

1. Enhancing Indigenous Careers and Services (January 16, 2020)



Calls to Action #3, #5, #92	Article 21
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There were a total of eight people present for this session focusing on ways to improve participation of Indigenous peoples in the workforce. The pre-session questions for this session were focused on the same two questions as the first, with the inclusion of two new questions noted below:

1. Write down in 2 to 3 sentences your understanding of how racism impacted Indigenous people of Canada

- I am First Nations. It creates barriers, makes us feel less than.
- Marginalizes and impacts many things from work and lifestyle to living situations.
- Held back from job opportunities.
- Lack of healthcare in hospitals.
- Lack of housing – cannot get rentals.

2. Using 2-3 sentences write down your understanding of how discrimination has affected Indigenous people in Canada.

- Racism is the foundation for reserves, residential schools, etc.
- Discrimination affects everything.
- Jobs/placement.
- Jailed – incarceration.
- Not respected.

3. In 1-2 sentences please describe the purpose of Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommended Calls to Action.

- To be a platform for Indigenous people to begin the process of educating and healing.
- To guide every Canadian on reconciliation and improving relationships.
- To help Canadians (all) understand the Indigenous background (and why) to create compassion.

4. Please describe in one or two sentences the intent behind the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

- To have Canada address the inequality of Indigenous people.
- I am not sure.
- To bring awareness.
- To oversee.
- Act as a third party.

For those present in the session, the focus was understanding the barriers that may be in place within their workplaces and organizations that prevent the work of Truth and Reconciliation from moving forward.

In terms of practices, there is a lack of understanding regarding the necessary tools that frontline staff may need, along with general information or lack of guidance from Elders. Many felt that their organizations do not have adequate resources to support more Indigenous people and processes in their programs, nor do they feel like they can adequately address the needs themselves.

While some felt that there has been some effort in ensuring policies and procedures have been identified, such as the creation of Indigenous strategy and plans or having Indigenous representation on their boards, there is still a huge gap in many procedures, and often there can still be blatant biases and prejudices.

One area of concern was the colonial impacts of western policies that have a negative impact on Indigenous staff and people, including policies against certain cultural practices such as smudging, clean criminal records, lack of access to ceremony, job requirements such as driver's licence, and access to a vehicle, to name a few.

They had planned to continue the dialogue to include steps to eliminate barriers and actions to support further strategies, but did not have the time to complete those portions of the session.