

Residential School Survivors and the Impacts of Intergenerational Trauma

Jenna-Marie Cowan

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## **Abstract**

There has been an increase in research regarding Residential Schools and Intergenerational trauma. Researchers are looking into how Intergenerational trauma develops from the resulting trauma children faced while in Residential School. Although their research is necessary, this paper will focus on just the intergenerational trauma. The research presented will focus on the negative effects that could potentially be linked to intergenerational trauma that was developed by children attending Residential Schools and the subsequent generations.

To begin, this paper will review how the government attempted to assimilate the Indigenous peoples through erasure of their Indigenous ways of life which is imperative for cultural identities and a sense of self. Out of several plans that the government developed, such as the British North American Act (BNA), The White paper, and the Residential Schools, many Indigenous lives experienced trauma. This paper will focus on the Residential School as being one of the ways in which intergenerational trauma was created. In these schools, Indigenous children were dehumanized through several forms of abuses by the church. The impact of the multitude of attempts the government had to assimilate the Indigenous person led to the focus of this paper, intergenerational trauma.

This paper goes on to discuss the methods in which trauma is passed on to future generations. One of the ways the trauma is passed onto the first generation is done so prenatally. There is evidence from research that shows the chemical make-up of the brain does not develop as it would with someone who experienced a stress-free pregnancy. This leads to children of Intergenerational trauma experiencing

developmental challenges. Trauma is also passed onto following generations due to parenting abilities reflecting that of intergenerational trauma and can be seen in children with inadequate developmental skills. The last section of this paper will review how intergenerational trauma creates social issues among its survivors including, but not limited to, violence in the home and children being placed in care. What is discovered by my findings is that Intergenerational trauma does indeed create the theorized negative outcomes. In fact, Residential schools did not stop affecting children once the doors closed in 1996. They created intergenerational trauma which created subsequent impacts that negatively impacted multiple generations of families.

## **Introduction**

What are the impacts of intergenerational trauma that was created by Residential schools? This paper will explore a historical overview of Colonialism, BNA, the White paper, and Residential Schools, which is imperative to understand Intergenerational trauma. There will be discussion on what Intergenerational trauma is and examine the pathways in which Intergenerational trauma is passed down to subsequent generations. This paper will then investigate how Intergenerational trauma manifests itself and will review prevalent themes that were seen throughout the research. The themes that were discovered in the research center around transmission of trauma by expectant mothers and young children, the next theme on the negative social impacts from the Intergenerational trauma, and the final theme will dive into parenting styles that reflect those who are survivors of Intergenerational trauma. The paper will then conclude with a discussion on the recovery and resilience of those impacted by Intergenerational trauma.

## Colonization, Colonialist History and Residential Schools

Beverly Jacobs terms colonization best when she states, “colonization is violence”<sup>1</sup>. Another way of looking at colonialism is as a way of one nation gaining control over another nation.”<sup>2</sup> With Canada, our nation came to be over the disregard for the Indigenous peoples. An act, known as the British North American Act (BNA) or Constitution Act of 1867, was enacted to create our nation which at the time consisted of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Province of Canada (Ontario and Quebec).<sup>3</sup> This act gave the government complete power over “Indigenous lands reserved for Indians” thus taking away whatever was left for the Indigenous person and making them solely reliant on the Government. Indigenous people were nothing more than something to take power over.

This was reinforced and seen through our nation’s first ever Prime Minister when he said, “the great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to change”.<sup>4</sup> Our very first Prime Minister and our government wanted to extinguish the Indigenous population and as stated by O’Neil, Fraser, Kitchenham & McDonald, “the written histories of colonization in Canada...are filled with accounts of immense loss of life, suppression of culture, and the intentional

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<sup>1</sup> Jacobs, Beverly. “Decolonizing the Violence Against Indigenous Women”, pg. 48

<sup>2</sup> Alfred, Taiaiake & Corntassel, Jeff. *Being Indigenous: Resurgences against Contemporary Colonialism*. Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> McIntosh, Andrew, and W.H. McConnell. "Constitution Act, 1867." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Historical Canada. Article published February 06, 2006; Last Edited October 21, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Paul, Wade. *The Pain of Residential Schools in Canada: An Analysis of Silence and Narrative*. Project Muse, 41 (2), 357-371, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lm.2023.a921567> pg. 363

deculturization of Indigenous peoples”.<sup>5</sup> They wanted to get rid of the “Indian” quickly and through multiple methods. One method being the introduction of Residential Schools<sup>6</sup>.

The Canadian government introduced Residential Schools in 1883 because they were the “quickest and most permanent way to assimilate Indigenous peoples”, in total over 130 schools were opened and over 150,000 children attended.<sup>7</sup> It scares me to think that this number is not a true representation. Residential Schools were a very horrific part of Canada’s history, that to many, still go unknown or known extraordinarily little of. This sends a poor message as our last residential school was closed in 1996.<sup>8</sup> I feel this is in part due to our education system failing to implement the true part of Canada’s history into curriculum.

The Governments attempts at removing the Indigenous person continued in 1969 when the government introduced the “Statement of the Government of Canada of Indian Policy”, or also known as, “the White Paper” event. This document that was released by one of our previous Prime Ministers, Pierre Trudeau and the then Minister of Indian Affairs, Jean Chretien wanted to “eliminate the legislated difference between Indigenous

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<sup>5</sup> O’Neill, Linda., Fraser, Tina., Kitchenham, Andrew., & McDonald, Verna. “Hidden Burdens: A Review of Intergenerational, Historical and Complex Trauma, Implications for Indigenous Families”. *Journ Child Adol Trauma* 11 (2018) :173–186, DOI 10.1007/s40653-016-0117-9. (2023), 968–985, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2021.1998427>, pg. 174

<sup>6</sup> Middleton-Moz, Jane., Mishna, Faye., Martell, Rebecca., Williams, Charmaine., & Zuberi, Samar. “Indigenous trauma and resilience: pathways to ‘bridging the river’ in social work education”. *Social Work Education*. VOL. 42, NO. 7

<sup>7</sup> Paul, Wade. *The Pain of Residential Schools in Canada: An Analysis of Silence and Narrative*. Project Muse, 41 (2), 357-371, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lm.2023.a921567> pg. 363

<sup>8</sup> Pooyak, Sherri D., Thomas, Vicky., Henderson, Earl W., Laliberte, N., Jongbloed, K., Sharma, R., Spittal, Patricia M., & Pearce, Margo E. “Overcoming the soul wound: Reflecting on experiences and resilience of intergenerational residential school survivors”. *Child Abuse and Neglect*. (2023): 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106242>

people and the “Canadian”.”<sup>9</sup> They did this stating that the legislative difference was the reason for the “socio-economic oppression and political marginalization”, all while voicing for “equality”.<sup>10</sup> This was so much more than just removing the legislation. This would have removed the Indian Act completely, would have removed the treaties created between the Indigenous people and the Government, and moved Federal responsibility to the provinces.<sup>11</sup> These plans were the government’s attempt at removing all responsibility to the Indigenous people all while not listening to the people themselves.<sup>12</sup> Not only did the Indigenous people fight back on this policy, it also received criticism from some representatives in the House of Commons as the policy was not created with consultation of the Indigenous people.<sup>13</sup> All of the above events, the BNA, the Residential School and the White Paper are all clearly traumatizing events that occurred to the Indigenous person and could lead to intergenerational trauma.

### **Intergenerational Trauma**

The intergenerational trauma for this paper focuses on the outcomes of Residential Schools. Residential School survivors “recount a loss of language, culture, and traditions...all while being subjected to emotional, sexual and physical abuse.”<sup>14</sup> The outcome of Residential Schools has indicated that the survivors faced trauma,

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<sup>9</sup> Nickel “Reconsidering 1969: The White Paper and the Making of the Modern Indigenous Rights Movement” pg 224

<sup>10</sup> Nickel, Sarah. (2019). “Reconsidering 1969: The White Paper and the Making of the Modern Indigenous Rights Movement”, The Canadian Historical Review, doi: : 10.3138/chr.2018-0082-2 pg.224

<sup>11</sup> Nickel “Reconsidering 1969: The White Paper and the Making of the Modern Indigenous Rights Movement” (2019)

<sup>12</sup> Nickel “Reconsidering 1969: The White Paper and the Making of the Modern Indigenous Rights Movement” (2019)

<sup>13</sup> Nickel “Reconsidering 1969: The White Paper and the Making of the Modern Indigenous Rights Movement” (2019)

<sup>14</sup> Paul, Wade. The Pain of Residential Schools in Canada: An Analysis of Silence and Narrative. Project Muse, 41 (2), 357-371, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lm.2023.a921567>. Pg.362

violence, self-harming behavior, addictions (with out of 127 cases reviewed, 87% suffering from substance use disorders) and identity issues<sup>15</sup>. Intergenerational trauma is said to have started here by residential school survivors expressing grief as lateral violence was often directed at family and community members.<sup>16</sup> Intergenerational trauma is complicated, and many studies have been done focusing on this.

Studies on Intergenerational trauma has typically focused on holocaust survivors with a change in focus to Indigenous peoples and the experiences with residential schools, starting in the early 2010's. <sup>17</sup>Intergenerational trauma broken down "is the intergenerational and unconscious grief from the historical trauma experienced by Indigenous peoples" being passed down from one generation to the next and it is due to "forced relocation, land dispossession, and loss of spiritual practices, language and culture" .<sup>18</sup>It is apparent that with over four centuries of systemic marginalization, many Indigenous peoples suffer from Intergenerational trauma.<sup>19</sup> Without seeking help, Indigenous peoples can experience "depression, anxiety, PTSD, and substance

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<sup>15</sup> Marsh, Teresa Naseba., Coholic, Diana., Cote-Meek, Sheila. & Najavits, Lisa M. "Blending Aboriginal and Western Healing Methods to Treat Intergenerational Trauma with Substance Use Disorder in Aboriginal Peoples who Live in Northeastern Ontario". Harm Reduction Journal, (2015), 1-12.

<sup>16</sup> Marsh, Coholic, Cote-Meek & Najavits, "Blending Aboriginal and Western Healing Methods to Treat Intergenerational Trauma with Substance Use Disorder in Aboriginal Peoples who Live in Northeastern Ontario"

<sup>17</sup> Menzies, P. (2024). Intergenerational Trauma and Residential Schools. In The Canadian Encyclopedia. Retrieved from <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/intergenerational-trauma-and-residential-schools>

<sup>18</sup> American Psychiatric Association. (2024). Stress & Trauma Toolkit for Treating Indigenous People in a Changing Political and Social Environment, Retrieved from <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/diversity/education/stress-and-trauma/indigenous-people#:~:text=Intergenerational%20Trauma:%20The%20intergenerational%20and,higher%20risk%20for%20mental%20illness>

<sup>19</sup> Marsh, Coholic, Cote-Meek & Najavits, "Blending Aboriginal and Western Healing Methods to Treat Intergenerational Trauma with Substance Use Disorder in Aboriginal Peoples who Live in Northeastern Ontario"



abuse”.<sup>20</sup> The experiences of intergenerational trauma if left untreated will be discussed in more detail later in this paper. The ongoing intergenerational trauma demands “increased understanding of the effects of multigenerational disruption on healthy familial and cultural development for families,”<sup>21</sup> if there is going to be any progress made in assisting those affected by it.

According to O’Neill, Fraser, Kitchenham & McDonald, there are two forms of intergenerational trauma. They are direct and indirect transmission. It is important to be able to differentiate between the two so that proper intervention can be developed. Direct transmission (or transposition) is “evidenced by children learning to think and behave in challenging ways similar to their parents”, this results in the children taking on and living in their parent’s traumas as if the traumas were their own.<sup>22</sup> Those who are from the second generation may unconsciously “live their parents’ traumas in their lives, sometimes through abandonment, depression, and guilt”.<sup>23</sup> Indirect (or redirect) transmission is apparent by which the children are burdened by unconscious expectations as they “compensate for their parents’ losses and the diminished ability to parent”, to be clear as well, the actual trauma is not transferred over to the child. <sup>24</sup>

## **Brain and Child Development**

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<sup>20</sup> American Psychiatric Association. (2024). Stress & Trauma Toolkit for Treating Indigenous People in a Changing Political and Social Environment

<sup>21</sup> O’Neill, Linda., Fraser, Tina., Kitchenham, Andrew., & McDonald, Verna. “Hidden Burdens: A Review of Intergenerational, Historical and Complex Trauma, Implications for Indigenous Families” pg. 174

<sup>22</sup> O’Neill, Linda., Fraser, Tina., Kitchenham, Andrew., & McDonald, Verna. “Hidden Burdens: A Review of Intergenerational, Historical and Complex Trauma, Implications for Indigenous Families” pg. 178

<sup>23</sup> O’Neill, Linda., Fraser, Tina., Kitchenham, Andrew., & McDonald, Verna. “Hidden Burdens: A Review of Intergenerational, Historical and Complex Trauma, Implications for Indigenous Families pg. 178

<sup>24</sup> O’Neill, Linda., Fraser, Tina., Kitchenham, Andrew., & McDonald, Verna. “Hidden Burdens: A Review of Intergenerational, Historical and Complex Trauma, Implications for Indigenous Families pg. 178

A child's brain is a fragile thing with multiple events, positive or negative, determining how the child's brain develops. With the use of the MRI and PET brain scans, there has been a contribution of new information "to traumatology, providing another layer to the conceptualization of historical and intergenerational trauma".<sup>25</sup> Trauma itself is a most "pervasive impact" during the first ten years of a child's life, and the differential diagnosis of "extreme stress" having evolved into the term "complex trauma"<sup>26</sup> can be highly important to be aware of.

Racism can be a form of stress and is an ongoing issue that Indigenous peoples in Canada have faced since the time of colonization. Racism "can be associated with severe negative impacts on individuals' mental health, including anxiety, depression, stress of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other psychopathologies".<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, there is research that indicates "evidence for pathways by which maternal mental health during the prenatal period may impact the neonatal brain and infant behavior".<sup>28</sup> What's worse, according to Kral, Williams, Wylie, McLaughlin, Stephens, Mills-Koonce, Birn, Propper & Short is that when exposed to stressors, the prenatal mental health has been "associated with impaired structural neurodevelopment" including "smaller hippocampal volume and reduced cortical folding" and altered

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<sup>25</sup> O'Neill, Linda., Fraser, Tina., Kitchenham, Andrew., & McDonald, Verna. "Hidden Burdens: A Review of Intergenerational, Historical and Complex Trauma, Implications for Indigenous Families pg. 175

<sup>26</sup> O'Neill, Linda., Fraser, Tina., Kitchenham, Andrew., & McDonald, Verna. "Hidden Burdens: A Review of Intergenerational, Historical and Complex Trauma, Implications for Indigenous Families

<sup>27</sup> Kral, T.R.A., Williams, C.Y., Wylie, A.C., McLaughlin, K., Stephens, R.L., Mills-Koonce, W.R., Birn, R.B., Propper, C.B. & Short, S.J. Intergenerational effects of racism on amygdala and hippocampus resting state functional connectivity. *Scientific Reports*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-66830-3>.

<sup>28</sup> Kral, Willimas, Wylie, McLaughlin, Stephens, Mills-Koonce, Birn, Propper & Short "Intergenerational effects of racism on amygdala and hippocampus resting state functional connectivity, no pg.

neurochemistry.<sup>29</sup> Thus, ongoing stressors from racism can affect how the infant develops.

The children's brain development can also be affected by the parent who raises them. In the case of intergenerational trauma, children are exposed to environmental influences that negatively affect their development. Children who display signs of Development Trauma Disorder (also known as complex trauma) from early trauma or ambivalent caregiving, resulting in disorganized attachment, may "suffer long-term problems with self-regulation, learning and attention, and personality issues at a level so severe it can be considered psychologically dysfunctional."<sup>30</sup> Children who have experienced trauma will also "develop language more slowly and may have communication delays because those parts of the brain were not stimulated at a crucial developmental stage".<sup>31</sup> This makes it crucial to bring more awareness of what intergenerational trauma is so warning signs can trigger the parent to obtain outside support, if possible.

## **Social Impacts**

There are many reports that indicate negative social impacts that are the result of Intergenerational trauma. One report stated "detrimental generational effects of the trauma experienced by Residential and Boarding School Survivor's...include depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicide, substance abuse, family

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<sup>29</sup> Kral, Willimas, Wylie, McLaughlin, Stephens, Mills-Koonce, Birn, Propper & Short "Intergenerational effects of racism on amygdala and hippocampus resting state functional connectivity, no pg.

<sup>30</sup> O'Neill, Linda., Fraser, Tina., Kitchenham, Andrew., & McDonald, Verna. "Hidden Burdens: A Review of Intergenerational, Historical and Complex Trauma, Implications for Indigenous Families pg. 176

<sup>31</sup> O'Neill, Linda., Fraser, Tina., Kitchenham, Andrew., & McDonald, Verna. "Hidden Burdens: A Review of Intergenerational, Historical and Complex Trauma, Implications for Indigenous Families pg. 176

dysfunction, physical and sexual abuse, and criminal activity”.<sup>32</sup> What was found by adults attending therapy were discussions of feelings of “low self-worth, depression, feelings of powerlessness, and alienation, with many more who feel abandoned and confused about family roots”.<sup>33</sup> Identity loss is an important outcome of intergenerational trauma as I feel this can lead to the other outcomes of intergenerational trauma.

There was a qualitative case study done by Pooyak, Thomas, Henderson, Laliberte, Jongbloed, Sharma, Spittal & Pearce that looked at first generation residential school survivors and what their experiences were like being raised in their homes and what the outcomes were for their lives. The authors found that “considerable evidence has linked intergenerational trauma and lifetime trauma experiences with depression, anxiety, suicide ideation, and post-traumatic stress response”.<sup>34</sup> Another article describes intergenerational trauma as creating trauma, violence, self-harming behavior, and addictions.<sup>35</sup> It is possible that the above resembles the parenting skills that reflect those who attended Residential School.

## **Parenting Skills**

Residential Schools have created many social issues that parents still hold on to and this can be reflected in their parenting skills. In fact, it is said that “brutal

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<sup>32</sup> Middleton-Moz, Mishna, Martell, Williams & Zuberi, “Indigenous trauma and resilience: pathways to ‘bridging the river’ in social work education” pg. 971

<sup>33</sup> O’Neill, Linda., Fraser, Tina., Kitchenham, Andrew., & McDonald, Verna. “Hidden Burdens: A Review of Intergenerational, Historical and Complex Trauma, Implications for Indigenous Families pg. 176

<sup>34</sup> Pooyak, Sherri D., Thomas, Vicky., Henderson, Earl W., Laliberte, N., Jongbloed, K., Sharma, R., Spittal, Patricia M., & Pearce, Margo E. “Overcoming the soul wound: Reflecting on experiences and resilience of intergenerational residential school survivors”. *Child Abuse and Neglect*. (2023): 1-14.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106242>, pg. 11

<sup>35</sup> Marsh, Coholic, Cote-Meek & Najavits, “Blending Aboriginal and Western Healing Methods to Treat Intergenerational Trauma with Substance Use Disorder in Aboriginal Peoples who Live in Northeastern Ontario” pg. 3

experiences in (Residential Schools) were reported by survivors as a force that shaped their lives and future parenting styles”.<sup>36</sup> Indigenous parents who attended Residential Schools did not and some still do not discuss mental health concerns of their negative experiences at the schools to anyone, including their children<sup>37</sup>. This could cause further pain for the parents as they have nowhere to release their trauma. What is true is that parenting skills are hard to be the blame for the parent when there is Intergenerational trauma from Residential Schools. Especially with the research presented so far in this paper.

According to O'Neill, et al. , “the link behind adult survivors of trauma, child abuse or neglect has been observed with many injured, impaired and suffering caregivers not being able to be physically and/or psychologically be responsive to their children,<sup>38</sup> meaning they are not able to love and care for their children. In some cases, there was a strong desire for parents who lived through intergenerational trauma to not want to pass on the pain and suffering and had ended up placing their children up for adoption or into the child welfare system<sup>39</sup>. In fact, in one study done parents voiced “constant anxiety about the possibility of their children having the same negative childhood experiences that they had and continuing the cycle of trauma”.<sup>40</sup> One mother was quoted as saying “all I have to say is that I’d never put my kids through what I, my mom

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<sup>36</sup> Marsh, Coholic, Cote-Meek & Najavits, “Blending Aboriginal and Western Healing Methods to Treat Intergenerational Trauma with Substance Use Disorder in Aboriginal Peoples who Live in Northeastern Ontario” pg. 3

<sup>37</sup> Paul, Wade. The Pain of Residential Schools in Canada: An Analysis of Silence and Narrative

<sup>38</sup> O'Neill, Fraser, Kitchenham, McDonald “Hidden Burdens: A Review of Intergenerational, Historical and Complex Trauma, Implications for Indigenous Families” pg. 173

<sup>39</sup> Pooyak, Thomas, Henderson, Laliberte, Jongbloed, Sharma, Spittal & Pierce, “Overcoming the soul wound: Reflecting on experiences and resilience of intergenerational residential school survivors

<sup>40</sup> Pooyak, Thomas, Henderson, Laliberte, Jongbloed, Sharma, Spittal & Pierce, “Overcoming the soul wound: Reflecting on experiences and resilience of intergenerational residential school survivors, pg. 7

did with us. I can't ever do that. That's why I gave up my kids".<sup>41</sup> This could resemble or portray the lack of supports that are out there for the parents who struggle with coping with their trauma. It also appears as if the early government's attempt at assimilating children has continued to occur. Indigenous children are being placed into the westernized childcare system, where Indigenous children are not guaranteed to be placed in an Indigenous home where traditions are practiced.

### **Overcoming the Trauma**

Colonialism is said to have "corrupted the relationship between the original peoples and the settlers."<sup>42</sup> and with all the evidence throughout history, it is hard to argue this point. "Canada's colonial government has been the abuser since its inception,"<sup>43</sup> again, it is hard to argue this point. It is clear with the information presented in this paper that the Residential Schools not only accomplished assimilation with the schools but continued to assimilate the children of Residential School survivors through the effects of intergenerational trauma. The residential school survivors suffered so much trauma that they lost their voice for a very long time (some still have no voice, meaning they have not yet talked about their experiences with Residential Schools). This affected how they raised their children, and this affected how their children developed and raised the next generation.

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<sup>41</sup> Pooyak, Thomas, Henderson, Laliberte, Jongbloed, Sharma, Spittal & Pierce, "Overcoming the soul wound: Reflecting on experiences and resilience of intergenerational residential school survivors, pg. 7

<sup>42</sup> Alfred, Taiaiake & Corntassel, Jeff. Being Indigenous: Resurgences against Contemporary Colonialism. Blackwell Publishing, 2005 pg. 611

<sup>43</sup> Jacobs, Beverly. "Decolonizing the Violence Against Indigenous Women". Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of B.C. 2017, pg.49

It is common for subsequent generations of residential school survivors to want to change and make a difference, to move on from the pain and suffering. In fact, in the qualitative research group mentioned above by Pooyak et. al., found that “many participants expressed their desire to break cycles on trauma” with some realizing that “continuing impacts of family violence were an extension of trauma that had begun generations before.”<sup>44</sup> Many intergenerational trauma survivors wish to move forward and start their healing journey. There were hopes of beginning a healing journey, being clean and sober and working on building relationships with their own children.<sup>45</sup> These are all steps forward.

Research has been done by Marsh, Coholic, Cote-Meek & Najavits that found “elders were the carriers of knowledge of both the physical and spiritual reality and that they have been educated through the oral tradition”, they go on to mention that elder’s credentials are recognized in Indigenous society.<sup>46</sup> It is important then with healing of residential school and intergenerational trauma that elder knowledge be incorporated with planning. It is important to do so because both Western treatments and conventional psychology do not understand Indigenous traditional and spiritual healing methods,<sup>47</sup> and this can hinder any form of healing by not addressing this.

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<sup>44</sup> Pooyak, Thomas, Henderson, Laliberte, Jongbloed, Sharma, Spittal & Pierce, “Overcoming the soul wound: Reflecting on experiences and resilience of intergenerational residential school survivors, pg. 6

<sup>45</sup> Pooyak, Thomas, Henderson, Laliberte, Jongbloed, Sharma, Spittal & Pierce, “Overcoming the soul wound: Reflecting on experiences and resilience of intergenerational residential school survivors

<sup>46</sup> Marsh, Coholic, Cote-Meek & Najavits, “Blending Aboriginal and Western Healing Methods to Treat Intergenerational Trauma with Substance Use Disorder in Aboriginal Peoples who Live in Northeastern Ontario”, pg 2

<sup>47</sup> Marsh, Coholic, Cote-Meek & Najavits, “Blending Aboriginal and Western Healing Methods to Treat Intergenerational Trauma with Substance Use Disorder in Aboriginal Peoples who Live in Northeastern Ontario”

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, between the BNA, the Residential School system and the White Paper, the government attempted to assimilate hundreds of thousands of Indigenous people, and this has continued to affect future generations. In fact, there is not one Indigenous generation to this day that has not been affected by the Residential School system. This tells us the importance of understanding intergenerational trauma as this trauma is being passed on generation after generation with a lack of understanding with some of the survivors. They suffer from all the effects of intergenerational trauma that have been discovered such as addiction, suicide, mental health issues, and even loss of their children into the governments foster care system. It is important that awareness is made known to many of the said effects of intergenerational trauma. With a better understanding of intergenerational trauma, comes better intervention methods for families struggling with effects.



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