land, teachings, etc.

Colonialism/Colonization: Colonialism is the attempted or actual imposition of policies, laws, mores, economies, cultures, or systems, and institutions put in place by settler governments to support and continue the occupation of Indigenous territories, the subjugation of Indigenous Nations, and the resulting internalized and externalized thought patterns that support this occupation and subjugation.

Colonialism is not to be confused with colonization.

Colonialism is the ideology advocating colonization. Colonization generally refers to the process by which Europeans invaded and occupied Indigenous national territories.

Decolonizing: Decolonization is a social and political process aimed at resisting and undoing the multifaceted impacts of colonization and re-establishing strong contemporary Indigenous Nations and institutions based on traditional values, philosophies, and knowledge systems.

It is the meaningful and active resistance to forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of Indigenous minds, bodies, and lands.

It requires individuals to consciously and critically question the legitimacy of the colonizer and reflect on the ways we have been influenced by colonialism.

Discrimination: Systemic discrimination is the creation and perpetuation of systems (that is, knowledge, education, governance, laws) based on the values and mores that are central to one fragment of a society and to which it assumes all societies subscribe.

Intergenerational Trauma: Intergenerational trauma is transmission of the effects of trauma across generations, affecting the children and grandchildren of those initially victimized. This includes the transmission of historical oppression and colonization that continues to impact the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples today.

Seven Sacred Teachings: The Seven Sacred Teachings is a term used by many, but not all, Indigenous peoples in what is now referred to as Canada. The term refers to the foundational concepts by which we should all live our lives in the best interest of ourselves, our families, our communities, and all living things. The Seven Sacred Teachings are: love, honesty, courage, wisdom, humility, truth, and respect.

Stereotypes: Stereotypes are commonly held public beliefs about a certain social group or type of individual. Stereotypes include images, understandings, or categorization of groups or individuals based on simplified or generalized understandings of the characteristics, nature, or descriptions of the individuals or groups. This categorization, which denies diversity, results in a skewed, false, or incorrect understanding about the characteristics, nature, or description of the individual or groups in question.