

OUR
HISTORICAL
JOURNEY AS
FIRST NATIONS
PEOPLE

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In order to know where we are going, we need to know where we come from.

Knowing the historical journey of our people is very important; historical milestones have created many of today's challenges. We need to know the root of the issues that we face to day, in order to come up with solid solutions for the healing and survival of our people.

Definitions

Native

Aboriginal

Indian

Native
American

First Nation

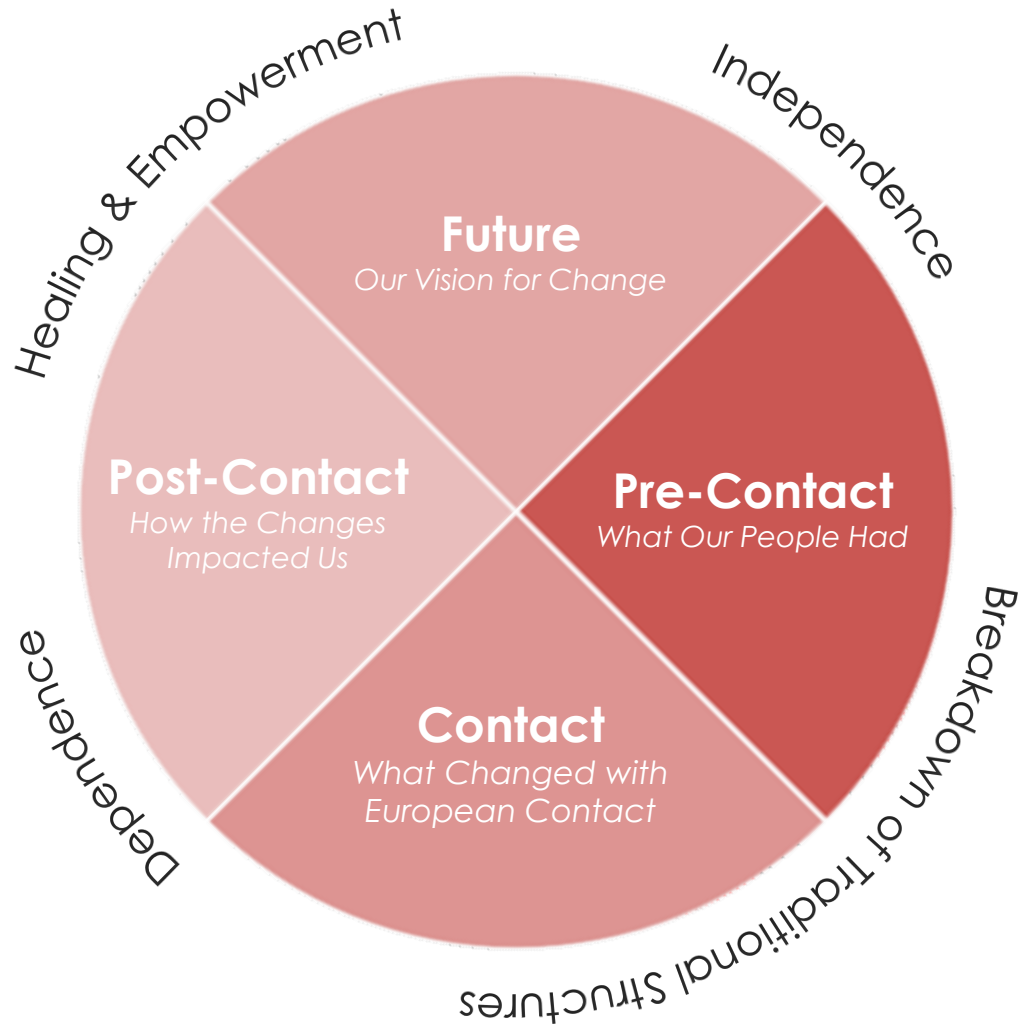
Indigenous

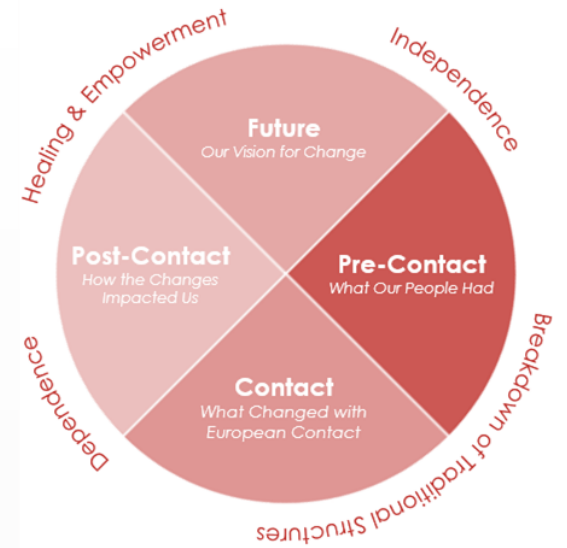
Amerindian

Tribal Affiliations Linguistic Families



Our Historical Journey





Pre-Contact Era



Sovereignty & Nationhood

Our ancestors had sovereignty; they lived on their own here on their lands since time immemorial. Our ancestors were self sufficient; they did not rely on outside help prior to European contact.

Our people were self sufficient; they survived on their land since time immemorial; they believed that the Creator placed them on this land as a gift and that they are to take care of it

Our people lived off the land, in harmony with nature, taking only what they needed, and always acknowledging the gifts from the land, as being from the Creator; our connection with the land was spiritually based

Self Governance

“government under control and direction of the inhabitants of a political unit rather than by an outside authority... Control of one’s own affairs”
(Webster dictionary)

Our ancestors had self governance: they governed themselves based on natural laws – their spiritual connection to the Creator

Traditional governance is based on the spiritual connection to the Creator (sacred teachings)



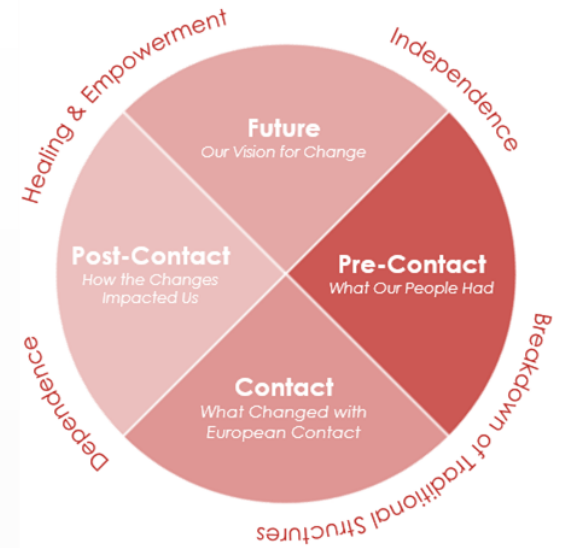
Spiritual Foundation

For our ancestors, their spirituality was the foundation as to how they lived.

Their traditional systems were based on their spiritual beliefs on how they believed the Creator wanted them to live.

Governance was based on their belief in the Creator, and the natural laws were followed.

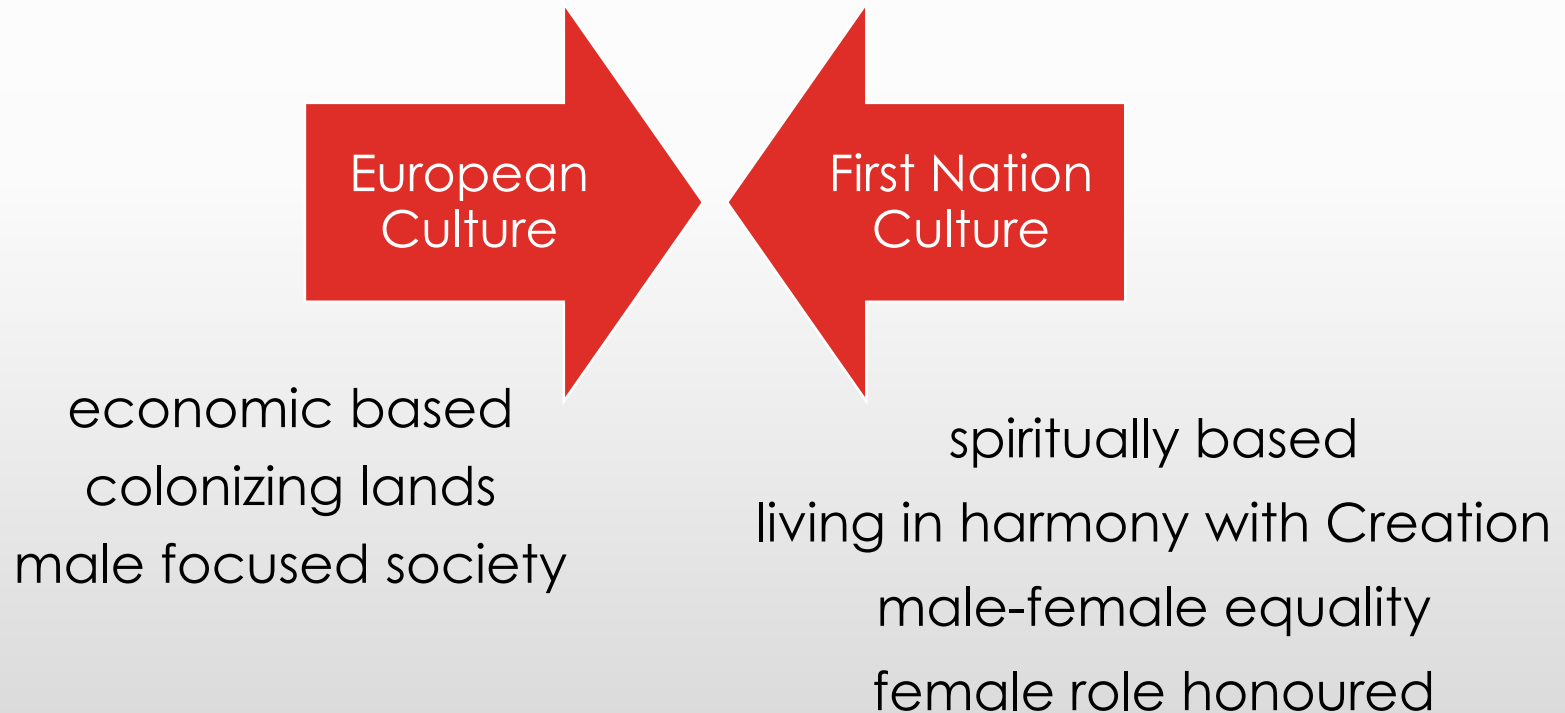
Everyday life was spiritual: always acknowledging the Creator in decision-making and all of Creation for the gifts they received (all of life was a ceremony)



Contact Era



Europeans take over our lands, and they set up a country called Canada

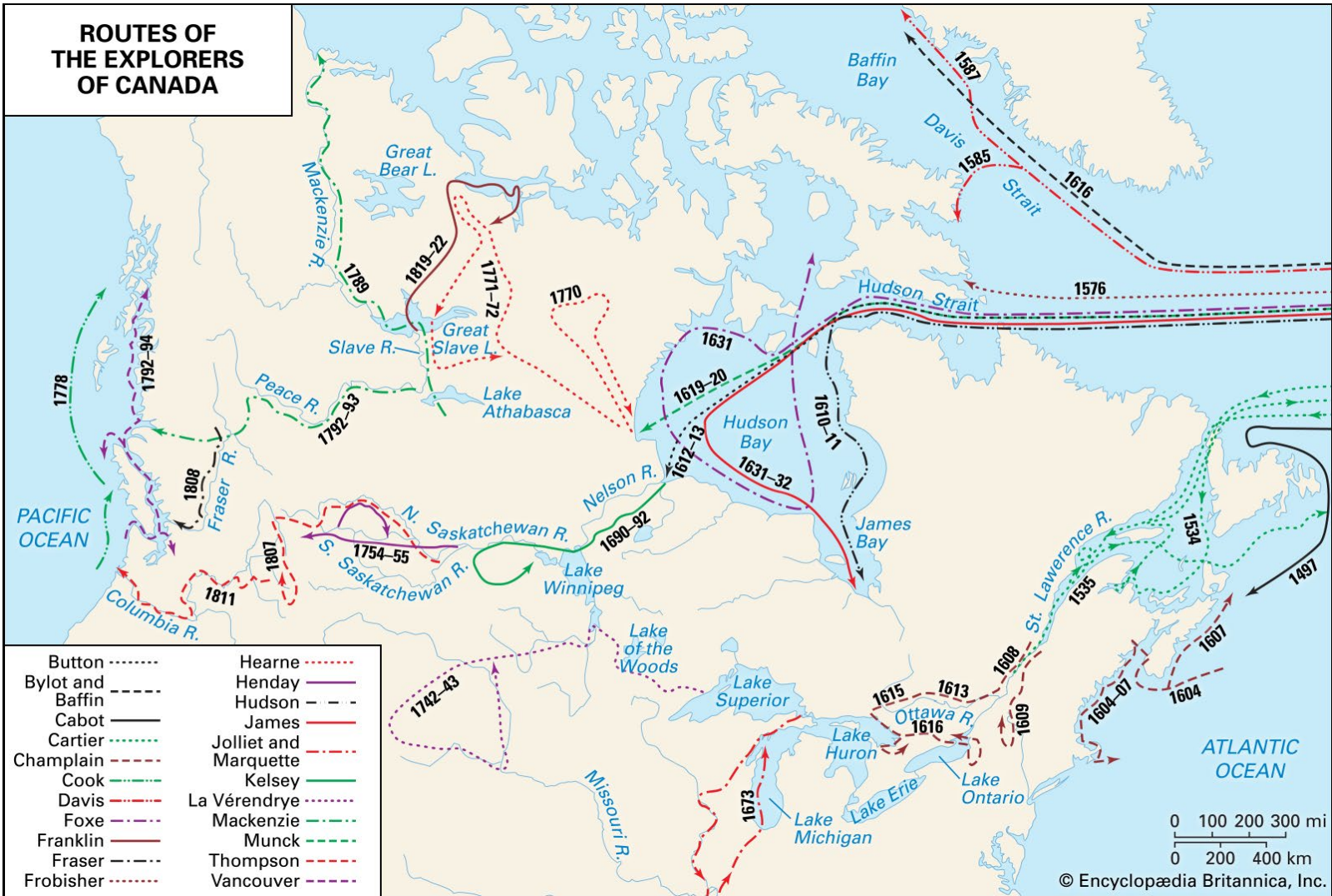


COLONIZATION

“when various European nations explored, conquered, settled, and exploited large areas of the world... spreading European institutions and culture...” (Encyclopedia Britannica)

Governments from other lands come to take over another nation's lands; these new governments are called “settler governments”

ROUTES OF THE EXPLORERS OF CANADA



Settler Government Laws

Indian Act

- main law affecting Native people
- passed in 1876 (based on policies already set out for Native people)
- its purpose was to control Native people
- Indian Act still exists today

Policies

- reserve system to gain access to lands through treaties
- residential school system to assimilate Native people, to destroy Native culture

Impacts of Government Laws

Reserve System

- We lost all our lands
- Treaties were signed between government and First Nations people (see attached map showing treaties)
- Government's view of treaty: we were giving up our lands
- Our people had a different understanding of the treaty: we believed we were agreeing to live in harmony with settlers and that our lands would be shared

Pre- and Post-Confederation Treaties in Canada



Impacts of Government Laws

Residential School System

- Used as a way to assimilate Native people to become like Europeans
- Government believed the best way to do this is through the children
- For over 100 years, Native children were taken from their families and raised in residential schools

This has had devastating impacts on us:

- loss of culture and language
- Identity
- Dignity
- Parenting skills
- Family breakdown



Loss of Spiritual Foundation

Our traditional society was based solely on our spiritual connection to the Creator; we lived by natural laws, all of which were spiritually based

Our spiritual foundation is what the government attacked, because it was what made us strong, proud and independent

Our spirituality was outlawed for over 100 years; it was against the law to follow our ancestors' ways

Majority of our people lost their spiritual foundation; we became assimilated into European culture

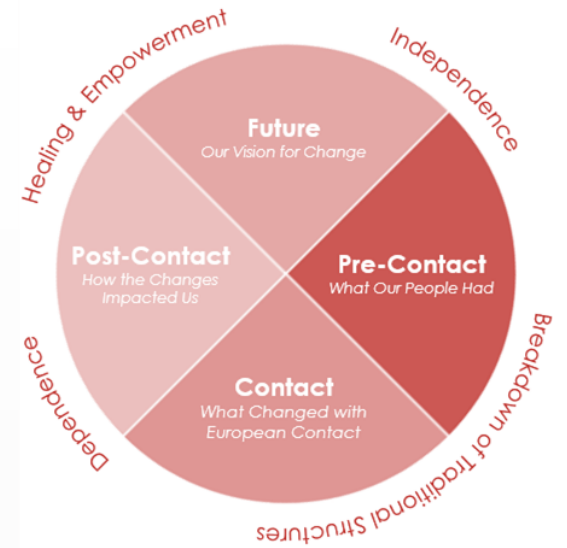
Dependency Syndrome

Loss of self-reliance has resulted from years of colonization

Dependency on the government has become a syndrome

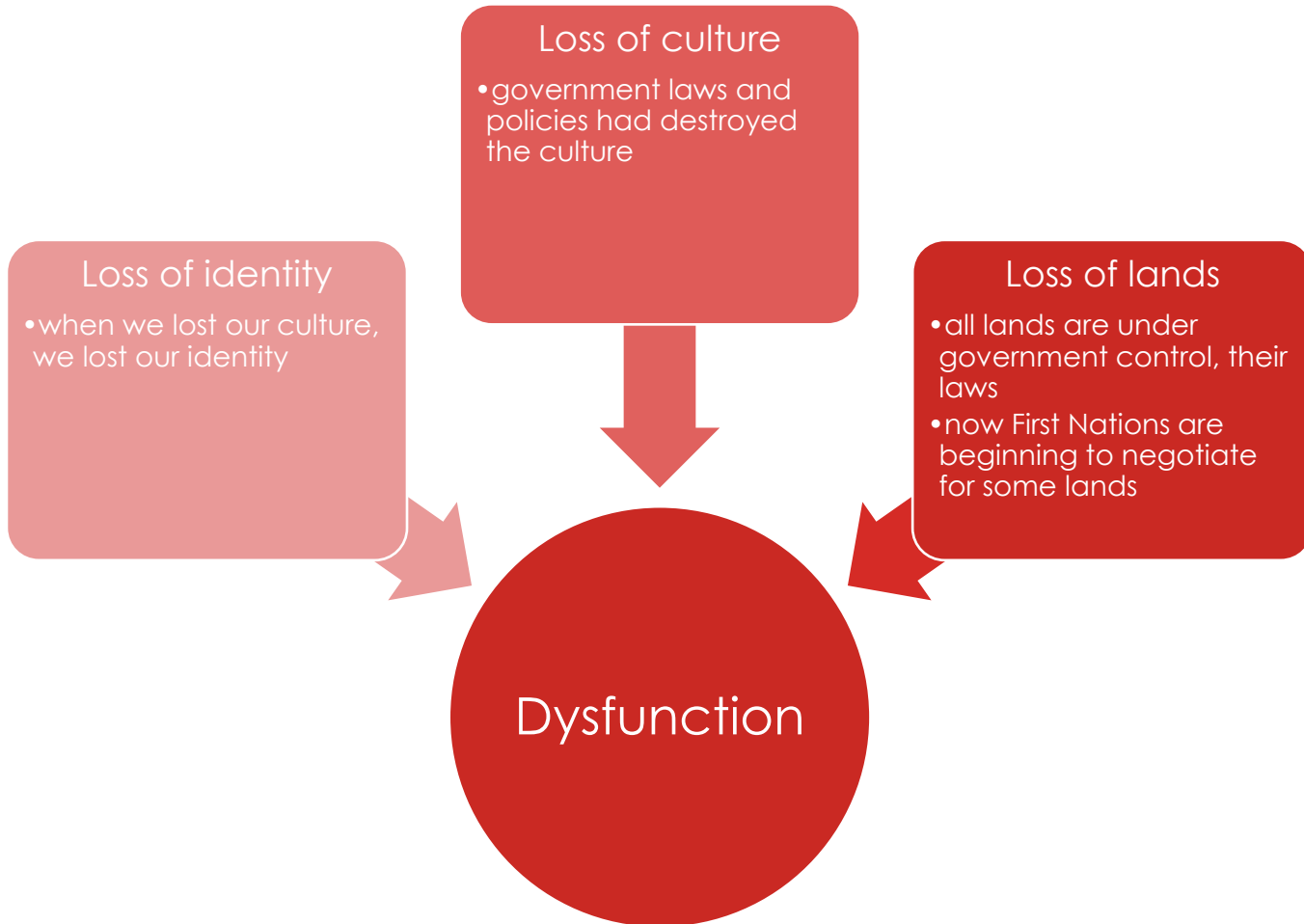
How did this happen?

- Relocation to reserves
- Indian Act restricting and controlling us
- Welfare system
- Deprivation from learning about own culture, language and history



Post-Contact Era

Results of Oppression



Symptoms of Oppressed People

Addictions

- many of our people turn to alcohol and drugs, to numb themselves, many are not aware of why they do this

Lateral violence

- we turn on each other, instead of fighting against the government for our rights, we fight each other

Suicides

- hopelessness leads to suicide, many youth turn to suicide



Grief and Loss Symptoms

Overwhelming losses over a long period of time; a general state of apathy

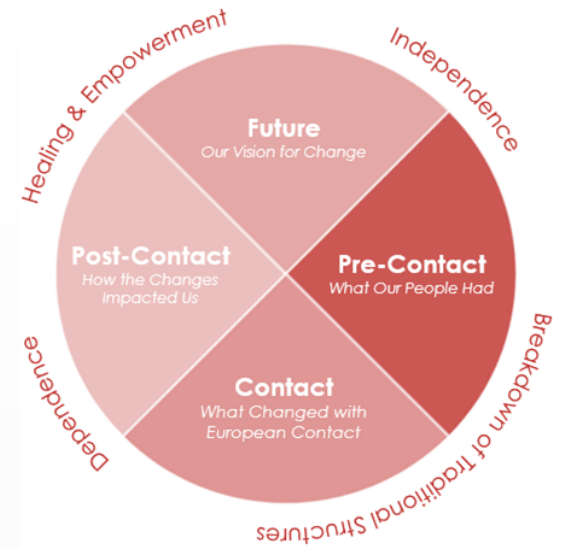
Hundreds of years of losses will take some time to heal

We need healing and empowerment

The first step in our healing is acknowledging that the injustice/losses have happened (knowledge is power)

EMPOWERMENT

taking our power back, taking back control of our lives



Future Era

Our Sovereignty
Our Self-sufficiency
Our Identity
Our Spiritual Foundation

We want what our Ancestors had in the Pre-contact Era

Becoming Self Governing

Asserting Sovereignty

Governance and Homelands

Acting on Self-sufficiency

Economic, Education, Health

Reclaiming our Culture Identity

Fostering positive self image and identity

Focusing on Spiritual Foundation

Ethics and values as a base of our nationhood

Healing and Empowerment

Creating awareness among our People, youth who represent our survival and future

Coming Full Circle

