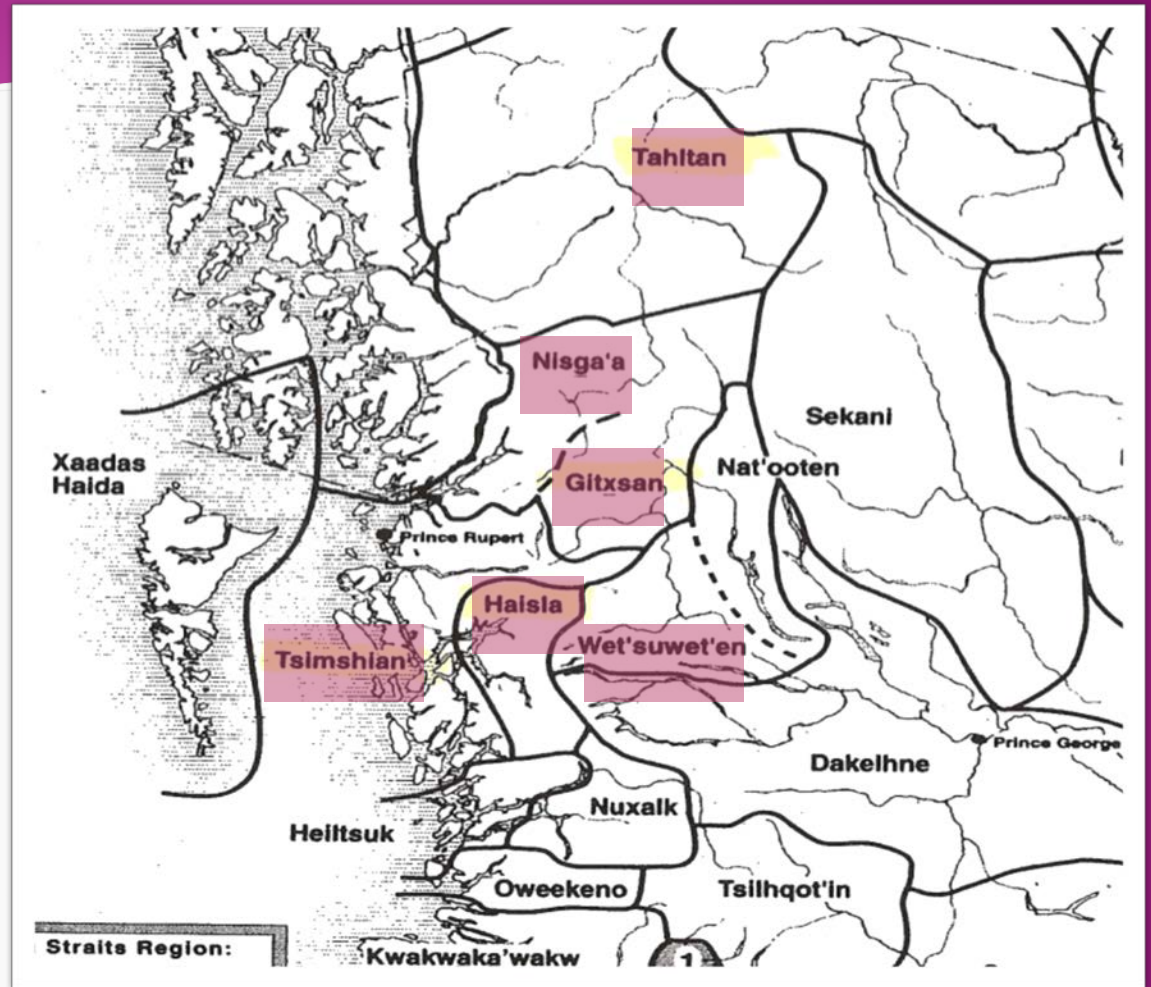




GENERATIONAL GRIEF AND LOSS IN FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES

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6 Nations
Gitksan,
Haisla,
Nisga'a,
Tahltan,
Tsimshian and
Wet'suwet'en



NORTH WEST BC MAP
OF FIRST NATION

WHAT IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW

The stats from Government of Canada (2006) shows the mental health crisis that is occurring on First Nation reserves across Canada;

- ◉ depression and suicide rates are twice as high (on average) than the national average;
- ◉ 5 times higher rate of domestic violence and
- ◉ 8-18 times higher rate of spousal homicide;
- ◉ sexual abuse is triple the Canadian average

COLONIZATION

- ◉ Pre-colonization - 1500 years ago Northwest coast peoples began to diverge into distinct cultures , language and village sites.
- ◉ First contact came in the late 18 century and with is small pox epidemic killed more then half the population - 1862 alone over 20, 000 people
- ◉ In time of overwhelming loss what happens to culture and ceremony associated with death?
- ◉ Survival, panic and chaos

Taken from; thecanadianencyclopedic.ca

LEGISLATED RACISM

- ◉ Less than human
- ◉ Forced relocations
- ◉ Children taken
- ◉ Not allowed to practice their culture
- ◉ Given a status number

Does this sound familiar? Has there been another group that this happened to in history?

PROCESSES THAT IMPACTED THE PSYCHE

○ Assimilation

- making laws against the traditions practices
- Control over raising child
- Outlawing languages for child

○ Oppression

- no way to protest
- Overcrowding
- Need permission for any change
- Financial control

PROCESSES THAT IMPACTED THE PSYCHE

○ Objectification

- Less than human - to be deemed human must give up status
- Assigned a number

○ Discrimination

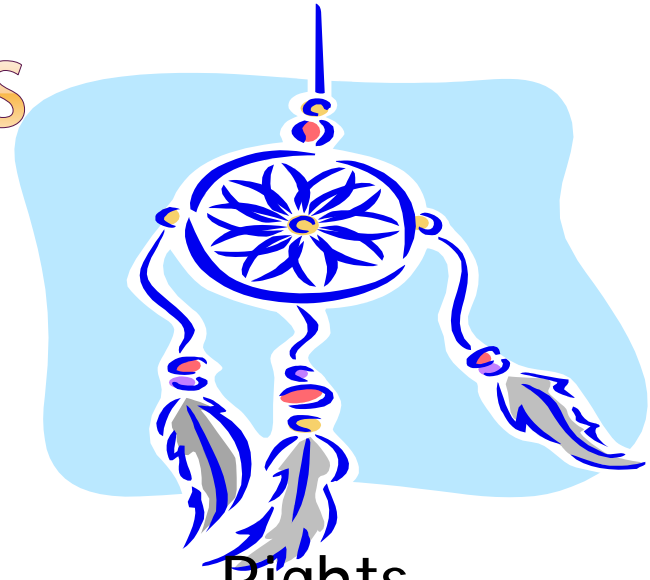
- Perpetuate stereotypes “the Indian problem”
- Reduce access to resources-reserves
- Treat differently - in mainstream society
- Use of labeling

PROCESSES THAT IMPACTED THE PSYCHE

○ Attachment trauma

- Take significant adults away from children
- Changes the child view of the world, of safety, of trust
- Leaves caregiver abandon, feeling blame.
- Build resentment and anger in children and caregivers
- Research indicates increase in mental health problems , addiction behaviours and relationship problems,

GENERATIONAL LOSSES OF FIRST NATION



Loss of ...

Status

Language

Freedom

Power

Value

Etc...

Identity

Land

Independence

Knowledge

Children

Rights

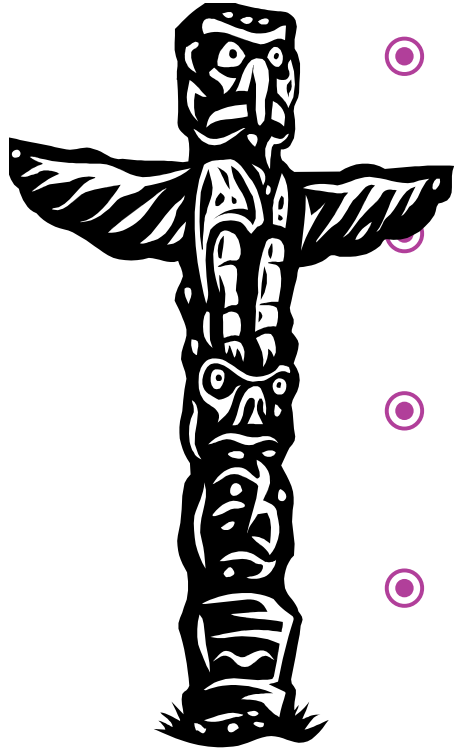
Culture

Control

Community

Homes

DISENFRAANCHISED GRIEF



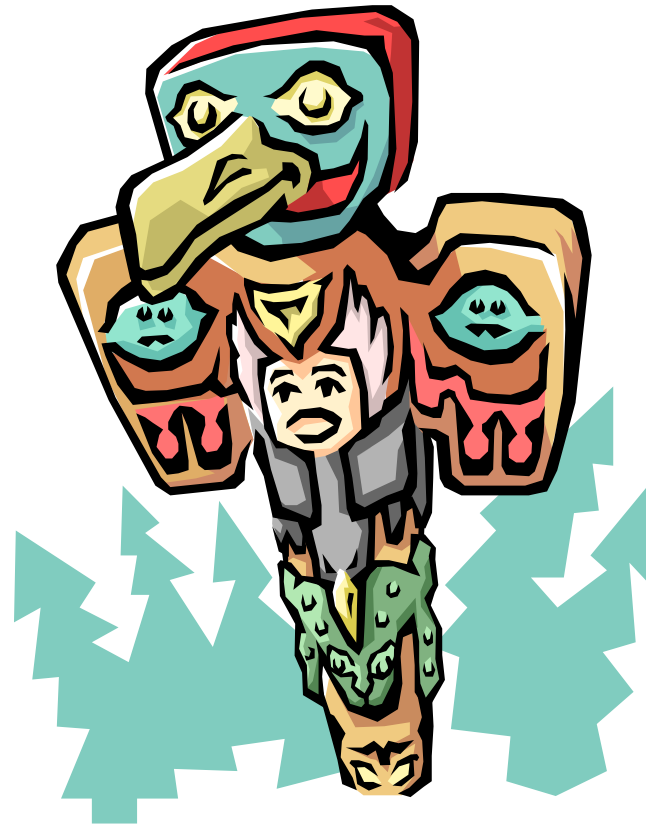
- Being denied the opportunity to grieve
- Forced to carry the burden alone and in secret
- Forced to hide and suppress feelings and emotions
- Deny any meaningful participation in rites and rituals

(Ken Doka, 1989)

COMPLICATED GRIEF

Multiple/Compound

- ❖ One loss right after another
- ❖ Unresolved grief surface
- ❖ Overwhelming process



SO WHAT NOW???

WHAT DOES THE IMAGE OF
THE ICEBERG TELL US
ABOUT HELPING AND
HEALING?

SO WHAT DOES THE METAPHOR
OF THE ICEBERG TELL US
ABOUT HELPING AND HEALING?



HOW CAN WE SUPPORT VALUE?

- ◉ Teach the true history
- ◉ Educate your friends and family
- ◉ When offered, attend First Nation gatherings
- ◉ Speak against stereotypes
- ◉ Smile say hello
- ◉ Respect First Nation choices
- ◉ Take time to get to know and celebrate the diversity in your environment
- ◉ Allow grief to be recognized and acknowledged

WHAT IS GRIEF?

- A set of complex emotional reactions to a perceived loss
- A process of “relearning” how to be without the loss
- A journey into change - into renewal

