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## RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS

Grade 9

#### **MAIN IDEA**

For over 100 years, the main goals of the residential schools were to assimilate and civilize First Nation's children. Ways in which the schools tried to "kill the Indian in the child," resulted in lifelong struggles for residential school survivors, their family members and communities. Students will learn about the impacts caused by residential schools. Students will learn about traditional types of healing, specifically art. Students will reflect upon art by survivors and have the opportunity to share information about themselves through their own piece of art.

## ONTARIO SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS

**NATIVE STUDIES/ARTS** 

- Students will...
  - Explain what Aboriginal artists or artisans might have been trying to express through their work
  - Identify ways that contemporary Aboriginal art forms contribute to the renewal and healing of Aboriginal societies

MATERIALS	RESOURCES & SOURCES
Computer/Projector	Reclaiming Connections: Understanding Residential School Trauma Among Aboriginal People
Handouts	http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/healing-trauma-web-eng.pdf
White/Coloured	Aboriginal People and Residential Institutions
construction paper	http://www.irvingstudios.com/child_abuse_survivor_monument/ ResidentialInstitutions.htm
Washable Paint	
	Signs and Symbols
Foam Paint Brushes	http://www.schoolsliaison.org.uk/aliens/access/signsSym/signsSym.htm
Fine tip markers	Healing the Generations DVD & Residential School Survivor Stories Book – Available by order from Nishnawbe Aski Nation – http://www.nan.on.ca
Scissors	
	The Residential School System, Long-term Impacts section
Glue	http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-residential-school-system.html
Rubric	

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#### **ACTIVITIES**

- 1. Students can work in pairs to assist one another. Have students choose a paint colour, white paper, and a foam paintbrush. Students will begin this activity by using small foam paintbrushes to thinly paint the palm of one hand (left or right). Have students press their painted hand onto white paper, making sure their handprint is solid. Allow time for the paint to completely dry.
- 2. While their painted handprint is drying read 'Killing the Indian in the Child' to the students. Please note that this material is serious and sensitive in nature. Make sure that students' feelings, emotions and reactions are fully supported. You can also have an Elder or counselor in the room in case a student is having a difficult time.
- 3. Have classroom discussions on the following:
  - Do students think that Residential School Survivors could benefit from Traditional Healing Methods (renewal of their own cultural practices, sense of pride in gaining or regaining this knowledge, opportunity to share, learn ways to cope)?
  - Ask students to brainstorm traditional examples of healing (healing circles, smudging, prayers, sweat lodge ceremonies, fasting, dancing, drumming, storytelling, vision quests, etc.)?
  - Ask students if doing ART could help in the healing process?

#### Art is a Primary Means of Communication for Oral Cultures:

In oral cultures, art is the primary means through which ideas, emotions, hopes and dreams are communicated. In Inuit, Métis and First Nation cultures, the colour and design of masks, beadwork, quilts and other crafts is carefully chosen to express a specific meaning or purpose. Artistic expression is an important, nonverbal method of communication, and many Aboriginal arts and crafts are created in a group setting. As such, art has an important role in healing through relationship and community building. Art inspired by vision quests is also considered an integral part of balanced mental, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being.

Source: From Reclaiming Connections: Understanding Residential School Trauma Among Aboriginal People

4. Display **Aboriginal People and Residential Institutions** Web site in the computer lab. Inform students that Dr. Michael C. Irving is a psychotherapist who works with traditional and contemporary healing approaches. He is of Choctaw and Cherokee ancestry. Dr. Irving



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if the founder of the Child Abuse Survivor Monument which has the main goal of helping people heal through art.

- 5. Have a class discussion around the use of hands in artwork and ask the students what do symbols in artwork mean?
  - Symbols have been important to artists from the very earliest times. They often represent an idea or quality, for example the colour white usually stands for purity and the lion makes us think of courage. Because works of art don't usually include words, symbols are used in order to tell the viewer a message or even a story.

From **Signs and Symbols** have students reflect upon why the symbols of hands were used in Dr. Irving's therapy?

- What do the hands symbolize/represent to you? (Hands can hurt and heal, hands outstretched in search of hope, love, understanding, optimism, healing).
- What other symbols were displayed with hands?
- Which piece of art do you connect with and why?
- 6. Inform students they will create a personal piece of art with their painted hand imprint. Provide **Healing Hands Art Project Handout, Rubric** and art materials to students. Once completed, the teacher will grade and then display art under the title '**Healing Hands**'.
- 7. Read and reflect upon (4) poems from **Aboriginal People and Residential Institutions**Web site: **Grandfathers, They Did I Do, Never Alone, Spirit of the Raven.** 
  - What common theme is apparent in each poem? (Hope, strength)
  - Can we heal through art? (Sharing experiences, fears and hopes)

#### **Poetry Reading Strategies:**

**Preview** the poem by reading the title and paying attention to the poem's form: shape on the page, stanzas, and number of lines and ending punctuation.

**Read poem aloud several times** to hear rhyme, rhythm, and the overall sound of the poem. This makes it easier to understand the poem.



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**Visualize the images** by paying close attention to strong verbs, and comparisons in poem. Do the images remind you of anything? Let the comparisons paint a picture in your head.

**Clarify words and phrases** by allowing yourself to find the meaning of words or phrases that stand out, are repeated, or you do not understand the meaning. Use dictionary, context clues, teacher or peer.

**Evaluate the poem's theme** by asking what message is the poet trying to send or help you understand? Does it relate to your life in any way?

Source: <a href="http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/collateral\_resources/pdf/m/mentors0708kechiawilliams/Poetryreadingstrategies.pdf">http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/collateral\_resources/pdf/m/mentors0708kechiawilliams/Poetryreadingstrategies.pdf</a>

#### **ASSESSMENT**

Summative: Healing Hands Rubric

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#### INFORMATION

### KILLING THE INDIAN IN THE CHILD

The purpose of residential schools was to assimilate Inuit, Métis and First Nation children into mainstream Canadian culture. To this end, isolating them from the influence of family and community life was believed essential.

But many schools went much further than separation and isolation to what has been called: "killing the Indian in the child" (Fournier and Crey, 1997:47). Understanding the full meaning of this chilling concept is essential in order to grasp the full scope of what is meant by "disconnection" in the context of residential school abuse.

In the context of residential schooling, "killing the Indian" meant dis-connecting children physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually from their language, culture and their communities and also, but most painfully, from their own sense of identity as being Indian.

**Physical dis-connection** was achieved by removing children from loving families and communities and forcing them to grow up in institutions among strangers.

**Mental dis-connection** was achieved by forbidding children to use their own languages or any familiar customs that may have given them comfort. Without language, the key to the distinctive worldview of Aboriginal cultures was lost.

**Emotional dis-connection** was achieved by teaching children that the parents, grandparents and Elders they so loved were savages, and their own bodies and racial characteristics were sinful and dirty.

**Spiritual dis-connection** was achieved by teaching children to adopt the new religion or suffer God's wrath eternally.

Source: Reclaiming Connections: Understanding Residential School Trauma Among Aboriginal People: <a href="http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/healing-trauma-web-eng.pdf">http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/healing-trauma-web-eng.pdf</a> (page 43 – 47)



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#### **INFORMATION**

### IMPACTS OF RESIDENTIAL ABUSE

The following are the observations and reflections of frontline workers at a residential school abuse retreat in 2000. www.ahf.ca

### **Impacts on the Self**

- Personal loss of culture, language, traditional modes of spirituality, pride in cultural origins resulting in lack of positive self-identity and confidence.
- Having to use a sense of humour to get past trauma.
- Little guidance or nurturing from family.
- Deep-rooted feelings of humiliation, shame and abandonment leading to low self-esteem.
- Communication barriers, especially an inability to express affection.
- Ongoing triggers from sounds and smells.
- A belief system that denies the value and importance of women.

### **Impacts on Families**

- Inconsistent or extreme expressions of love: to go from trying to give everything to the children to an inability to give anything at all.
- Families where no nurturing or affection was present for generations.
- Discomfort expressing love for children in physical ways, especially hugs.
- Lack of communication within the family.
- Loss of bonding between siblings.
- Children taken into custody by Children's Aid Society.
- Inability to talk to our young children about our childhood because it involved so much abuse.
- Emotional abuse and patterns of traumatic bonding.
- Using gifts and material things to soothe wounds in the family.
- Wishing that things had been done differently and deep feelings of remorse.
- The silence and shame of abuse in residential school is repeated in the home.
- Family members direct lateral violence, such as anger, jealousy, resentment and gossip, against each other.

#### **Impacts on Communities**

- High rates of suicide and family violence.
- Addictive and self-destructive behaviours: substance abuse, gambling or violence.
- · Lack of traditional skills and role models.
- Unhealthy living conditions.



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### Impacts of Residential Abuse continued...

- Feelings of isolation within the community.
- Ongoing power and control issues.
- Inability to face the levels of abuse and dysfunction within the community.
- Racism, racial scaling—splits between mixed/Métis and Status vs. "Non-Status".
- Lack of self-sufficiency and sustainability.
- Spiritual "splits" and factions between Catholics, Protestants, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christians and those with traditional Aboriginal spiritual beliefs.
- Problems of reserves and settlements are transferred to urban communities, such as family feuds, and violence.
- A strong desire to reclaim cultural and spiritual identity.
- The community comes together during crises but cannot sustain positive energies at other times.

Source: http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/healing-trauma-web-eng.pdf

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**HANDOUT** 

Name:			

### **HEALING HANDS ART PROJECT**

Be sure to properly follow the instructions below in order to successfully complete your art project. Also follow the **Basic Art Rubric** carefully so you know what is expected of you.

- 1. Ensure your handprint is completely dry.
- 2. Using a fine tip marker write on each part of your painted hand with brief descriptions about yourself in the following manner:

Index finger = Name a strength
Middle finger = Name a weakness

**Ring finger** = Future ambition (a career choice)

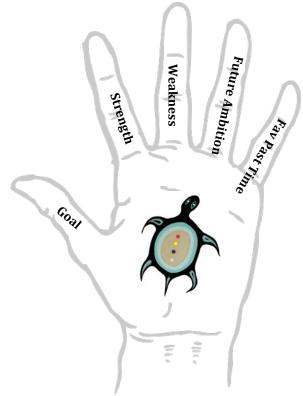
**Pinky finger** = Favourite past time

**Thumb** = Set a goal (study more, eat healthier, join a club or team,

start a hobby, quit a bad habit)

**Palm** = Add a drawing of an Aboriginal symbol, a pictograph, an

animal (something connected with and important to you).





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Name:	

# **HEALING HANDS ART PROJECT**

Categories	<b>Level 1</b> (50-59%)	Level 2 (60-69%)	<b>Level 3</b> (70-79%)	Level 4 (80-100%)
Elements of Design	The student did the minimum amount required for the assignment.	The student did the assignment in a satisfactory manner.	The artwork shows that the student applied the requirements discussed in class.	The artwork shows that the student applied the requirements in a unique way.
Creativity	The student's work lacked originality.	The piece shows little original thought.	The student's work demonstrates an average amount of originality.	The student's work demonstrates an above average amount of originality.
Effort	The student did not finish work in a satisfactory manner.	Student put minimal effort in to the assignment.	The project was finished in an average manner.	The project was completed in an above average manner.

Rubric was adapted from <a href="https://rubrics.engrade.com/hands">https://rubrics.engrade.com/hands</a>