

Focused Conversations

Intergenerational Trauma – October 2, 2012

Alberta

How do we support a healing system?

Participant Quotes

"We need awareness at all ages and levels within social structures."

"Teach about history and the impact of colonization, residential schools, etc."

"We need to be more positive and stop the negativity of media around child intervention."

"Support communities to do whatever they need to do to heal."

"We need a "healing system" – child intervention and justice system are circular – feed each other."

"Our job is to work together, Aboriginal people to not be angry and western culture to not feel guilty. We are part of the solution. Move towards implementing the solutions."

A Space for Change...

On October 2, 2012, Alberta Human Services, the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research and Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families (AASCF) jointly hosted a morning and afternoon session with Dr. Mike DeGagné for over 140 people including, Elders, community members and staff from Human Services and community organizations.

Dr. Mike DeGagné, the Executive Director of the **Aboriginal Healing Foundation**, presented lessons and ideas learned based on the past 15 years of work of the Foundation.

Dr. DeGagné shared that some of his greatest learnings in his own journey occurred at one of his first jobs on a reserve in Ontario.

Dr. DeGagné also shared what was learned from the 1,500 community projects that were funded by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. The most successful projects were those that were community led and community driven.



However one of the major learnings of these projects was that not enough support was provided to the dedicated staff who faced challenging situations on a daily basis. This lack of attention led to a high degree of worker burn-out.

Dr. DeGagné shared stories of people who had experienced the trauma of residential schools and their challenges and strengths as they overcame the effects of being disconnected from their family, culture and language.

The stories revealed the devastating impacts of residential schools, and why it is so important that we all first seek to understand these impacts, listen and find out how we can work together to support healing.



Survey Responses

"I have very little understanding of Aboriginal adults who were in care or adopted. I need to learn more about it."

"Educate society on the Indian Residential School system and impacts on First Nations people."

"The best part was learning about the impact of the residential schools on individuals - wish there was more."

"I would love a survivor to present their experience - I learn more from personal stories."

"Very educational and feel this should be taught in schools in detail."

"I will provide leadership to my CFSA to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children in care."

"Today's information reinforced many things that am involved in."

"I will go out of my way to work with the agencies."

Email the Aboriginal Engagement and Strategy Division at: HS.CommunityConversations@gov.ab.ca

Survey Results – What You Told Us

At the end of both the morning and afternoon sessions, participants completed an evaluation of the event. We want to thank the 70 people who took the time to respond.

We heard from participants that:

#1) The environment in which the conversation took place was respectful – **100%**

#2) The workshop was meaningful to me – **96%**

In addition to multiple choice questions, we asked -

"What is the most significant thing you learned today?"

the responses fell into the following themes:

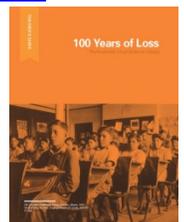
- The need for more education about the history of Aboriginal people in Canada.
- The importance of working together if meaningful change is really going to happen.
- The need for healing that is varied and responsive to the needs of people that have been adversely impacted by colonialism, residential schools and intergenerational trauma; and
- The need for action, based on listening, caring and understanding.

The Aboriginal Engagement and Strategy Division will use this information to plan for future events and help determine the next steps that will improve outcomes for children, youth.



Resources

1. **Aboriginal Healing Foundation**—Its mission is to provide resources which will promote reconciliation and encourage and support Aboriginal people and their communities in building and reinforcing sustainable healing processes. The Foundation has produced a number of resources that can be downloaded from their website at www.ahf.ca
2. **The Legacy of Hope Foundation** developed a valuable resource called 100 Years of Loss. This Edu-kit contains a teacher's guide including lesson plans, a DVD, and 4 posters that depict the realities of the residential school experience. More information about this resource can be found at: <http://www.legacyofhope.ca/projects/100-years-of-loss-edu-kit>
3. **National Indian Residential School Crisis Line** has been set up to provide support for former Residential School students. Callers can access emotional and crisis referral services and get information on how to get other health supports from the Government of Canada. Contact the Crisis Line 1-866-925-4419 or visit the following website for more information. <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015576/1100100015577>



4. **Where are the Children?**—is an online educational tool for students in grade 9 –12 and lifelong learners. The resource contains lesson plans, videos, a virtual tour of a residential school and interviews with residential school survivors.

<http://www.wherethechildren.ca>