A group of students and a nun pose in a classroom at Cross Lake Indian Residential School in Cross Lake, Manitoba in February 1940. Photograph: Reuters
Many Indigenous peoples have been affected by assimilation. This includes the residential school system, boarding schools, the sixties scoop, foster care, and forced removal efforts along with those who had to hide out of fear & self preservation.

The ongoing traumas we face often make us feel like we’re walking alone, but we aren’t.

Through stories, community efforts and retrospect into how we’ve been shaped by a system set to dismantle us, we can ensure our thrival as peoples - by using our words and experiences to heal.

Above all else, kakichihiewewin is a grassroots effort with the goal to build Indigenous peoples back up and create safe community spaces.

This zine was created to meet you at whatever point you are on in your journey to healing and understanding. It is meant to heal and to educate. Please remember: It was written and created from experience and empathy - so be mindful as you read, as there will be agitators or triggers within it’s pages.
Assimilation: A policy in which a nation forces or encourages a people to adopt its institutions and customs.

Residential School: A place where children were sent to assimilate into white culture

Boarding School: A place where children were sent to assimilate into white culture

Forced Assimilation: No one was given a choice

Intergenerational Trauma: No one was given a choice

Long before the first institution opened up on stolen lands, native peoples were already hated and unwanted by the entitled.

Colonialism reinforced the “savage” stereotype that we were heathens and therefore needed to be taught how to live properly according to the church and state.
Albert Lacombe was a legendary figure in early Alberta, a man of rare energy and will whose abundant charm, incisive intellect, and indefatigable spirit shaped the social and spiritual landscape of the province. Born in Saint-Sulpice, Lower Canada, in 1827, Lacombe was ordained as a secular priest in 1849 and became a member of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.) in 1856. During his long career as a cleric, Lacombe travelled extensively throughout the vast North-West Territories as a missionary. Among Lacombe’s many accomplishments were his essential role in establishing St. Albert and other Alberta communities; his diplomacy in resolving disputes between Natives and Euro-Canadian settlers, businessmen, and politicians; and his role as a strong advocate for French and Catholic culture in western Canada.

Lacombe’s last major project in Alberta was the construction of Lacombe Home, a substantial facility to accommodate orphans, the aged, and the poor. To capitalize the undertaking, Lacombe—a master fundraiser—secured the cooperation of several prominent businessmen. From Calgary cattle tycoon Pat Burns he received 200 acres of picturesque ranch land north of Midnapore; after the construction of Lacombe Home, Burns also provided the home with abundant supplies of fresh meat, butter, and dairy cattle. Lacombe’s long-time friend Lord Strathcona contributed a “petit souvenir” of $10,000 to the enterprise. A colliery owner in Lethbridge donated several railcars full of coal, another associate contributed lumber to erect the outbuildings, and two railway companies generously agreed to transport these materials without cost. Lacombe also managed to convince the Sisters of Charity of Providence to operate the facility. The Lacombe Home was officially opened in 1910. Ever solicitous for support, Lacombe persuaded attendees at the opening to donate both money and linens for the undertaking. Considered by Lacombe the culmination of a life dedicated to ministering to the most vulnerable in western Canada, the home was likely the first of its kind in Alberta.

Tragically, the Lacombe Home was destroyed by fire in 1999. Nonetheless, several significant ancillary structures associated with the home still exist, including a brick laundry, frame shed, unusual heavy-timber water tower, brick carpenter’s shop, and a brick heating plant. The water tower possesses particular significance. Not only does it mark the location of the Lacombe Home, but its shape, size, and collection is an excellent—and perhaps the only extant—example of such an early institutional complex.

Source: Alberta Culture and Community Spirit, Historic Resources Management Branch (File: Des. 303)

Why do we celebrate and uphold the values of genocide? It’s because any admittance to wrongdoings against Natives peoples would take their Christianity away from the perpetrators. Lacombe home is responsible for generations of trauma. Lacombe home is responsible for the death of children and culture.
LACOMBE HOME BURNT DOWN IN 1999, HOPEFULLY DESTROYING THE ECHOES OF TRAUMA THAT SURELY HAUNTED THE HALLS.
These generous ancient woodlands,
As vast as the eye can see,
We rejoiced in the return of our relatives,
From their journey out at sea,
We danced the song of creation,
Giving thanks to all that be,
Waters once overflowed with salmon,
No longer to be seen.

Waking in morning,
Falling asleep at night,
We sung the song of creation,
Giving thanks to source of light,
We light our sacred fire,
Embracing grandmother moon,
and listened to our relatives,
the howls of the loon.

We dreamt of ancient woodlands,
As vast as the eye can see,
We sung the song of creation,
Giving thanks to all that be,
We await the return of our relatives,
From their journey out at sea.

Traveling up the river,
Was not who we expect,
Wary of these strangers we met them at the shore,
Disguised like tricksters as our kin,
With silver hair and ivory skin,
We welcomed them to our lands with ease,
and sung the song of creation,

We gave them all they needed,
Yet still they asked for more,
with hungry and ravenous spirits,
They ravaged shore to shore,
They destroyed our ancient woodlands,
Our relatives of the sea,
Killed our sacred relatives,
Taking more than what they need.

They gave us poison water,
and abducted our children too,
They severed their connection,
and beat them black and blue,
They banned the song of creation,
Kept like animals in a zoo,
They brought up broken children,
With nothing left to do.

They segregated our nation,
Because they knew our strength
was great,
They destroyed our ancestral customs,
Dug up ancestral remains,
Our warriors fought for centuries,
With nothing left to sustain,
The colonizers kept on colonizing,
Perpetuating all this pain.

We were lost for generations,
But through prophecies left untold,
Our elders passed down a message,
For our children of today,
They will heal our nation,
and our people will be free,
The settlers will make reparations,
and pay for what they’ve done,
Our children will keep on fighting,
and reconnect to our land,
They will sing the song of creation,
Giving thanks to all that be,
We await the return of our relatives,
and our nation will rise again.

-Gjiga’qaquj Algwimu, Raven of the Loon Clan
“In these experiments, control and treatment groups of mal-nourished children were denied adequate nutrition.

In one experiment, the treatment group received supplements of riboflavin, thiamine and/or ascorbic acid supplements to determine whether these mitigated the problems – they did not.

In another, children were given a flour mix containing added thiamine, riboflavin, niacin and bone meal.

Rather than improving nutrition, the children became more anemic, likely contributing to more deaths and certainly impacting development.

In these experiments, efforts were made to control as many factors as possible, even when they harmed the research subjects.

For example, previously available dental care was denied in some settings because the researchers wanted to observe the state of dental caries and gingivitis with malnutrition.”
How is it that after hundreds of years of colonial terrorism, western medicine doesn't consider residential schools, experimentation, kidnapping, forced assimilation, and genocide to be the determinants of our present day health? How can a legacy of violence and trauma be erased from the context of our healing? It will be our work to reclaim and reinvest our time and energy into traditional medicines and healing that account for the extent of harm done to our communities.
The electric chair at St. Anne’s residential school.

#CdnHist #twitterstorians & public historians: What is an artifact that defines, or that is quintessentially, “Canadian” - either the nation or the land which many call Canada?
This effort was directed by Pratt as he saw assimilation of Native children to be the only way to truly make them equal to European-Americans. The images you see are mere facades taken by John N. Choate - increased exposure to make their skin appear lighter, and photos taken hours apart to appease wealthy funders showcasing Pratt “civilizing” Native children. Carlisle shut down in 1918 - but the damage was irreparable. Still, more than 180 children remain there, buried, along with the secrets of abuse and assimilation.

Carlisle was the first off reservation, federally funded Indian boarding school in The United States. With the guidance of Captain Richard Henry Pratt Carlisle was established in 1879. More than 10,500 children were subjected to torture, humiliation and abuse - all under the intention to “kill the indian, save the child”.
"There's many reasons why the lettering is backwards:

1. That type of thinking is backwards.
2. They are words that shouldn't ever be easy to be spoken.
3. They are also words we should never forget."
"She was taken away during the 60's scoop era in so-called Canada, and her adoption was expedited by the director of the agency - the man who "adopted" her.

Cora Mae displayed 'behavioural issues', which just wouldn't do for an affluent white family. Her adoptive mother didn’t have the patience to 'deal' with a Native child, burdened with the stigma of a unappealing medical title, so Cora Mae was placed in a foster home - she saw her 'mother & father' on weekends.

I met Cora Mae for the first time when I was 17. Cora Mae is my sister. And she was stolen."

Cora Mae, George, & Sarah Amalia's, First Meeting, Summer 2001
"Definition of Impostor Syndrome:

A psychological condition that is characterized by persistent doubt concerning one's abilities or accomplishments accompanied by the fear of being exposed as a fraud despite evidence of one's ongoing success."

In Native communities, imposter syndrome is deeply saturated with colonial-esc red tape forcing us to exclude the people affected by assimilation, torn from their communities, culture & languages with little to no knowledge or guidance of how to get back.

The work must be continued, to build confidence and reclaim what was stolen. We must be kind to those coming home. When we feel comfortable enough to announce our identity in a colonial system, it's incredibly scary.

We do not always feel valid or validated in what we say or do. It's time to shift that pattern of thinking.

Colonial language is weaponized to continue the legacy of genocide in Indigenous communities:

What are you mixed with?
You're not Native enough
You're only a quarter
You're only half
Blood Quantum
Half-Breed
Full Blood
Apple
The Goal of Residential School

“We instil in them a pronounced distaste for the native life so that they will be humiliated when reminded of their origin. When they graduate from our institutions, the children have lost everything Native except their blood.”

Bishop Vital Grandin, 1875
“If I die, try to understand, I did not do this because of you. I love you very much, even though we do not know each other very well. I hope that you can do better in life than I, and keep trying—things are bound to get better, and you know me I quit everything. Love Richard Stanley Cardinal.”

Removed by the RCMP along with his siblings because of alleged alcoholism in the family, Richard and his older brother Charlie were kept together—while the other children were housed separately. Cardinal recollections of abuse at his first foster home placement at age six, when he and his older brother were whipped with their pants down in front of the three daughters of his foster family. It quotes Cardinal’s brother as stating, “What Richard needed most was to go home. His funeral was the best social service that was provided for Richard, because it finally brought his family together.”

*RCMP - The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are the federal and national police service of Canada.*
THE COMPLEXITIES OF GROWING A WILD ROSE AWAY FROM ITS NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

This seed has a very hard outer layer, so it needs to be nipped and scraped by a sharp knife, coarse sandpaper, or SOS like scrubbing pad from your kitchen, with no added soap or chemicals.

Place back in the packaging and store in your fridge for one week.

Then store in your freezer for one week.

Then return back to your fridge for another week. The variations in the cold causes the stratification process to take place. Stratification takes place in the regions where this plant thrives naturally, so you are going to mimic that with your cold storage.

These extreme temperature changes cause the outer layer of the seed to constrict and expand, cracking it so the seedling can escape. You need to keep it in mind how this plant self sows in nature. Which brings you to your next step. Animals that eat the rose hips that contain the seed actually help germinate this seed.

When animals consume the seeds, they rest in their digestive system for a day or two. So you increase your germination chances by mimicking that. Stomachs contain digestive acids that ate in processing. So you were going to soak your seeds in a mixture of 1 cup room temp water and 1 teaspoon hydrogen peroxide. Placing in the sun in a warm window will also help, during this step.

Animals eat and excrete the seeds outdoors. So you will either plant in a container or directly to the area you want them to grow at least a 1/4 - 1/2 inches depth of soil coverage. If planted in a container, regardless of how cold it is outside, said your containers outdoors. Place in direct sunlight, we're rain, snow, do can continue to affect the seeds. Water if there has been no precipitation one so it becomes dry to the touch on the surface. Do not over water, seed will rot.
This is the last step and by far the most difficult.

Patiently wait for what could be anywhere from 70 to 120 days for the ceilings to emerge don't give up it will happen and it'll be worth the wait. Once established, these will thrive spread and grow taller every year.

The enjoyment of these beautiful and fragrant blooms, or sure to be your favourite of all your plants. The delicious tea and things you can make from the nutritious hops are endless.

Plus you’ll get thousands of seeds to replant or share, or both.

Let's grow children in the places that they will thrive by healing our communities and raising them in their culture and language.
Displaced Indigenous

By Zooey Hatjes

I do not know my language. I do not know my people’s stories or traditions. My feet have never touched the lands of my ancestors, but I have been a guest on many. As a child the Awaswas, Ohlone, Muwekma and Tamyen lands listened to me cry and watched me as I navigated through trauma after trauma. The land held my stories as I pushed them into the dark corners of my mind. When I was 13 they felt my bare feet push off of them as I ran through the sand, away from the news of my father’s death, away from the memories of my Father’s abuse. The ocean was always there to catch my tears. The sky was always there to catch my sorrows.

Both sets of my Great Grandparents on my Mother’s side came “illegally” to the “US” from Mexico. I know very little of their journey. Out of survival of future generations, they wanted their children’s children to be fully assimilated. This wish created a knowledge gap between generations. My Mother did her best to pick up what she could. I remember going to Powwows with her. I remember Mexican flags scattered around the grounds.

Later in my childhood I found that I was more aware of the rhetoric used when discussing people from Mexico. I was surrounded by this idea that my people were all dirty and dangerous. With this I started to become increasingly more aware that I was not white. Stereotypes and racial slurs were tossed so violently around me. When I would call attention to the racism that saturated my friends, they would look at me and say, “You don’t count.” How did these white people feel as if they had the authority to tell me who I am and what I count as?

I am 27 now and this hasn’t stopped.

The more I heard these statements thrown at me, the more I began to question who I was. Even now, in the midst of talking to white people about race, the genocide of indigenous people and the children and families in cages at our “borders”, I get told, “...but you look white. I never would’ve guessed you were indigenous.” I tend to wish I looked different, that I was darker. It’s tiring living in a world filled with white people that so quickly dismiss your right to indigeneity. They are so quick to erase who I am. It is exhausting living in a society where the only way you look indigenous is if you meet the standards of a white person.

I have learned that this idea is a tool to erase us. I am slowly learning that I do not have to give them that power. I have learned from my beautiful indigenous friends, teachers and authors that we know who we are. I know who I am. I may not know my songs or traditions but I know who we are. I am 27 now and this hasn’t stopped. I will never stop holding space for my community, I will never be silent. I have lots of days where I feel as though I don’t have a right to take up the space that I do. That I am not indigenous enough. Then I go to the water, I visit the river on Chinook, Kalapya and Clackamas lands. The land knows who I am. I can feel my ancestors smiling at me.

They tell me to talk to the water and listen to the land.
Native youth are up to five times more likely to die before adulthood than young white people, according to the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Overall life expectancy for Native Americans is nearly five years less than the general population.

Suicide is the leading cause of death for our future ancestors.
When autonomy is stolen. When Identity is stolen. When family is stolen. When culture is stolen. When language is stolen.

Addiction to pain.
Addiction to painkillers.

When all you know is trauma, you seek it out.

Trauma including dependency on the very substances that numb the pain, actually inflict more trauma to the body & community.

When you feel absolutely out of control, you take control of the only thing you can: Yourself.
The Path:

Lean to your nations traditions and protocols to heal.

Find strength in your ancestors and if possible - community.

You are not expected to have all the answers on how to heal yourself and your community.

But simple gestures and tools can make an incredible difference for an individual.

Try these things:

Listen - by being present, and using body language to signal your attentiveness.

Ask - the greatest thing we can give someone is the autonomy and authority to say what they want and need. “What can I do to help you?” or even, “Can I help you?” goes a long way.

Don’t Try To Fix Everything - Sitting with someone in their discomfort and grief can be an incredibly healing measure.

Hold Their Hand - Some folks that have experienced abuse will not be amicable to touch, but some will. Learning there can be good, comforting touch without conditions will help folks learn the difference between the two.
We cannot undo history or fully take away the pain of present day traumatic experiences but we can build new pathways to ensure the thrival of Indigenous people.

These efforts include never forgetting the past, but truly honouring those who come after us by doing our part to stop the cycle.

**Resources:**

Hope For Wellness
hopeforwellness.ca
1-855-242-3310

StrongHearts Native Helpline
strongheartshelpline.org
1-844-762-8483
Dedicated to George & Emily (Cora Mae)
To Angelita, Ron, and Audrey