



Integrating the hard work of reconciliation into our roles as communicators

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CEPA CONFERENCE 2021

ha7lh skwáye1

?əy' sweya1

(good day - skwxwú7mesh & hən'qəminəm')

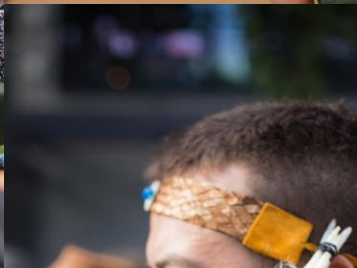
I respectfully acknowledge that I am an uninvited guest on the unceded ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy'əm (Musqueam), skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlił'ílw'ətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

A foreword:

This presentation is based on my personal experience as a settler having worked in two First Nations communities (Tsawwassen First Nation and the Squamish Nation), as well as teachings shared with me, conversations with Indigenous community members and elected leadership, and knowledge and perspectives I have sought out from Indigenous voices. I do not speak on behalf of Indigenous Peoples.

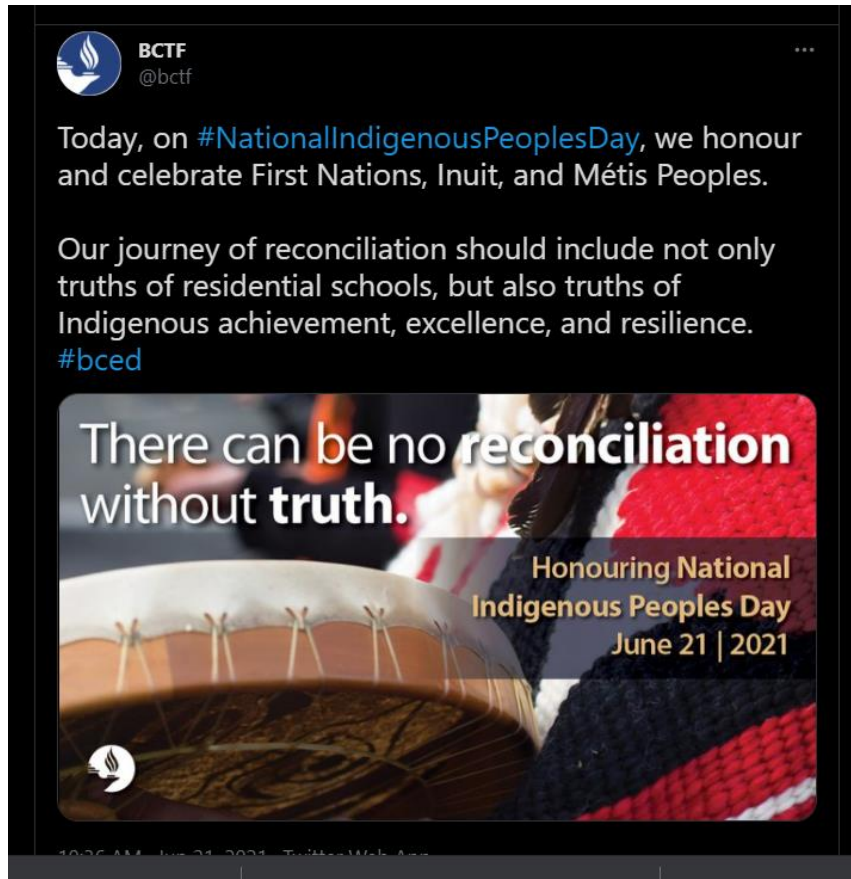
Though I have endeavored to accurately represent these teachings, I too make mistakes and remain entirely open to continued learning, including being corrected when I am wrong.

Lastly, this is in no way intended to be an exhaustive resource; rather, it is something I hope will spark thought, conversation, and consideration for the work you are undertaking at your respective organizations.





Carrying what I have learned forward to the BCTF



June 16, 2021

Residential schools—listening, learning, and next steps

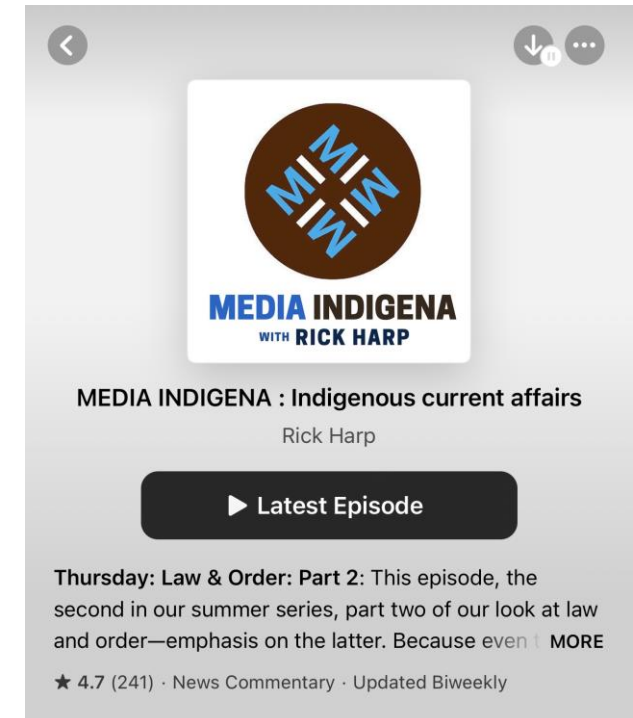
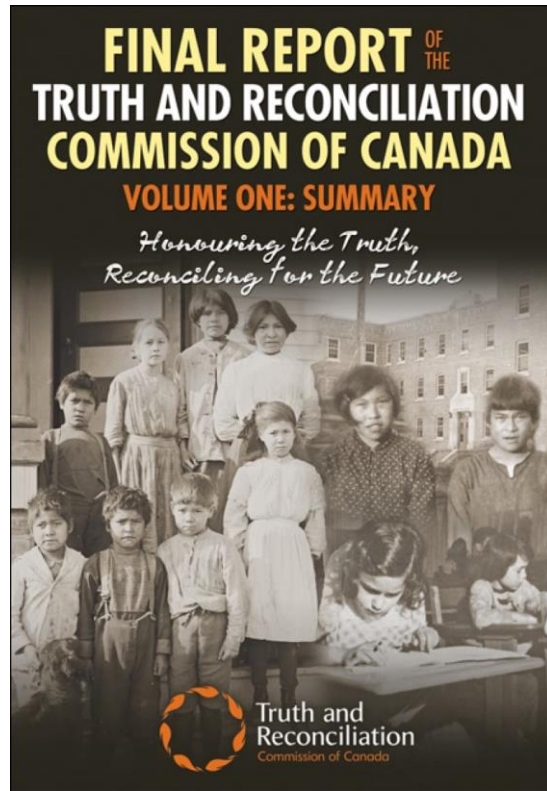
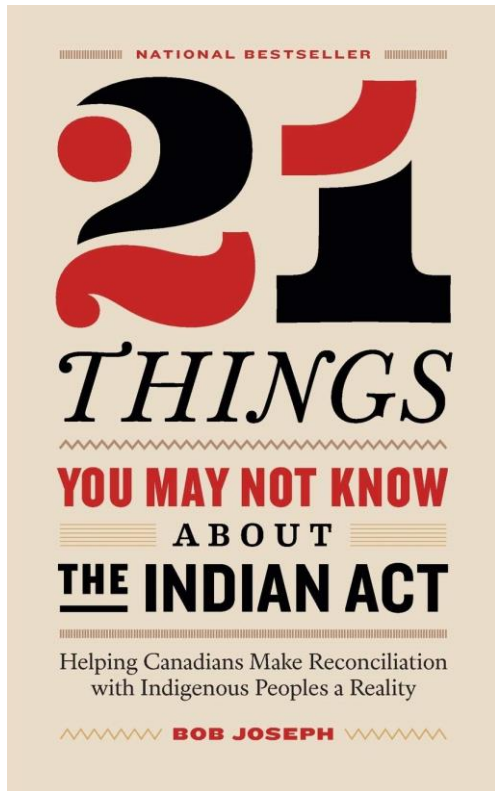
Greetings,

As we process the discovery of the 215 children buried at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, as well as more unmarked graves at sites across the country, many of us are finding ourselves feeling compelled to take action. The need for collective action, as well as individual action, is undeniable.

Although this news may have come as a shock to some, we must acknowledge that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities across the country have long spoken about knowing that undocumented burial sites such as this existed.

This knowledge was not kept secret, either. In fact, there is an entire 273-page volume of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission dedicated exclusively to [Missing Children and Unmarked Burials](#). Yet another uncomfortable truth here is that *we weren't listening*.

We all know we need to do the work, but where to start?



Building meaningful relationships

How many of you have an established relationship with a designated Indigenous Education staff member, educator, or committee?

If not, find out who that person or committee might be within your organization or membership.

Building meaningful relationships

- Initiate outreach without a deadline or timeline in place.
- Be patient. Trust takes time.
- Offer your support; don't add to their workload.
- Attend in-person events.
- Accept invitations whenever possible.

Building meaningful relationships

Centre the relationship around them.

Their stories.

Their aspirations.

Their challenges.

Listen. Be respectfully curious.

Some “do’s and don’ts” to consider

DO...

Be as specific as possible in the words you choose (e.g., Indigenous/Aboriginal, First Nations, Métis, Inuit, _____ Nation, etc.)

Learn the correct pronunciation and spelling of local Nations

Attempt to find answers to your questions online before asking them of an Indigenous contact

Compensate folks for their time (this includes guest speakers, territorial welcomes, etc.)

Pay close attention to the ways you see and hear language used by the Indigenous folks you’re speaking about. (e.g., in Coast Salish territory, you may invite a *drummer*, or someone *to drum*, to open an event; you don’t invite someone to *play the drum*. Similarly, not every carved wooden pole is a “totem”; they may be called “house posts” or “welcome figures,” or something else, depending on where you are.)

Support Indigenous-owned businesses (e.g., photographers, designers, print shops, promotional gear, etc.)

More “do’s and don’ts” to consider

DO...

Be patient

Ensure your territory acknowledgements are meaningful

Speak of reconciliation as a continuous journey/process, rather than a destination

Share any photos you take with the community, individual, or organization

Amplify Indigenous voices wherever possible

Give your members the tools to support their own journeys of reconciliation

Confront systemic racism head-on in your communications

More “do’s and don’ts” to consider

DON’T...

Generalize or assume!

- This applies to culture, art, language, politics, governance, protocols, etc.

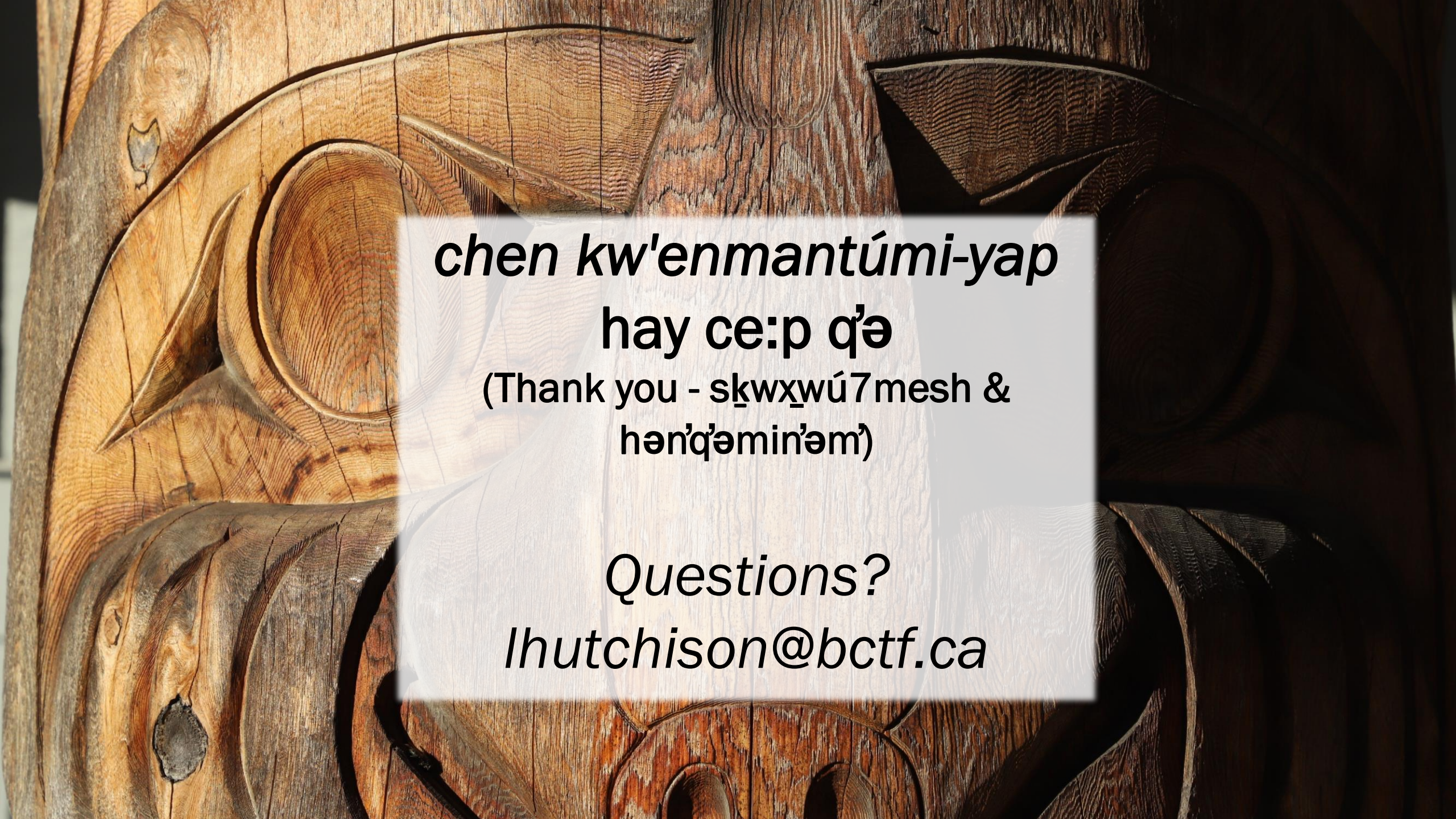
Use possessive language (e.g., “Canada’s Indigenous Peoples,” “our local First Nation’s territory,” etc.)

Focus exclusively on trauma and hardships.

Shy away from uncomfortable conversations with non-Indigenous colleagues

Have a non-Indigenous artist (e.g., in-house graphic design team) attempt to create Indigenous or “Indigenous-influenced” designs

Ask for an English phonetic spelling of an Indigenous language word/phrase. Sounds often don’t translate directly and meaning can be lost when Anglicized. If they wish to share a phonetic version, they will do so on their own terms.



chen kw'enmantúmi-yap

hay ce:p q'ə

(Thank you - skwxwú7mesh &
hən'q'əmin'əm')

Questions?

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