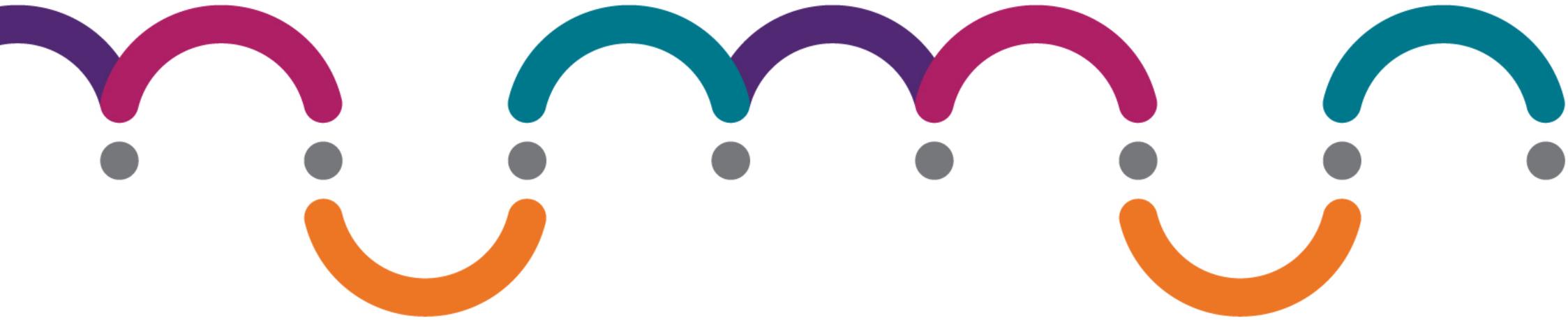


Bridging **the** **gap**

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Bridging **the** **gap**

The Forum on Workplace Inclusion®
April 16–18, 2019

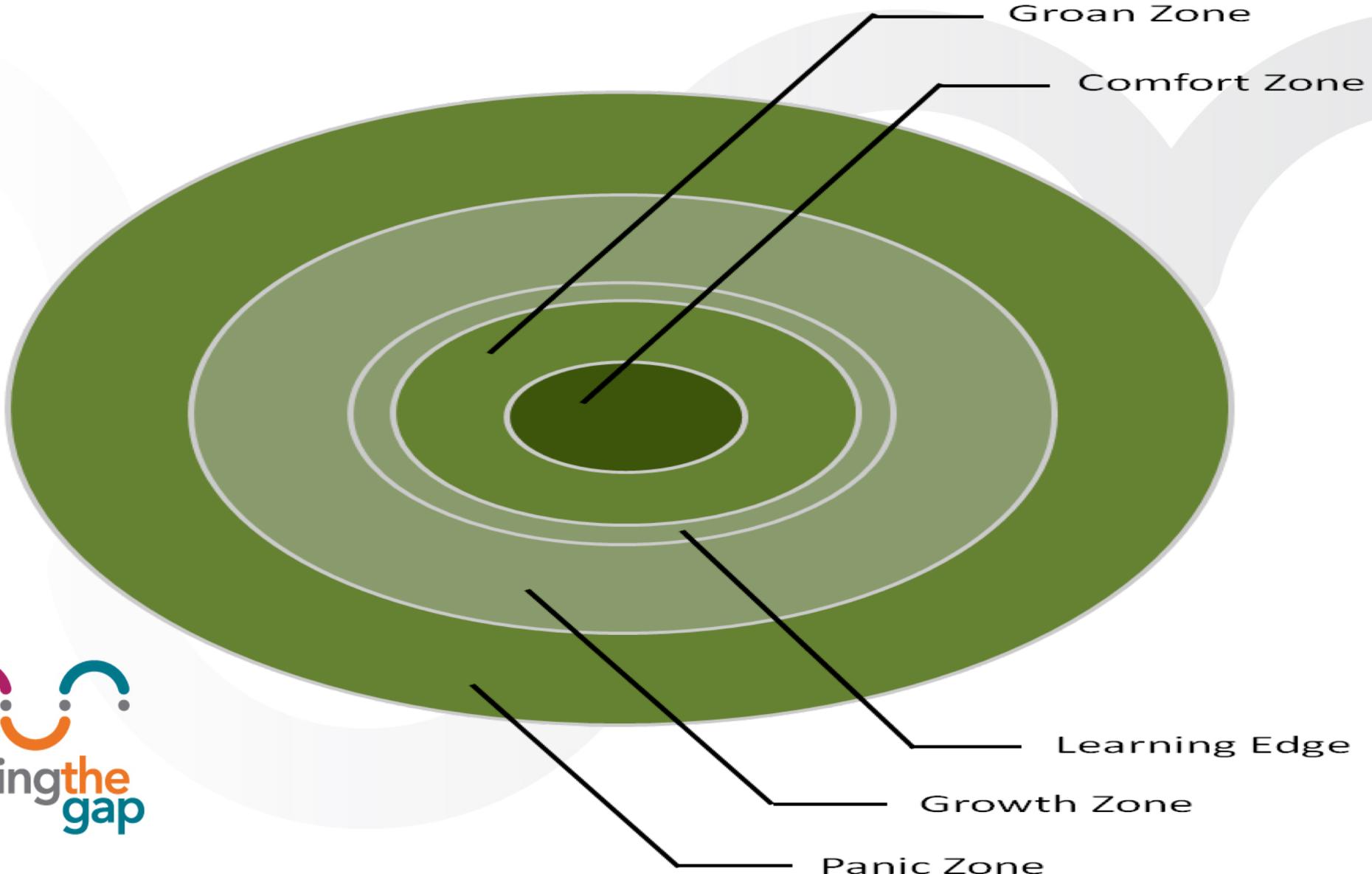
31st Annual Conference, Minneapolis Convention Center

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BRIDGING THE GAP: GOING BACK TO GO FORWARD—DECOLONIZING OURSELVES, OUR WORK AND OUR ORGANIZATIONS

Natasha Aruliah

Learning Zones



Agreements

from courageous conversations about Race - Glenn Singleton

- *Confidentiality (share learning not specifics)*
- *Stay engaged*
- *Speak your truth (honour one another)*
- *Experience discomfort*
- *Expect and accept non-closure*

The Sacredness of circles



Circles are important in most cultures and are significant in indigenous cultures of North America. The First Peoples believe in a creation-based form of spirituality which has at its centre, the symbol of the sacred circle. It is believed that the circle represents a harmonious relationship with nature and with all living things. In this worldview, humans seek to understand and honour the connections among things, seen and unseen, in order to live in balance with the universe. Living in balance is the same as living a good life. Here in the middle is the universe, the mystery and the beauty. It is our knowledge, our culture, our understanding, our identity and our teachings, the essence of who we are, and we are all connected to it. It is sacred.



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Community



This is our community, our people, our mothers and fathers, our children, our grandparent and great grandparents, our elders, our uncles and aunties, cousins, siblings, friends and neighbours and our ancestors. Everyone has a place in the circle. Our villages and communities, our peoples and in the middle our knowledge, our understanding, our identity, our spirituality and our teachings, the essence of who we are, and we are all connected to it. This is who we are and how we have been for centuries, for generation we have lived together in our circles, our communities, in harmony with nature, with all our relations, living in our time-honoured ways.”



The Timeline of Contact with Europeans

Pre-contact population



Between 1492 and 1900 the Aboriginal population of North American was reduced from an estimated 12 million people to 300,000 and was still declining until the 1980's.

Whilst exact numbers are unclear it is known that the population declined by around 80% after contact with Europeans, due to disease, violence, massacre and starvation as a result of land grabs and European settlement.



Thornton, Russell (1990). [*American Indian holocaust and survival: a population history since 1492*](#). University of Oklahoma Press. pp. 26-32.

Current population



In the 19th and 20th centuries, cultural genocide and impacts of residential schools, indigenous 'hospitals' etc. led to high rates of addictions and suicide, which further impacted their numbers.

Pushed on to smaller and smaller reserves, further and further away, poor living conditions, poverty and other social issues added to their decline well into the 1980s.

Unsettling Canada - Art Manuel, 2015



Currently, only 67% of aboriginal youth complete high school as compared to 87% of non aboriginal people¹

The suicide rate of aboriginal youth and men is between 5 to 25 times higher than all other groups.²

The life expectancy of an Aboriginal person is significantly less than that of a white Canadian.

¹*First Nations 101*, Lynda Gray, Adaawx Publishing, 2011

²*Breaking point: The suicide crisis in Indigenous communities*, Report of the standing committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk, June 2017

Despite Aboriginal people representing only about 5 % of the Canadian population, they are over represented in our prisons, the homeless on our streets, in addiction rates and children in foster care etc.

In BC aboriginal children make up 8% of the population, yet make up 51% of the children in care.

- More aboriginal people live in poverty than any other group in Canada
- in crowded homes, many of which are in need of major repairs, electrical, plumbing etc.¹
- Many reserves have substandard facilities or no infrastructure, such as drinking water and sewage.
- Currently 59 nations (reserves) in Ontario are living with boil advisories and 4 with “do not consume” advisories. 13 communities have had this advisory for 10 years or more. 2 of these communities for more than 20, years going back to 1995 and 1997.²

¹ Stats Canada

² Watertoday.ca - March 28th, 2019 <http://www.watertoday.ca/textm-p.asp?province=8&fbclid=IwAR0rd9426wi1lOggSyLe6mKx0Q2-TzKWKMgN-HMFvM-STCbNoOpJlQRVasc>

This is a piece on cultural genocide and colonisation of indigenous peoples of North America. It experientially describes the history of settlement and impact of colonisation specifically, of the First Nations on the West Coast of Canada. It can however also connect with stories and experiences of Indigenous peoples around the world, the persecution of many groups; the Jews, the Roma, the Koreans, Chinese and other Asians in the Pacific during Japanese imperialism, of people of African ancestry enslaved in Europe and the Americas, of genocides in Rwanda, Bosnia, Sri Lanka etc. and to experiences of colonisation across the world, throughout history and current corporate colonialism

Debrief



- How did it feel participating in this exercise?
 - The ones left behind in the circle? The children, the women, the men?
 - What about the people on the outside? How do you feel?
- How did you feel as your items were taken away?
 - Does it make a difference if we knew the stories about why the items were so important?
 - Would these items still be taken if your story was known?
 - Would it feel different if they knew the significance of the items and still took them?
- How does this connect to your story?



Colonisation



The policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.

Oxford English Dictionary



Colonisation



“...the innocent-sounding doctrine of discovery, which was the tool – the legal fiction – Europeans used to claim our lands for themselves....The Americas were first portrayed as *terra nullius* on European maps. But in almost all cases, Europeans were met, at times within minutes of arrival, by Indigenous peoples...The doctrine of discovery remained because it was a legal fig leaf they could use to cover naked thievery.”



Unsettling Canada - Art Manuel, 2015

Decolonising



The process in which a country that was previously a colony (= controlled by another country) becomes politically independent.

Cambridge English dictionary



Decolonising



Decolonization once viewed as the formal process of handing over the instruments of government, is now recognized as a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power [1]

- Decolonization restores the Indigenous/pre-colonial world view
- Decolonization restores culture and traditional ways
- Decolonization replaces Western interpretations of history with Indigenous perspectives of history



Linda Tuhiwai Smith 2012

DEI and declonising



- *What does 'bridging the gap' mean in the context of a colonial history – locally and globally?*
- *Consider the work you do, what is the impact of colonisation on the organisations, cultures and communities you interact with?*
- *Consider current practices of globalisation, internationalisation and multinational organisations – what is the impact on local cultures?*
- *How can we create respectful and equitable interactions when reaching out locally and globally to bridge the gap?*



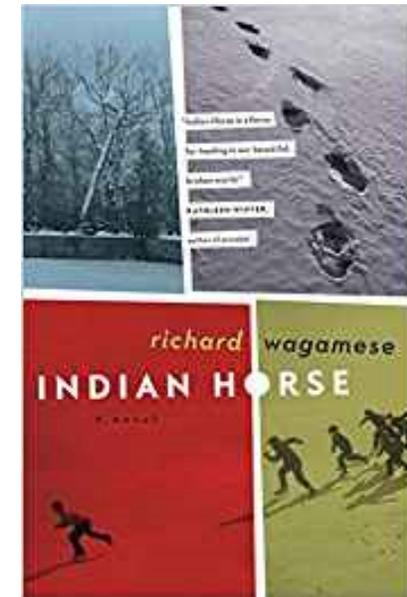
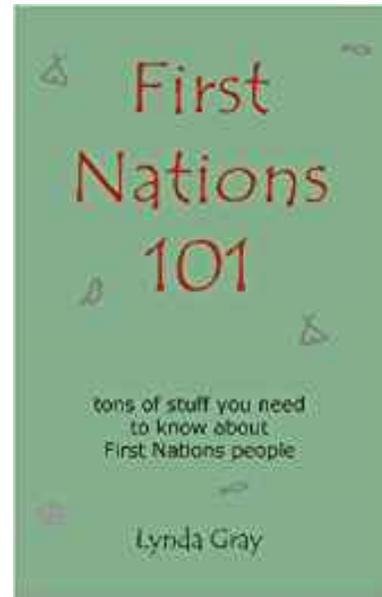
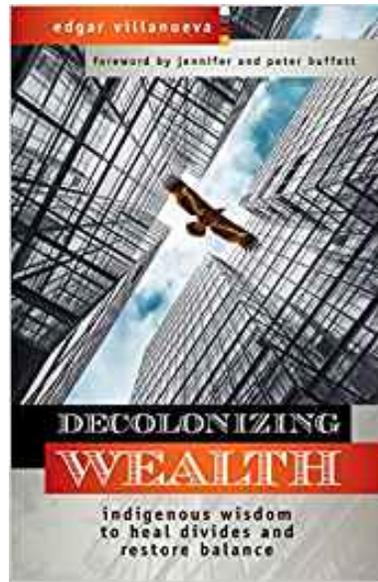
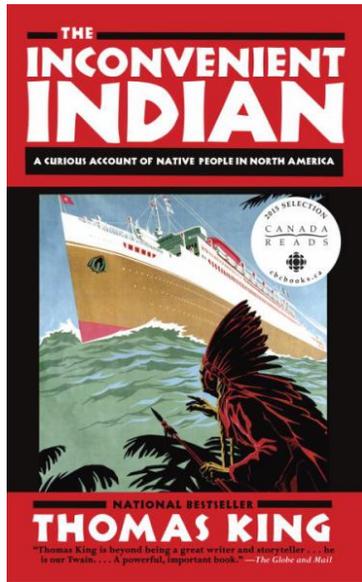
Some recommended books:

Thomas King

Edgar Villanueva

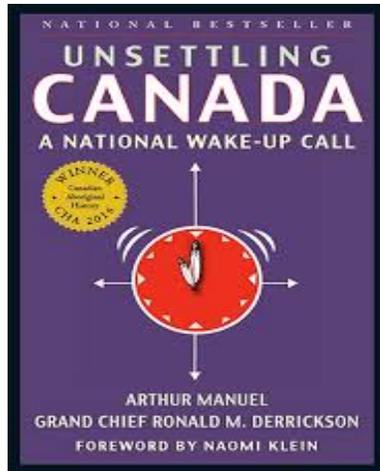
Lynda Gray

Richard Wagamese

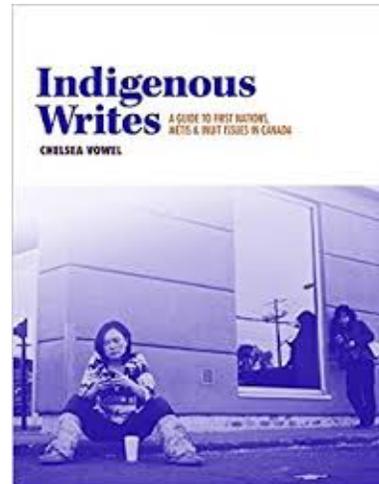


Some recommended books:

Arthur Manuel



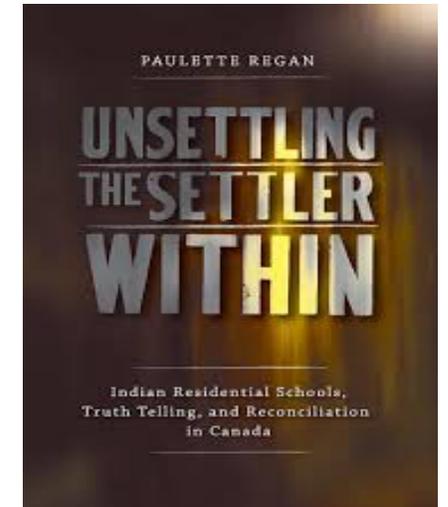
Chelsea Vowel



Lee Maracle



Paulette Regan



Howa'a *Haída* Wela'lin *Mi'kmaq* Hay ce:p q'a *Musqueam* Pinamaya *Nakota* Niá:wen *Mohawk*
Nitsíniyi'taki *Blackfoot* Walás Gíaxsixa *Bella Bella* Yokoke *Choctow* Kinanâskomitin *Cree*
Gilakas'la *Kwak'wakala* Thank *Lím Lím* *Okanagan* Eeshneesh *Stony*
Guneshcheesh *Tlingit* You *Kukwstsetsemc* *Shuswap*
Huy Chexw *Squamish* Kleco-Kleco *Nuu-chah-nulth* Mahsí' Cho *Déné and Gwich'in*
Miigwetch *Ojibway* Mahalo *Hawai'ian* ?ul-nu-msh-chxw *Coast Salish (Sechelt)* Yontonwe *Huron*
Kkwstumulh *St'at'imc* Kalap *Navajo* Ahéhee' *Ktunaxa* Hu Naçanaqni?ni *Gitsxan*
T'ooyaksim *Nisga'a* Nisim *Tahltan* Medu *Abenaki* Kwás' H:oy *(Halq'emeylem)* Merçi *Méchif (Métis)*

நன்றி (Nandri)