

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation: ORCC's Statement in Support of Indigenous Survivors of Sexual Violence

September 30, 2021

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada made 94 Calls To Action to expose the truth of Residential Schools and set Canada on the path to reconciliation. Among these was the creation of a federal holiday to “honour Survivors, their families, and communities,” and for the Canadian public to commemorate the harm done by these Schools.

Operating across Canada for more than a hundred years, Residential Schools were designed to assimilate Indigenous* peoples by eradicating their identities and cultures. Sexual violence was a key tool of colonial oppression in Residential Schools. Children were isolated from their families, communities, and each other, only to be subjected to sexual violence and exploitation that purposefully violated their autonomy, agency, and bodies.

The Ottawa Rape Crisis Center stands in solidarity with Indigenous communities as they mourn the lives taken and harmed by Residential Schools. We honour the strength and power of Survivors who have carried these truths and fought to bring them to light.

ORCC recognizes the uncomfortable truth that sexual violence has been, and continues to be, integral to colonial violence. Though the last Residential School closed in 1996, the violence continues. For all of Canada, this national day of commemoration must not be a passive process. Each of us must make concrete efforts to learn from the voices and experiences of Residential School Survivors, their families and communities. Each of us must take action to right the wrongs of the past.

As a non-Indigenous, survivor-centered organization on the unceded, unsundered Territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation, ORCC is an ally in Indigenous-led efforts to address sexual violence as a manifestation of colonial violence. We urge all levels of government to move forward on the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, and the Calls to Justice made by the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

And as the ORCC marks this day, we commit to decolonizing our operations, service provision, advocacy, and partnerships. We will not look away from these uncomfortable truths. Instead, we commit to learning from them in order to build meaningful and engaged allyship. We welcome the promise of profound transformation that these truths gift us.

**ORCC uses the term “Indigenous” to encompass “First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people, regardless of residency and regardless of relationship to the Crown.” (Urban Path to Reclaiming Power and Place, Regardless of Residency—Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ National Action Plan)*

We must all take action on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Here are some ways to do your part:

- Make a donation to an organization that supports Residential School Survivors, like the [Indian Residential School Survivors Society](#), [Minwaashin Lodge](#), or [Tungasuvvingat Inuit](#).
- Register for the [free Indigenous Canada course](#) through the [University of Alberta](#). Better yet, encourage your friends and family members to sign up, so you can learn alongside each other.
- Take the time to read the [94 Calls to Action](#) made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Write a letter to your local MP to express your support for implementing them.

Supports for Residential School Survivors

National Indian Residential School Crisis Line | 24/7 | 1.866.925.4419

Nation-wide emotional support and crisis referral services for former students and those who have been affected

Minwaashin Lodge | 613-741-5590 | <https://www.minlodge.com>

An Indigenous Women's Support Centre providing a range of programs and services to First Nations, Inuit and Métis women and children (regardless of status) who are survivors of domestic and other forms of violence, and who may also be suffering the effects of the residential school system.

Talk4Healing Talk, Text & Chat | 24/7 | 1.855.554.HEAL | talk4healing.com

Ontario-based help, support, and resources for Indigenous women, by Indigenous women, in 14 Indigenous languages

Tungasuvvingat Inuit | 613-565-5885 | <https://tiontario.ca>

An Inuit-specific registered not-for-profit Ontario service provider offering social support, cultural activities, employment and education assistance, youth programs, counselling, crisis intervention, and more.

Hope for Wellness Help Line | 24/7 | 1.855.242.3310 | hopeforwellness.ca

Nation-wide counselling and crisis intervention for Indigenous Peoples in English, French, Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut