

Increasing Access to PEACE Programs for Indigenous Children, Youth and Non-Offending Caregivers

June 2020



BC Society of
Transition Houses



Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
Purpose	3
Document Overview	3
A Note on Language	4
Recognizing Diversity	4
2. CONTEXT	5
Decolonization	5
Resistance and Resurgence	5
Indigenization	5
PEACE Program Considerations	6
Additional Resources	6
3. CULTURAL SAFETY	8
Cultural Humility	9
Understanding Social Location	9
PEACE Program Considerations	10
Additional Resources	10
4. A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH: PRINCIPLES & LIMITATIONS	12
Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach to Practice	12
Limitations of a Trauma-Informed Approach	14
Violence Informed Indigenous and Intersectional Practice (VIIP)	14
PEACE Program Considerations	15
Additional Resources	15
5. COMMUNITY BUILDING	17
PEACE Program Considerations	17
Additional Resources	17
6. WISE PRACTICES	19
Relationship Building	19
Through an Indigenous Lens: Applications for PEACE Program Practice	20
Sample Activities	23
Additional Resources	25
7. REFERENCES	27



1. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The **Increasing Access to PEACE Programs for Indigenous Children, Youth and Non-Offending Caregivers** document is designed to support and guide PEACE (Prevention, Empowerment, Advocacy, Counselling and Education) Program counsellors in their work with Indigenous children and youth and their non-offending caregivers who have experienced violence in culturally safe and meaningful ways.

BCSTH acknowledges the shifting landscape and growing body of knowledge on this topic. The information and resources in this document encourage reflection and offer considerations and resources for the work PEACE Programs do serving Indigenous children, youth and families.

DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

This document has four main objectives. To:

- Increase knowledge and understanding of cultural safety and cultural humility.
- Increase knowledge and understanding of a trauma-informed approach when working with Indigenous children, youth and families.
- Provide PEACE Programs with resources and ideas for community building.
- Provide PEACE Programs with 'Wise Practices', practical activities and resources for supporting Indigenous children, youth & non-offending caregivers.

BCSTH has designed this document to provide background knowledge and context for the broader landscape of issues facing Indigenous people, particularly as they relate to the PEACE Program objectives. At the end of each section, specific PEACE Program considerations are offered as well as additional resources for further reading and applications of the topics discussed. Rather than offering a prescriptive list of practices for working with Indigenous children, youth and non-offending caregivers, this document provides resources and activities that PEACE Programs can pull from, use and build on depending on the context.

In addition to this resource, BCSTH offers an online training course, [Increasing Access for Indigenous Women](#) related to the issues presented here.



A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

The term 'Indigenous' is used throughout this resource and it is meant to be inclusive of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Aboriginal peoples in Canada. BCSTH recognizes that there are a number of terms used to refer to specific Indigenous peoples in the province of BC. PEACE Programs can research the language and terminology used on the land where they are operating in this [guide from Indigenous Foundations at UBC](#).

RECOGNIZING DIVERSITY

There are many diverse Indigenous nations and bands.

For example:

- There are over 630 First Nation communities in Canada and 203 in BC alone¹.
- According to Canada's 2011 National Household Survey, 451,795 people identified as Métis, of whom, 69,475 lived in BC².
- In the same survey, 59,445 people identified as Inuit. Many of whom live in 53 communities across Inuit Nunangat, which translates to "the place where Inuit live" and stretches across Labrador to the Northwest Territories, comprising of four regions: Inuvialuit (NWT and Yukon); Nunavik (Northern Quebec); Nunatsiavut (Labrador); and Nunavut³.
- There are also individuals who identify as neither First Nation members nor Métis who are commonly referred to as non-status Indigenous.
- Indigenous individuals and families may live far away from their homelands, and as such Indigenous children and youth and families that access the PEACE Program may not be from the hosting territory. For example, there is a large population of Cree and Ojibway in BC whose homelands are in other parts of Canada.



2. CONTEXT

DECOLONIZATION

“Decolonizing” is a social and political process aimed at resisting and undoing the multi-faceted impacts of colonization and re-establishing strong contemporary Indigenous Peoples, Nations, and institutions based on traditional values, philosophies, and knowledge systems.” ⁴

Decolonization is about shifting the way Indigenous Peoples view themselves and the way non-Indigenous people view Indigenous Peoples⁵. Decolonization requires all Canadians to recognize and acknowledge Canada’s colonial history and the resulting systemic damage to Indigenous communities. Decolonization restores the Indigenous worldview, culture and traditional ways. Decolonization replaces western interpretations of history with Indigenous perspectives.

RESISTANCE AND RESURGENCE

The concepts of resistance and resurgence are important to a decolonizing approach. Resistance refers to the broad range of diverse strategies and activities that Indigenous Peoples and Nations use to resist colonialism and promote decolonization, Indigenous ways of life, values, knowledge, and broader political goals. It includes everyday acts of resistance that embody individuals and communities living by their traditional teachings, despite overwhelming pressure from the dominant society not to do so.

Resurgence is the increase or revival of an activity or of ideas. For Indigenous peoples, this involves increasing or reviving traditional land-based and water-based cultural practices that existed long before colonization, as well as the revitalization of languages and cultural practices that have been under attack⁶.

INDIGENIZATION

Indigenization requires non-Indigenous people to recognize the validity of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge and respect that these worldviews are as important as other views. Indigenization supports



incorporating Indigenous perspectives and knowledge into all levels of education. It must be acknowledged that there is not one homogenous Indigenous worldview, as each nation or community has their own worldview. Indigenous peoples represent hundreds of cultures and languages across Canada, and there are 203 nations in BC alone. It is important to consult with the Indigenous community on whose land you live and work for input about how to incorporate their knowledge⁷.

PEACE PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

PEACE Programs that are interested in implementing decolonization can:

- Reflect on current policies and practices and implement ones that are supportive of a decolonizing approach.
- Learn about Indigenous values, philosophies, and knowledge systems.
- Support counsellors to explore the power and influence PEACE Program counsellors may hold and supporting PEACE counsellors to reflect on the impact of their gender, race, social class, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, and geographic location and the intersection of these in the work that they do.
- Use a strengths-based approach, with PEACE Programs drawing on the expertise of the local Indigenous communities.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Increasing Access to Indigenous Women

An online course offered through BCSTH that focuses on providing staff and managers at transition houses, second stage houses and safe homes in BC with tools to increase access to services for Indigenous women and their families who are seeking safety from violence.

Chapter 1 of this course specifically covers the history of colonialism in Canada and the strength and resilience of Indigenous people. The course is self-directed and self-paced.

Trauma-Informed Practice with Indigenous Peoples across the Life Span.

A 1-hour webinar presented by Natalie Clark offers relevant, accessible & insightful dialogue. Topics explored include: What is decolonization? What are some ways workers might embrace a decolonizing approach? What are some key things Programs might offer families & youth?



Re-Thinking Family Violence: Centering Indigenous Knowledge

This National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCAH) webinar centers Indigenous worldview while exploring the issue of family violence. Topics of residential schools, decolonization, resistance and resurgence are present throughout and the webinar is broken up into accessible 20-30 minute segments.

Monique Gray Smith – The Ripple Effect of Resilience

Through the course, you will add to the bundle of gifts and knowledge that you carry in your work with Indigenous children, youth and families. Woven into the 6 modules, Monique will share her personal journey, offer readings from her various books and together you will build a practice of hope and resilience.



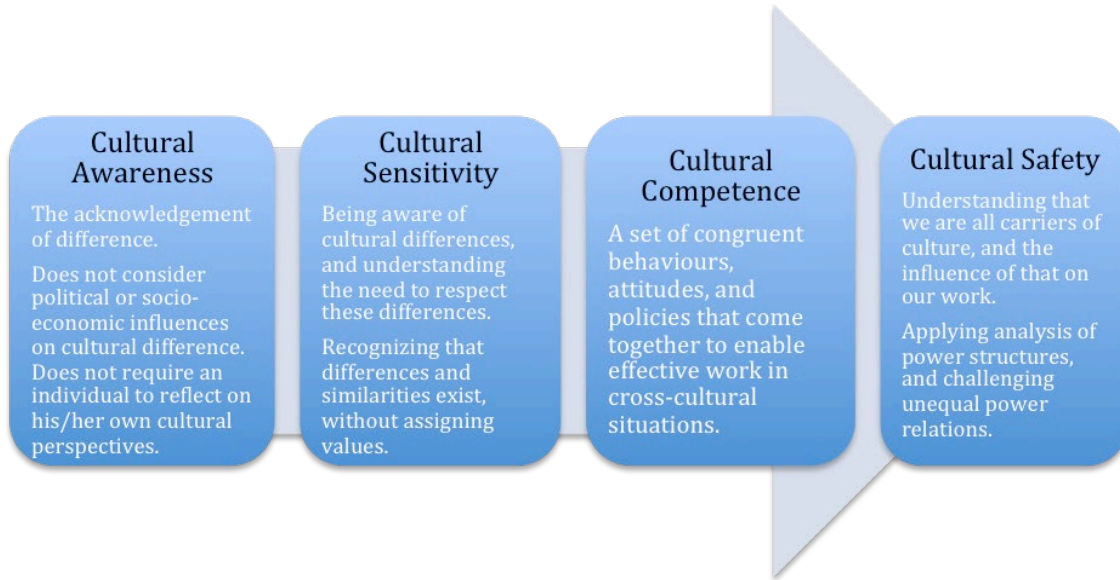
3. CULTURAL SAFETY

The first stage of healing from trauma involves making your world as safe as possible. Further, this task of creating safety takes precedence over all others for no other work can proceed if safety is not secured.⁸

“Cultural safety is defined as an environment which is safe for people; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning together with dignity, and truly listening.”⁹

The concept of cultural safety was developed in the 1980’s by the Maori people in New Zealand, in response to dissatisfaction with the nursing care they had received. Cultural safety differs from cultural competence, which is a set of skills that individuals can master, to function effectively within the context of the cultural beliefs, behaviors, and needs presented by different individuals and their communities.

Instead of a “checklist” approach based on a set of cultural skills, cultural safety requires the provider to be intuitive, curious, and responsive to each individual, and to examine the power relations in every interaction. The model below illustrates how one can move from a simple awareness of difference among cultures, to a curiosity, understanding, and reflection of one’s own cultural assumptions and biases and how they influence our perceptions of, and interactions with, others.



CULTURAL HUMILITY

In support of cultural safety, cultural humility emerged as a way to enable cultural safety. Cultural humility involves acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another’s experience. It is a life-long process of self-reflection aiming to understand personal and systemic biases. Cultural humility encourages individuals and organizations to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. When PEACE Program counsellors engage with Indigenous peoples from a place of cultural humility, they are helping to cultivate a safe environment, which is necessary for the healing process to begin. Thus, cultural humility is an integral part of a PEACE Program that is culturally safe for all.

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL LOCATION

Everyone has a social location (i.e., the group of people they belong to because of their place or position in history and society) that is defined by their gender, race, social class, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, and geographic location. Social location influences power and privilege, how the world is viewed and how individuals are seen. Taking a holistic view of social location is a vital part of working in a woman and children-centered and anti-oppressive way. Looking at the world through the lenses of unique histories and identities assists with understanding the lives of the women, children and youth being supported.



PEACE PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

PEACE Programs can build trust and form lasting relationships with Indigenous children, youth and families by committing to practicing cultural humility and providing culturally safe services.

PEACE Programs can implement culturally safe services by:

- Listening to individual Indigenous children, youth and family's perceptions of cultural safety and perceived local ways of wellness and grounding.
- Including Indigenous peoples in all levels of their organization as a way of ensuring Indigenous perspectives are reflected in strategic and decision-making bodies.
- Engaging with Indigenous communities from a place of cultural humility by encouraging reflection on an individual and program level and develop respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust.

In addition, PEACE Program counsellors can self-reflect regarding their own perspectives. Self-reflexivity is a skill that can be learned and facilitates the development of culturally safe relationships.

As a starting point, PEACE Program counsellors may want to ponder the following questions:

What is your perception of Indigenous peoples in your community?

- What is the basis of this perception?
- Has your social location (i.e., gender, race, social class, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, and geographic location) influenced this perception?
- Can you identify any stereotypes in this perception?
- Can you identify any biases in this perception?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BCSTH Increasing Access for Indigenous Women.

An online course offered through the BCSTH that focuses on providing staff and managers at transition houses, second stage houses and safe homes in BC with tools to increase access to services for Indigenous women and their families who are seeking safety from violence.

Chapter 2 of this course specifically covers the topic of cultural safety. Chapter 5 offers tools



for creating safety in relationships with Indigenous peoples. Course is self-directed and self-paced.

Pulling Together: A Guide for Front-Line Staff, Student Services, and Advisors

A resource for positioning non-Indigenous service providers working with Indigenous people. It is written for the education system but contains a wealth of information about how to support systemic change through Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation. Written by Ian Cull, Robert Hancock, Stephanie McKeown, Michelle Pidgeon and Adrienne Vedan.

Cultural Safety and Cultural Humility Webinar Series

A Series of nine 1-hour talks on cultural safety and cultural humility in the context of the Canadian Health Care System.

FNHA's Policy Statement on Cultural Safety and Humility

First Nation Health Authority's (FNHA) protocol to guide relationships in a respectful way using principles, values and directives. This protocol builds a common understanding of cultural safety and humility and uses these terms as the foundation of the policies and practices.

Healthy and Healthcare Implications of Systemic Racism on Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

This resource was created for healthcare workers by the College of Family Physicians of Canada. Questions discussed include: What is systemic racism? What can you do about it as an individual? What can you do about in your local community? What can you do about it in the workplace?

Thunder Bay Talks Racism: First Nations and Stereotypes

A 7-minute TVO segment about racism, stereotypes, cultural humility & Indigenous peoples.



4. A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH: PRINCIPLES & LIMITATIONS

*'Providing safety, choice, and control to individuals who have experienced trauma is the starting place and encourages us all to work in ways that can make a positive difference by reducing the short-term effects of trauma, supporting long-term healing, and creating systems of care that support staff, children, youth and families alike.'*¹⁰

A trauma-informed approach to serving children, youth and families recognizes how common experiences of trauma are, and the wide range of effects trauma can have on both short-term and long-term health and well-being. The overall goal of trauma-informed approaches is to develop programs, services, and environments that do not re-traumatize while promoting coping skills and resilience.

A key aspect of trauma-informed practice is that it be delivered in a culturally safe manner to people from diverse backgrounds which is critical to increase access to PEACE Programs for Indigenous Children, Youth and Non-Offending Caregivers.

PRINCIPLES OF A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH TO PRACTICE

*'Trauma is not what happens to us, but what we hold inside in the absence of an empathetic witness.'*¹¹

Researchers and service providers have identified four principles of trauma-informed practice.¹² These principles provide a framework that may be incorporated into PEACE Program practice.

1. Trauma Awareness:

A trauma-informed approach begins with:

- Building awareness among program staff and counsellors about the commonness of trauma experiences;
- Recognizing that the impact of trauma can be central to development;



- Having awareness of the wide range of adaptations people make to cope and survive after trauma; and,
- Recognizing the relationship between trauma and a range of physical and mental health concerns.

2. Safety and Trustworthiness:

Physical, emotional, spiritual and cultural safety for the children, youth and families PEACE Programs support is key to trauma-informed practice. Safety and trustworthiness are established through:

- Welcoming intake procedures;
- Adapting the physical space to be warm, comfortable and inviting;
- Providing clear information about Programs and interventions;
- Allowing the expression of feelings without fear of judgment;
- Demonstrating predictable expectations; and,
- Creating safety plans.

The safety needs of PEACE Program counsellors are considered within a trauma-informed service approach. Trauma-informed services demonstrate awareness of secondary traumatic stress and vicarious trauma. Key elements of trauma-informed services include staff education, coaching and supervision.

3. Choice, Collaboration and Connection:

Trauma-informed services create safe environments that foster a sense of efficacy for those receiving support. They work collaboratively with children, youth and families, with an emphasis on creating opportunities for choice and connection within the parameters of services provided.

4. Strengths Based and Skill Building:

Trauma-informed services, equipped with an understanding of the effects of trauma and the skills that promote self-regulation and resiliency, assist children, youth and families in developing resiliency and coping skills. Strengths-based approaches require acknowledging the past through a trauma-informed lens and then building on one's strengths and assets. PEACE counsellors can teach and model skills for recognizing triggers, calming, centering, and staying present.



LIMITATIONS OF A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

*'In spite of the work to expand the framework of trauma to include the experiences of Indigenous peoples, there has continued to be a domination of Western constructs of trauma and the related evidence-based practices with Indigenous peoples.'*¹³

There are limitations of a trauma-informed approach as applied to Indigenous communities. These limitations may influence connection, collaboration and support of Indigenous children, youth and non-offending caregivers.

*'The current focus on trauma and trauma-informed practice continues the colonial reach and the entrenchment of Western European medical model approaches and colonizing health services that continue to perpetuate narratives of risk located within Indigenous girls and their families and communities.'*¹⁴

The current popular discourse on trauma continues a colonial legacy of labeling and pathologizing Indigenous children and youth through the lenses of criminalization, medication and talk therapy¹⁵. Case studies conducted through Indigenous girls' groups in the Secwepemc Nation and the Ask Auntie Program throughout Indigenous communities in British Columbia demonstrate a more holistic practice that is beneficial for Indigenous youth. These programs demonstrate that by resisting medical and individual definitions of trauma and violence, and offering a more holistic and intersectional framework, Indigenous children and youth are able to understand and locate their coping strategies as a response to larger systemic forces including racism, poverty, sexism, colonialism, and a culture of trauma.^{16, 17, 18}

VIOLENCE INFORMED INDIGENOUS AND INTERSECTIONAL PRACTICE (VIIP)

By resisting the western construct of trauma-informed approaches, Natalie Clarke, of Thomson's River University, has established a model of Violence Informed Indigenous and Intersectional Practice (VIIP). VIIP avoids individualizing the problem and instead situates mental health and trauma within a broader context that acknowledges Indigenous resurgence, resistance and agency at the intersection of



colonialism, poverty, patriarchy, racism and discrimination, among other systems. VIIP understands the diversity that exists within communities and across Indigenous cultures. The program includes the use of local resources & capacities.

PEACE PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

Violence Informed Indigenous and Intersectional Practice includes the following suggestions for programs and individuals working to support Indigenous children and youth.

1. Creation Stories. – Hearing, reading and telling stories through voice and play.
2. Witnessing - Being a good witness. Role modelling active listening skills with children & youth.
3. Theorizing Love - Inquiring about personal motivation for doing this work.
4. (re)Connection and Meaning - Exploring holistic health for children & youth.
5. Truth-telling. – Sharing real life stories about resilience & healing.
6. Sacred Spaces – Creating space for holistic safety and containment.
7. Play and Art – Using creative modalities to support healing and healthy risk taking.

More specific resources for the practical application of a trauma-informed approach and VIIP can be found in the final section of this document, **Wise Practices**.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Trauma-Informed Practice with Indigenous Peoples across the Life Span.

A 1-hour long webinar with Natalie Clark offers relevant & insightful dialogue. Topics explored include: What is decolonization? What are some ways workers might embrace a decolonizing approach? What are some key things programs might offer families & youth?

Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework in British Columbia

An overarching framework intended to improve outcomes for Indigenous children, youth, families and communities through restorative policies and practices. Specifically, the Circle process is shared as a strengths-based and holistic way to honour Indigenous peoples' cultural systems of caring, wellness and resiliency at a community, family and individual level.



Healing Families, Helping Systems: A Trauma-Informed Practice Guide for Working with Children, Youth and Families.

Created in 2017 by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) in British Columbia, this guide is aimed at advancing understanding and action about trauma-informed approaches that support program and service delivery with children, youth and families. This guide intends to identify trauma-informed approaches and to raise awareness among those delivering child and youth services in B.C. of trauma-informed service delivery; and, to increase capacity amongst service providers delivering child and youth services in B.C. to better serve children, youth and families impacted by violence and trauma.

Red Intersectionality and Violence-Informed Witnessing Praxis with Indigenous Girls

This 2016 article by Natalie Clarke emphasizes the need for spaces where Indigenous girls can address their intersecting and emergent health needs without being identified as at-risk or traumatized. A case study of girls groups throughout Indigenous communities in B.C. demonstrates ways Indigenous youth resist medical and individual definitions of trauma and violence. Instead, an Indigenous holistic framework to locate their coping as the response to larger systemic forces including racism, poverty, sexism, colonialism and a culture of violence and trauma, is presented.

Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) Foundations Curriculum for Justice, Public Safety, and Anti-Violence Community Sectors in British Columbia

Trauma-Informed Practice Foundations Curriculum delivered in a cross-sector format specifically for members of the justice, public safety and anti-violence community sectors in British Columbia.

It's a Girl Thang: A Manual on Creating Girls Groups

This support group curriculum by Natalie Clark and contains outlines for girls' groups, resources for facilitators and youth and a great list of activities that can be used with youth in groups and individuals.

Ask Auntie

Ask Auntie is an online and community-based wellness program for Indigenous girls aged 10-14. Girls learn about a holistic, Indigenous understanding of health and their bodies, connection and relationships, culture and the history of colonization, and what it means to be a strong Indigenous girl.



5. COMMUNITY BUILDING

*'Developing collegial working relationships with other related service providers in your community can support your work as a PEACE Program counsellor.'*¹⁹

Decolonization and indigenization require the cooperation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and institutions²⁰. Collaboration and communication across services, sectors and communities can provide a holistic response that facilitates healing and helps to minimize service barriers²¹.

PEACE PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

PEACE Programs can build relationships through the following actions.

- Learn about the history of the land and the Indigenous people where staff live and work.
- Research local Indigenous traditions, ceremonies and protocols.
- Meet, with the local Indigenous community, community leaders, and local Elders to seek their guidance and support as to collaboration. Value Elders for their time.
- Consider offering a PEACE Program group within the local Indigenous community in collaboration with local Indigenous facilitators.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Healing and Rebuilding: Stories of Healing and Transformation in Aboriginal Communities

A document created by the Healing & Rebuilding grant to support holistic approaches in Indigenous communities and assist them in healing and rebuilding from the impacts of violence against Indigenous women. The document profiles 9 projects that promote cultural resiliency by supporting community connections through traditional cultural practices.

BCSTH Increasing Access for Indigenous Women.

An online course offered through the BCSTH that focuses on providing staff and managers at transition houses, second stage houses and safe homes in BC with tools to increase access to



services for Indigenous women and their families who are seeking safety from violence.

Chapter 7 of this course focuses on establishing and maintaining partnerships.

Engaging with Elders: A Co-Created Story.

This Elder Protocol project based in Calgary, Alberta is centered on Indigenous ways of knowing and doing and it offers a supportive dialogue for engaging with Elders in community.

Delegated Aboriginal Agencies

Delegated Aboriginal Agencies provide child welfare services across BC to Indigenous families. These programs have an agreement with the MCFD & they were set up as part of an effort to help restore the responsibilities of child protection & family support to Indigenous communities. The Band office or government agent office may have the name of the delegated Aboriginal agency in your area. The exact roll of Delegated Aboriginal Agencies is still evolving.



6. WISE PRACTICES

*'I propose that we need to develop models for addressing violence that are aligned with Indigenous values, Indigenous paradigms and epistemologies and that are based in strengths, resistance and survivance. I suggest that we should move beyond decolonizing Western models of trauma, and instead attend to the centering of "wise practices" and specific Indigenous Nations approaches to within a network of relational accountability.'*²²

'Wise practices' is a term used by Natalie Clark illustrating that Indigenous peoples are culturally heterogeneous, socially diverse and ever-changing.²³ Following the guidance of Wise Practices, rather than offering a prescriptive list of practices for working with Indigenous children, youth and non-offending caregivers, the following resources and activities are for PEACE Programs to explore and use in their programming depending on the context.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

One of the most important elements of a PEACE Program counselor's job is building relationships with the children, youth and non-offending caregivers. Some ways that PEACE Program counsellors can create connections with Indigenous families in their program are by:

- Creating a safe, welcoming and inclusive space. Open the dialogue of safety and ask Indigenous children, youth and non-offending caregivers what helps them feel safe? Be the witness and listen.
- Increasing child and youth engagement through sensory activities. This could be as simple as going for a walk, holding onto a rock, touching a feather, or having a snack together.
- Listening to participant's stories and connections to their Indigenous heritage. They may want to tell a story with words or create a story with images, sand, clay, paint or toys. Be the witness and listen.



- Incorporating knowledge of Indigenous concepts of health and healing where relevant. This can be as simple as using a talking stick, making a group circle or creating a ritual for the beginning and ending of each session. It is not necessary to say the purpose of your actions, but including these practices may help children feel welcome and valued.
- Fostering child and youth empowerment. PEACE Program counsellors can ask children and youth, ‘what do you want to do when you come to counselling?’ ‘Is there a routine to create together to begin and end each session?’
- Introducing resistance by noticing and acknowledging the ways that children and youth communicate and act to resist the violence experienced in the past and in the present.
- Prioritizing choice. Ensure that Indigenous children, youth and non-offending caregivers know that PEACE Programs value consensual participation and counsellors will always listen and value their choices. In practice, this may be as simple as allowing children and youth to choose the game or toy they play with and this can be aided by PEACE Program counsellors offering choices regularly to encourage attendees to explore how the PEACE Program can meet their needs.
- Enhancing well-being and security with predictable routines, positive language, listening, witnessing and open-ended questions.
- Facilitating and supporting meaningful relationships between a child or youth, their non-offending caregiver, and other family members and elders. This can be done through letter writing, phone calls, inviting them to join activities, such as a walk or a snack time.

THROUGH AN INDIGENOUS LENS: APPLICATIONS FOR PEACE PROGRAM PRACTICE

The list of activities and wise practices below, suggested by Natalie Clarke offer practical and inclusive ways to approach working with Indigenous children and youth.²⁴

Activity	Wise Practice
1. Creation Stories – Local Indigenous stories hold the knowledge and values we need to guide us in our work with our children, youth	Ask children and youth for the stories they know or stories they have heard. This can be done



<p>and non-offending caregivers. Research the local Indigenous stories where you work.</p>	<p>orally or by drawing, painting, clay, puppets or play.</p>
<p>2. Witnessing - Be a good witness. Offer children and youth a chance to be seen as an individual and/or in the circle of the group.</p>	<p>PEACE Program counsellors can ask children and youth questions about themselves and then listen to how youth see themselves in different facets of their lives. This exercise illustrates that identity is not fixed and static but is an emerging and shifting quality that exists in the context of relationships to others.</p> <p><i>Who am I? becomes....</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Who am I when I'm with my friends?</i> • <i>Who am I when I'm with my family?</i> • <i>Who am I when I am in class?</i> • <i>Who am I when I am alone?</i> ²⁵
<p>3. Theorizing Love: Naming and noting gifts, coping skills and resilience. Create a link to a child's family history through stories of past, present and future generations.</p>	<p>Central to our work with Indigenous children, youth and their families is the importance of acknowledging your own experiences and social location.</p> <p>They may ask you, 'who are you? And, why do you care?' PEACE Program counsellors should be prepared to enter this conversation with young people.</p>
<p>4. (re)Connection and Meaning - Reinststate, renew and revitalize meaning and connection through holistic models of health (body, mind, spirit) (self, family, community, spirit).</p>	<p>Plan and execute a fun activity together that supports holistic health. As a follow-up, PEACE Program counsellors can give time and space to reflect on holistic health. For example, ask a youth to visualize a positive, healthy future for themselves and their families and communities.</p>
<p>5. Truth-telling - Tell a true story about resilience, strength and resurgence or about the human body, communities and the human capacity for survival and healing.</p>	<p>Bring books to individual sessions and/or speakers to group sessions to provide examples of resilient children and youth speaking about resistance, courage and cultural history. Children</p>



	<p>and youth are hungry for these stories and it can be helpful for youth to hear stories of from others like themselves.</p> <p>This activity may encourage children and youth to share their own stories and strategies for resisting violence.</p>
<p>6. Sacred Spaces - Create space for holistic safety and acceptance of diversity. Holistic safety includes physical, mental, spiritual, emotional and cultural safety. Diversity values all cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations and emotions.</p>	<p>Ask children and youth about what makes a safe environment. In a group context, this may involve creating some group rules. In an individual context, create a welcome routine. Inquiring about what children and youth are expecting and/or what may have been difficult about coming can be a window into a conversation about safety.</p> <p>Create symbols of safety and invite children and youth to think of something that signifies safety and/or comfort for them. It can be helpful to think of a pleasant memory or a favourite place or activity that gives them comfort or safety. Invite them to identify a symbol or souvenir of safety and draw it or make it out of clay. If the theme of safety needs a bit more attention, you could first invite children and youth to draw it and then make it out of clay.</p>
<p>7. Play and Art – Imaginative play, games and art making support healing and healthy risk taking. Consider integration of traditional, local, Indigenous games.</p>	<p>Let children and youth guide the imaginary play and/or art making. This can be a relaxing way to begin a PEACE Program counselling session or a way to spend a longer period of time. Being present and connecting though an activity is a powerful tool for self-regulation.</p>



SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

Chapter 4 of the [PEACE Program Toolkit](#) outlines a variety of activities that can be used with all children accessing PEACE Program services. Some selected activities from the PEACE Program Toolkit are highlighted below as options when working with Indigenous children, youth and non-offending caregivers.

Individual Sessions:

- Three things that are special about me. This can be done through words or pictures. (p. 89)
- My Shield. This activity could be done with a circular shield as circles are commonly used to depict metaphors in Indigenous cultures in British Columbia. PEACE Program counselors could engage children, youth and non-offending caregivers to draw a circle that represents their family, their land, their home, their culture. (p. 93)
- I Am. This activity is open-ended and can be a useful way for PEACE Program counsellors to learn about the program participant. This activity may only take a few minutes or it could be much longer and more involved. Invite the use of storytelling and practice being a witness. This may be an activity can be returned to as opportunity for connection at the start of each session. (p. 99)
- Journaling. Invite the activity of journaling through images, words and creative expression as a tool for self-reflection and self-regulation. (p. 103)
- My Safety Plan. Prioritizing safety and valuing children and youth's view of safety is paramount. Integrate this early in the sessions and return to it as a check-in point if it feels relevant or necessary. (p.112)
- What is Violence in Relationships? Creating a vocabulary around violence that is culturally safe and making space for witnessing if children and youth want to share or speak about their experiences of violence. (p. 133)
- 'House of' Activity. This activity could be done through play as a way to make it three-dimensional. Use two shoeboxes or two jars to make two houses and invite children and youth to create a 'house of strengths' and a 'house of worries'. Depending on the age of the participant, explore their resilience in their house of strength and their concerns in their 'house of worries'. (p. 149)



- How am I feeling today? This is a great activity for talking about presence. Begin with offering children and youth tools for grounding (breathing, holding a rock, feeling their feet on solid ground). Presence is a relevant tool for helping children and youth notice their strengths and the coping skills they already have acquired. (p. 153)
- Feelings Activity: Exploring Grief and Loss. This activity may open children and youth to talking about sadness and realizing that the sadness they feel is not their fault. This may be an opportunity to hear stories about their culture, lost traditions, cultural resources and resiliency. (p. 161)
- Anger: Myths and Facts. This true and false activity can invite a bigger dialogue about the things that make children and youth angry and may open up the conversation about the link between sadness and anger. This can be explored on a personal or a cultural level. (p. 174)
- Helping your child ground, settle and be present. When possible, inquire with Indigenous children, youth and non-offending caregivers about tools they use to be present. Use natural and sense evoking resources like stones, feathers, shells, sand, water to evoke a feeling of connection to the earth as a tool for presence and grounding. Other sensory tools for presence are listening (what is the quietest sound you can hear), savouring a snack or a cup of tea, or walking barefoot. (p. 178)
- Cool-it Kit. This could also be called a Comfort Sensory Box. What are some sensory resources that comfort them? This resource can grow and shift as seasons change. (p. 179)

Group Sessions:

- Step Inside the Circle. This is a powerful activity for supporting children and youth to feel less isolated. If appropriate to the group demographics, PEACE Program counsellors may choose to include statements that celebrate Indigenous ways of being as a part of this activity (i.e. My family has _____ heritage). (p. 189)
- Naming Violence in Our Lives. Inviting the group to name a few places where they encounter violence. PEACE Program counsellors may choose to include some reference to cultural resilience as a way to access stories that Indigenous youth may have experienced. A reminder in this activity to tell children and youth they are safe and invite children and youth to notice how they feel. If it feels like too much, children and youth can ask to have a pause or stop the activity. (p. 191)



- My Safe Space Exercise. PEACE Program counsellors may facilitate this activity outdoors using natural materials. What are different ways to express a boundary? What does it feel like when someone crosses a boundary? (p. 196)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

It's a Girl Thang: A Manual on Creating Girls Groups.

This support group curriculum by Natalie Clark and contains outlines for girls' groups, resources for facilitators and youth and a great list of activities that can be used with youth in groups and individuals.

Reinventing the Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writings of North America

Edited by Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird, this anthology celebrates the experience of Indigenous women across North America and is at once an important contribution to our Indigenous literature and a historical document. It is the most comprehensive anthology of its kind to collect poetry, fiction, prayer, and memoir from over 80 writers.

Safeteen: Powerful Alternatives to Violence

Offering powerful alternatives to violence since 1976 and originally based in Vancouver, Safeteen has now grown into an internationally recognized program working to empower youth in their social-emotional survival and physical, mental and sexual safety. Their website offers a number of resources.

Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future

This book offers educators and others access to unique strategies for reaching youth. It shares activities such as creating a Circle of Courage to give youth a sense of belonging and generosity and how to mend a circle that has been broken.

Redwire Aboriginal Youth Magazine.

The Facebook page for an online Indigenous youth magazine offers uncensored spaces for youth to find their own voice.



Secret Path

This book and film produced by Gordon Downie and illustrated by Jeff Lemire explores the truth of residential schools. Appropriate for ages 12 +.

Girl Power: Young Women Speak Out!

Personal writings from teenage girls illuminate the worries, hopes, dreams and experiences of girls ages 13 - 19 through stories, poems, letters and notes. Edited by Hillary Carlip.

#NotYourPrincess

A book to inspire young Indigenous girls. The link takes you to a CBC article on the book and a podcast with the editors of the book, Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale.

9 Beautiful Children's Books by Indigenous Writers

This is a CBC website resource list that contains a collection of empowering stories and books written by Indigenous authors across Canada. There are stories for all ages on topics such as magic, grandmothers, storytelling, superpowers, language and relationships.

Indigenous Story Studio Website

A non-profit society in British Columbia that creates illustrations, posters, video and comic books on healthy and social issues for youth.

Speaking our Truth

This book by Monique Gray Smith teaches readers about the lives of survivors of residential schools and allies who are putting the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into action. It focuses on reconciliation and is appropriate for high school aged youth.

The Fall of Freddy the Leaf

This is a warm, thought-provoking story about a leaf named Freddy who travels through the seasons written by Leo Buscaglia. This short story navigates the delicate balance between life and death, sadness and joy with a touching and accessible wisdom for all ages.

You be You

Using the theme of a rock fish, Linda Kranz explores themes such as diversity, acceptance, individuality and resilience with simple language that is relatable for all ages.



7. REFERENCES

- ¹ Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. (2017). *Indigenous Peoples and Communities*. Retrieved June 28 2019 from: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100013785/1529102490303>
- ² Statistics Canada. (2013). *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit*. Retrieved June 29 2019 from: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.cfm>
- ³ Statistics Canada. (2013). *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit*. Retrieved June 29 2019 from: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.cfm>
- ⁴ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2019). *Reclaiming Power and Place: Executive Summary of the Final Report*. Retrieved August 29, 2019 from: http://dewc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/MMIWG_Executive_Summary_English-WEB.pdf
- ⁵ Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. (2017). *A Brief Definition of Decolonization and Indigenization*. Retrieved August 29, 2019 from: <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/a-brief-definition-of-decolonization-and-indigenization>
- ⁶ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2019). *Reclaiming Power and Place: Executive Summary of the Final Report*. Retrieved August 29, 2019 from: http://dewc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/MMIWG_Executive_Summary_English-WEB.pdf
- ⁷ Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. (2017). *A Brief Definition of Decolonization and Indigenization*. Retrieved August 29, 2019 from: <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/a-brief-definition-of-decolonization-and-indigenization>
- ⁸ Herman, J.L. (1992). *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence*. New York: Basic Books.
- ⁹ Johnstone, M. & Kanitsaki, O. (2007). An exploration of the notion and nature of the construct of cultural safety and its applicability to the Australian health care context. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing* (18) p247-156
- ¹⁰ Healing Families, Helping Systems: A Trauma-Informed Practice Guide for working with Children, Youth and Families. (2017). https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/child-teen-mental-health/trauma-informed_practice_guide.pdf
- ¹¹ Levine, P. (2010). *In an Unspoken Voice: How the Body Releases Trauma and Restores Goodness*. North Atlantic Books, Berkely, California. p. xii.
- ¹² Trauma-Informed Practice Guide. (2013). http://bccewh.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/2013_TIP-Guide.pdf
- ¹³ Clarke, N. (2016). *Shock and Awe: Trauma as the New Colonial Frontier*. p.5 Retrieved January 30, 2020 from: https://www.academia.edu/21923054/Shock_and_Awe_Trauma_as_the_New_Colonial_Frontier
- ¹⁴ Clark, N. (2016). *Red Intersectionality and Violence-informed Witnessing Praxis with Indigenous Girls*. p.51. Retrieved January 30, 2020 from:



https://www.academia.edu/30406802/Red_Intersectionality_and_Violence-informed_Witnessing_Praxis_with_Indigenous_Girls

¹⁵ Nadeau, D. & Young, A. (2006). 'Educating Bodies for Self-Determination: A Decolonizing Strategy. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*. 29, no. 1: 87-101.

¹⁶ Clark, N & Hunt, S. (2012). "Navigating the Crossroads: Exploring Young Women's Experiences of Health Using an Intersectional Framework." In *Health Inequities in Canada: Intersectional Frameworks and Practices*. Edited by Olena Hankivsky. Vancouver: UBC Press. pp. 131–46

¹⁷ Clark, N. (2012). Opening pandora's box: Girls groups and trauma-informed intersectional practice." In *Moving the Addiction and Mental Health System Towards Being More Trauma-Informed*. Edited by Nancy Poole and Lorraine Greaves. Vancouver: British Columbia

¹⁸ Clark, N. & Gadsby, C & Hunt, S. (2006). *It's a Girl Thang: A Manual on Creating Girls Groups*. Vancouver McCreary Youth Foundation. Retrieved January 15, 2020 from: http://mcs.bc.ca/pdf/its_a_girl_thang.pdf

¹⁹ PEACE Program Toolkit Program for Children and Youth Experiencing Violence (2017) BCSTH. retrieved from <https://bcsth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Peace-Program-Toolkit.pdf>

²⁰ Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. (2017) *A Brief Definition of Decolonization and Indigenization*. Retrieved August 29, 2019 from: <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/a-brief-definition-of-decolonization-and-indigenization>

²¹ PEACE Program Toolkit Program for Children and Youth Experiencing Violence. (2017). BCSTH. Retrieved from <https://bcsth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Peace-Program-Toolkit.pdf>

²² Clarke, N. (2016). Shock and Awe: Trauma as the New Colonial Frontier. p.5 retrieved January 30, 2020 p. 11 Retrieved Jan 30, 2020 from: https://www.academia.edu/21923054/Shock_and_Awe_Trauma_as_the_New_Colonial_Frontier

²³ Thoms, M. (2007) *Leading an Extraordinary Life: Wise Practices for an HIV Prevention Campaign with Two-Spirit Men*. Toronto: Two Spirit People of the First Nations.

²⁴ Clarke, N. (2017). *Trauma-informed Practice with Indigenous Peoples across the Life Span*. Thomson River University. Retrieved March 10, 2020 from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1646&v=UI71hyrAW-A&feature=emb_logo

²⁵ Johnson, Norine G. & Roberts, Michael C. (1999) Chapter One: Passage on the Wild River of Adolescence: Arriving Safely in *Beyond Appearance: A New Look at Adolescent Girls*. Eds. Norine G. Johnson, Michael C. Roberts and Judith Worell. American Psychological Association, Washington D.C