



Module 2

Our Shared History

Overview

In this panel, Ed Bianchi, Victoria Freeman, Qwul'sih'yah'maht (Robina Thomas) and Jesse Thistle highlighted important pieces of our shared history. Here are a few questions to keep you thinking about what we heard during the panel.

General

- 1) Whose traditional territory are you on? What language do they speak? Where was the closest residential school? Were there Indian hospitals close by? If you don't know this, do you know why you don't?
- 2) How much of what you know about the history of the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada did you learn in school? How much did you learn beyond school?
- 3) Who benefits from the lopsided colonial history we teach in our schools? Why is it perpetuated?
- 4) How is it that Indigenous Peoples in Canada are either hyper-visible (i.e. the stereotypes we see) or invisible?
- 5) Why are there so many homeless and addicted Indigenous Peoples in core urban areas of settler-states? Why are they seen as 'problems' in need of fixing? Why aren't the processes that displaced Indigenous Peoples ever cited as the cause of this? How are you implicated or complicit?
- 6) Do you agree with Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, who said, "Education got us into this mess and education will get us out"? Is education necessary for decolonization? What do you think he meant by education?

- 7) Throwing money at Indigenous populations to help heal intergenerational trauma is like trying to mend a broken arm by taping a dollar bill against it. Why do settler-state governments continue to do this? Why don't settler-state governments try to address the historical processes of colonization that injured Indigenous populations, recognize them, make amends, and move forward in genuine solidarity?
- 8) Reflect on your own relationship to colonialism, and that of your family and ancestors, if you know them. You may have been impacted by colonialism in multiple ways and in different countries: it may be part of your family history as either colonizers or colonized (or both); it may affect what you do or don't do, who or what you know, and how you see yourself or others in the present. It may be something that is talked about in your family or among your social circle or not talked about.

If you or your family or ancestors emigrated to what is now called Canada, think about where your family has been most connected to land, and whose territory you or your ancestors came to when they moved here. Whose territory do you now live on? If you don't know, think about why you don't know. How did that specific territory come under settler control?

If you don't know your ancestry because of adoption or other reasons, please reflect on your own experience of colonialism in Canada and what you learned about it through your adopted family, friends and society at large.

Finally, reflect on how your own experiences of colonialism may influence your learning about the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

- 9) Lila Watson, an Australian Aborigine, once said, "If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." What do you think she meant by this? How is the liberation of Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples bound up together? What is the role for education in this process of liberation?

10) Thomas King reminds us of this at the end of each chapter in his book, "The Truth About Stories"

So now you have heard the story, do what you wish with it, but in ten or twenty years from now do not say you would have lived your life differently if only you had known the story.

Now you know a very small snippet, or a paragraph or two, of the stories of our panelists. How are you going to learn the rest?