

Psychology's Response to the TRC

A report of the Canadian Psychological Association & the
Psychology Foundation of Canada

Prepared by the Task Force on Responding to the Truth &
Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Report



Truth and
Reconciliation
Commission of Canada



THE PSYCHOLOGY
FOUNDATION
OF CANADA

LA FONDATION
DE PSYCHOLOGIE
DU CANADA

CANADIAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION



SOCIÉTÉ
CANADIENNE
DE PSYCHOLOGIE

The Task Force

17 Task Force Members

6 Student Volunteer Assistants

3 Days of In-Person Meetings

7 Drafts

18 Points of recommendations

14 Guiding principles

- Statement of accountability & responsibility to Indigenous Peoples
- Guiding principles for psychological practice that acknowledges & respects Indigenous concepts
- Addresses assessment, treatment, research, education, clinical training, continuing education, & programming

Statement of Accountability

Acknowledge accountability for harms done to Indigenous Peoples in Canada by the profession of psychology

- **Articulates specific harms done**
- **Provides a formal apology on behalf of the profession**

Position statement

How to move forward toward reconciliation between psychology & Indigenous Peoples & psychology's role moving forward

Acknowledgement

The profession of psychology, in its interaction with Indigenous Peoples in Canada has contravened its own code of ethics & our history of having caused harm toward Indigenous Peoples

We apologize for:

- **Not opposing discriminatory governmental policy**
- **Colluding with policies & laws of marginalization & oppression**
- **Grounding our approaches in irrelevant epistemologies & research**
- **Lack of acknowledgement of cultural & historical contexts in our professional work**
- **Our failure to name the unjust impacts of governmental policies**

We have been biased, irresponsible & disrespectful to Indigenous Peoples in Canada -- We apologize for failing to be supportive allies & advocates

Guiding Principles

Practice of Psychology

- **Cultural Allyship** -- Stand with Indigenous Peoples
 - Have localized knowledge & cultural literacy
- **Humility** -- Address & respect Elders & traditional knowledge
 - Genuine learning & collaboration
- **Collaboration** -- Community collaboration
 - Bridging Western & Indigenous cultures
- **Critical Reflection** -- Commit to unlearn some training
 - "Self-locate" (credentials, ancestors, role in colonization)
- **Respect** -- For people & peoples
 - For resilient Indigenous cultures & their healing traditions
- **Social Justice**
 - Strive for greater understanding of social justice context

Guiding Principles

Areas within the discipline

Assessment

- We lack what we need to provide meaningful psychological assessments to Indigenous Peoples

Treatment

- Interventions not validated with Indigenous people may impose Western norms

Research

- Refer to the First Nations Principles of OCAP

Program development

- To be developed in partnership with Indigenous community members

Program evaluation

- Acknowledge power dynamics – ensure Indigenous Peoples provide relevant feedback

Advocacy & social justice

- Be proactively involved in the advocacy of Indigenous mental health



Guiding Principles

Education & Training

The task force addressed four broad topics in relation to education in psychology & Indigenous Peoples in Canada:

1. **Barriers for Indigenous students**
2. **Key training elements for undergraduate students**
3. **Key training elements for graduate students**
4. **Current psychologist's need for cultural literacy training**

The image shows the cover of a report titled "Guiding Principles" with the subtitle "Education & Training". The cover is dark grey with white text. The title "Guiding Principles" is in a large, sans-serif font, and the subtitle "Education & Training" is in a smaller, sans-serif font below it.

Guiding Principles

Education & Training

1. Barriers for Indigenous students

- < 12 Indigenous practicing & or teaching psychologists in Canada
- Need -- funding for indigenous psychology students
- Risks -- Indigenous graduate students lose traditional ways of knowing if education only validates Western epistemologies
- Very few universities recognize the scholarship of traditional, non-university educated knowledge keepers; Needed -- Psychology should advocate for their acceptance by academia

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Guiding Principles

Education & Training

2. Key training elements for undergraduate students

- Undergraduate psychology students should have access to a course on Indigenous cultural literacy
- Indigenous cultural literacy courses need to be separate from cultural diversity courses, as these are two entirely separate realms of knowledge



Guiding Principles

Education & Training

3. Key training elements for graduate students

- Knowledge of the residential school system / intergenerational trauma experienced by Indigenous Peoples in Canada
- Demonstrate Indigenous cultural literacy, value of Indigenous traditional knowledge, & how to balance with Western current practice
- Indigenous knowledge & cultural literacy as a core competency
- Knowledge sharing that demonstrates that Indigenous communities already have the cultural, linguistic, & spiritual knowledge they need to heal
- Programs can partner culturally competent instructors with Indigenous leaders, Elders, & respected community members

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Guiding Principles

Education & Training

4. Current Psychologists need cultural literacy training

- Experiential on-land experiences
- Reach out to friendship centres & Indigenous treatment centres to gain cultural literacy
- Those communities receiving services should be involved in the psychologist's cultural competency training
- But, remain cognizant of the possibility of overburdening communities with this responsibility

Dr. Judi Malone

Psychologists' Association of Alberta
Chief Executive Officer

judim@paa-ab.ca

