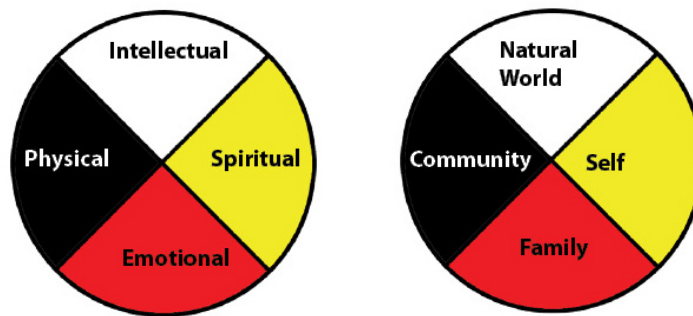




Native Teachings: Respect for Aboriginal Women; Carriers of Culture - Unit Template (CHV 20)



Teachers, before you start this unit reflect on the following questions for yourself:

- Are you comfortable enough in your own understandings of gender, race, and class-based violence, that you can be non-judgmental when bringing this topic up with your students?
- Are you aware of your privilege (or lack of) based on your gender, race, and class?
- Are you willing to understand students' cognitive dissonance resulting from what Canadians espouse in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and how the lived realities of Indigenous women contradict this?
- Do you understand that the subject content may elicit emotionally charged responses from students and are you prepared to insure that those learners receive the support they need?

This unit focuses on the following topic:

Violence against Aboriginal women and girls

Specific Expectations for Native Studies (NAC 2O):

Course Title: Aboriginal Peoples in Canada

- Students will: identify contemporary challenges that Aboriginal women face within Aboriginal and Canadian society.
- Students will: identify examples of the growing activism of Aboriginal groups in the 20th century;
- Students will: identify issues currently affecting Aboriginal peoples and the responses of local and national leadership to these issues.

Specific Expectations for History (CHC 2P and 2D)

Course Title: Canadian History in the 20th Century

- Students will: demonstrate an understanding of the elements of Canadian identity re: Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Objectives of this unit:
 - To understand the epidemic of violence against Indigenous women and to juxtapose this with our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
 - To understand the relationship between Indian Residential Schools and ongoing violence against Aboriginal women.
 - To know what national and local organizations are involved in raising public awareness.
 - To take personal responsibility in addressing this social justice issue with the goal of eradicating it.

Specific Expectations for Civics:

Course Code: (CHV 2O) Course Title: Civics

- students will participate effectively in a civil action or project of interest to them and of importance to the community.

Essential Question for this Unit:

- What is out of balance with Western values that basic human rights violations such as violence against Aboriginal women and girls, goes on virtually unnoticed in our country?

Vocabulary in this Unit:

1. racism
2. sexism
3. colonization
4. forced resettlement
5. social trauma
6. discrimination
7. marginalization
8. Turtle Island
9. Human rights
10. Prior Knowledge needed:
 - Students will know where “Turtle Island” is and why this term is important to understanding our ancestral relationship to native peoples.
 - Students and teacher should keep heightened awareness of his or her settler (newcomer) or Aboriginal status re: Turtle Island. *Whose land is this, really?*

Resources that will be used:

1. National Film Board DVD: "Finding Dawn"
2. Copy of "Stolen Sisters: Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous women in Canada-A Summary of Amnesty International's concerns.
3. Copy of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms
4. Guest speaker from Sisters in Spirit or from local sexual assault support centre

Materials, supplies needed:

1. DVD player
2. Paper and envelopes (letter-writing)
3. Posters of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls
4. Letter-writing rubric
5. Amnesty International's Website for Stolen Sisters report
www.amnesty.ca/campaigns/resources/amr2000304_summary.pdf
6. Native Women's Assoc. of Canada's website www.nwac-hq.org/
7. Contextual Knowledge Needed For this Unit:
8. The Civics, Native Studies, and History courses deal with the historical issue of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis interactions with the Canadian state, their displacement from their traditional territories and subsequent enclosure on reserved lands or forced resettlement. As western development (market economy) further erodes traditional lifestyles of Aboriginal people, poverty and the subsequent social trauma that accompanies it, permeates many Aboriginal communities as they struggle to maintain their constitutionally protected right to sovereignty.
9. We call the oppression that continues to plague Aboriginal people today "colonization". It did NOT stop when Canada got the right to govern itself upon constitutional repatriation (1982) or when we adopted our Charter of Rights. Historically, Aboriginal women have been triply affected by Canadian infringement on Aboriginal (crown) land. "Finding Dawn" addresses the horrific outcome that colonization, sexism, and racism continues to have on Aboriginal women in Canada.

Note: Before the coming of the Europeans, women in almost all Aboriginal societies were the centers of their communities. They were the politicians. They held great power within their nations and were highly respected because they were the creators of new life and were therefore the carriers of culture. Without women, their nations would not survive. To that end, they had great voice in deciding how their territories would be used. *Finding Dawn* discusses the harsh reality of the lives of scores of Aboriginal women who have experienced a severed connection with the land and the livelihood it offered.

Processes and actions for authentic student/teacher engagement to consider while doing this unit:

1. Invite a guest speaker from the community (e.g., Sisters in Spirit) to come in once throughout the course of the unit to address the students and to answer questions re: violence against Aboriginal women.
2. Each class begins with the teacher giving thanks to whatever Aboriginal tribal nation on which the school is located (e.g., if in Ottawa, teacher would thank the Algonquin people).
3. Every class begins with sharing in the circle. Each participant, including the teacher, introduces him/herself and their traditional territories (i.e. Sudan, Lebanon, England, Germany, etc.).
4. Participants acknowledge how they are feeling at that time, and acknowledges how they are going to approach the learning topic with respect. Each states why they believe this is important.
5. The teacher prepares the students in advance for the topic of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. The teacher makes it clear that should anyone need help, it is available. The teacher must provide a safe place for students to process the material being presented.

6. The DVD can be shown in the first lesson of the unit or in the middle of the unit, depending on how much “front-loading” the teacher chooses to do with the group.
7. Students will assess the values that Canadians stand for as exemplified in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, then juxtapose this with the reality in communities across Canada with respect to the treatment of Aboriginal women and girls.
8. Students will be given an introduction to the Human Rights violations happening to Aboriginal women and girls in Canada by studying “Stolen Sisters: Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada-A Summary of Amnesty International’s concerns”.
9. Teacher will facilitate learning in small groups, insuring equity in each group (gender, race, ability-level balance, etc). Important issues to ponder are a) why so much violence against Aboriginal women and girls exists and b) why it appears to be of so little importance (evidence in lack of response by policing authorities and community leadership).
10. Students will be given adequate time in class to express their feelings and their thoughts privately (journal writing, poetry, diary-type entries, sketching, etc.) as well as publically, insuring that “respect” guide the words and the stories that come out of their mouths.
11. Students and teacher together, brainstorm for ways in which they can live out their civic responsibilities to take concrete action (e.g., sign Amnesty International petition, write letters to the Prime Minister (currently the Right Honourable Stephen Harper) and to the Deputy Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness (currently the Honourable Vic Toews).

Students will watch documentary and take notes. They will list at least 4 things that they did not know before watching the documentary, and then list 4 things that they were “surprised” to find out.