



## RIGHTING RELATIONS

*Adult Education for Social Change*

### **Turning Theory into Practice: What we are learning about the work of Righting Relations**

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- **Involve Indigenous Peoples, Knowledges and Perspectives.** Indigenous peoples' humanity, nationhood and inherent rights to land, culture, and health have been violated over the past 500 years since European contact and the building of Canada as a nation. In order to do the work of righting relations to bring about a more just Canadian society, it is integral that Indigenous peoples and perspectives be involved and woven into the building of this network in all regions. Without meaningful involvement of Indigenous communities, our work in the name of *Righting Relations* runs the risk of losing its credibility.
- **Understanding Colonization – It's Contemporary History and Impacts.** Canada was founded through settler-colonialism and the process of colonization continues to this day through the country's social, political and economic structures. These structures perpetuate the privilege of those with European ancestry, financial resources, male and able-bodied, heterosexual, (to name a few) at the expense of Indigenous, people of colour, poor, women, gender non-conforming, differently-abled, LGBTQ2S, Muslim, and other groups considered minorities. In order to develop our political and economic literacy and to do the work of righting relations through an intersectional analysis, we must understand the colonial thinking, which creates and reinforces hierarchies, which separate us. We must understand the history of colonization and how it has impacted us on the personal, interpersonal, collective and systemic levels. In order to not perpetuate the cycle of colonization, we support one another in courageously seeking to understand how we each have been colonized so that we may do the work of

unlearning the thought patterns and behaviour, which perpetuate colonial structures.

- **Build Deep, Kin-like Relationships of Trust.** This means taking the time to build relationships and trust as part of our work, creating time for storytelling, and getting to know one another both formally and informally. We are learning that relationships are at the foundation of our social change work, and our ability to bring about sustainable and integrated change through a network that maintains the connection over time and space, depends upon our ability to build authentic relationships. This means that when conflict happens (and it's bound to happen) we have the ability to breakthrough vs. breakdown, and move forward, together.
- **Integrating Mind, Body, Heart and Spirit brings forth Higher Level Solutions.** When we invite our whole selves and our multiple intelligences into our work, we are able to access deeper level truth and wisdom, birthing previously unimaginable solutions.
- **The Personal, Interpersonal and Systemic are all Inter-Connected.** Social change takes place in the personal, interpersonal and systemic realms simultaneously. When we do the work on the personal level of being right with ourselves and unlearning hierarchical constructs, we are able to engage more authentically and justly in our interpersonal relationships. When we change internally, we change externally. When more just relationships occur, they have the power to shift the systems those relationships operate within. Systems are made up of people and patterns of behaviour, so when we change our thinking, our behaviour and our relationships, we have the power to change systems.
- **Healing is a Valid Part of the Process.** Regardless of who we are, whether we have benefited from, or been a victim of colonization, perpetrator or survivor we all have been wounded by colonization of people and the Earth and we all must heal from this wound in order to bring forth a more just and sustainable world. Healing inter-generational trauma collectively strengthens our capacity to do the work of radical adult education and community organizing and we recognize it as a valid part of the process of righting relations.
- **True Collaboration Requires a Commitment to Ongoing Self Reflection and Inner Work.** The work of true collaboration is not easy. Sometimes we say we are working 'collaboratively' and yet we are trying to hold on to power and steer the ship in a particular

direction. As we learn about what modelling a women-led process looks like, we come into circle, and in the circle, we have equal power. Each person matters and we all steer the direction we are collectively moving in. This work requires practicing deep listening with the intent to understand, a recognition of multiple truths, and the humility to accept that your way is only one way and that the group may prefer a different way, and that's ok. We recognize that part of doing this work, is working on the self, and unlearning our need for power, control and pre-established outcomes.