

# RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL INTERGENERATIONAL IMPACTS

Adapted from *Where are the Children*, <http://wherearethechildren.ca>

The unresolved trauma of Aboriginal people who experienced or witnessed physical or sexual abuse in the residential school system is passed on from generation to generation. The ongoing cycle of intergenerational abuse in Aboriginal communities is the legacy of physical and sexual abuse in residential schools. **"Intergenerational Impacts" refer to "the effects of physical and sexual abuse that were passed on to the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Aboriginal people who attended the residential school system."** Please see the list below of impacts that intergenerational Survivors face on a day-to-day basis:

1. Alcohol and drug abuse;
2. Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) and fetal alcohol effect (FAE);
3. Sexual, physical, and psychological/emotional abuse (past and ongoing);
4. Low self-esteem;
5. Dysfunctional families and interpersonal relationships;
6. Parenting issues such as emotional coldness, rigidity, neglect, poor communications and abandonment;
7. Suicide (and the threat of suicide);
8. Teen pregnancy;
9. Chronic, widespread depression;
10. Chronic, widespread rage and anger;
11. Eating disorders;
12. Sleeping disorders;
13. Chronic physical illness related to spiritual and emotional states;
14. Layer upon layer of unresolved grief and loss;
15. Fear of personal growth, transformation and healing;
16. Unconscious internalization of residential school behaviours such as false politeness, not speaking out, passive compliance, excessive neatness, obedience without thought, etc.;
17. Post-residential school community environment, seen in patterns of paternalistic authority linked to passive dependency; patterns of misuse of power to control others, and community social patterns that foster whispering in the dark, but refusing to support and stand with those who speak out or challenge the status quo;
18. The breakdown of the social glue that holds families and communities together, such as trust, common ground, shared purpose and direction, a vibrant ceremonial and civic life, co-operative networks and associations working for the common good, etc.;
19. Disunity and conflict between individuals, families and factions within the community;
20. Flashbacks and associative trauma; i.e., certain smells, foods, sounds, sights and people trigger flashback memories, anxiety attacks, physical symptoms or fear; e.g. the sight of a certain type of boat or vehicle (especially containing a social worker or RCMP), the sight of an old residential school building, etc.;
21. Educational blocks - aversions to formal learning programs that seem "too much like school," fear of failure, self-sabotage, psychologically-based learning disabilities;
22. Spiritual confusion; involving alienation from one's own spiritual life and growth process, as well as conflicts and confusion over religion;
23. Internalized sense of inferiority or aversion in relation to whites and especially whites in power;
24. Toxic communication - backbiting, gossip, criticism, put downs, personal attacks, sarcasm, secrets, etc.;
25. Becoming oppressors and abusers of others as a result of what was done to one in residential schools;
26. Dysfunctional family co-dependent behaviours replicated in the workplace;
27. Cultural identity issues - missionization and the loss of language and cultural foundations has led to denial (by some) of the validity of one's own cultural identity (assimilation), a resulting cultural confusion and dislocation;
28. Destruction of social support networks (the cultural safety net) that individuals and families in trouble could rely upon;
29. Disconnection from the natural world (i.e. the sea, the forest, the earth, living things)