

Background information for Orange Shirt Day

Indian Residential Schools were Government sponsored religious schools opened in 1831 and the last one closed in 1996. 150 000 First Nations children suffered injustices at residential schools across Canada. Orange shirt day is a commemorative day to honour those who survived Indian Residential Schools (IRS) and remember those that didn't.

The Canadian government believed that Aboriginal children should dress and speak and act like all the other children. Aboriginal children were taken from their families and brought to live at residential school where their hair was cut, they were all dressed the same, and were forbidden to speak their home languages. Only English or French were allowed. Children missed their families and forgot how to speak their language. Their communities missed them. This affected the communities and the future generations. Children were not allowed to speak with siblings or other family members. Students were not treated well. Families can still feel the effects of this treatment to their family members. Today we acknowledge this was wrong and we wear our orange to remember those children, and to remind us that it is okay to keep our traditions.

Resources on Residential Schools in Canada:

[The Canadian Encyclopedia Historica Residential Schools in Canada](#)

[National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#)

Why Orange Shirts? The movement was sparked in 2013 by Phyllis Jack Webstad, a Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation Elder in Williams Lake.

Listen to Phyllis introduce Orange Shirt Day: [Phyllis Webstad Orange Shirt Day](#)

We are wearing our shirts to acknowledge we know the truth of Indian Residential Schools and we will never let it happen again. "Every Child Matters"

More information available at: [Orange Shirt Day Website](#)

Moving towards Reconciliation:

"Reconciliation is a process of healing of relationships that requires public truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms."- 3rd Principle of Reconciliation, TRC.

"In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes the following calls to action." (Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, TRC)

[Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action](#)

Reconciliation is the responsibility of non-Indigenous and Indigenous people.