

Remembering the Children ^[1]

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From our Elders

At Residential Schools they tried to erase us, erase our culture. We were punished for speaking our languages. And even outside Residential School, the government outlawed our culture — it was illegal to practice our ceremonies.

During this time when our ceremonies were banned, our cultures went underground. People protected our cultures and ceremonies — they kept them alive. The ceremonies were still practiced, but not in public where people could see them. Now our ceremonies are done in public. They are big celebrations. As Elders, our work is to support the young people learning these traditions, our Indigenous languages and our ceremonies. Understanding Indigenous languages is really important to know who you are as an Indigenous person.

The news about the graves at Kamloops Indian Residential School in May 2021 really spoke for us. Residential School Survivors were sharing about these experiences for years, but people didn't believe us. They said the schools were run by churches and good people. But now people are beginning to see what really happened at Residential School.

Region: Canada ^[4]

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