

Cultural Humility and Standards of Practice for Social Work



SASKATCHEWAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Adopted by the Standards of Practice Committee March 4, 2022

The SASW head office is located on Treaty 4 territory, homeland of the Métis.
The gathering and ceremony were conducted on Treaty 6 territory, homeland of the Métis.

2110 Lorne Street, Regina, SK S4P 2M5

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge we are on Treaty Two, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight, and Ten territories and the traditional homeland of the Métis.

We acknowledge the Ancestors, our non-human kinfolk and helpers in all forms.

All Our Relations.



Standards of Practice Committee

The Standards of Practice Committee gathered in the late summer on September 17th, 2021 at Wanuskewin Heritage Park to begin the journey of developing the *Cultural Humility and Standards of Practice for Social Work*. We were joined by Elder André Letendre and Knowledge Keeper Audrey Armstrong. Cultural Humility was the focus which is the act of looking inwards to assess one's own self to establish supportive, respectful connections.

The day involved a morning of ceremony and teachings on First Nations and Métis history with a focus on ethics and protocols. In an approach of cultural humility and seated in a circle we gave our own personal reflections. The purpose of this gathering was to mark the beginning of a long journey of decolonization and reconciliation towards an inclusive future for the next seven generations.

Standards of Practice Committee members attending the gathering included: Kathy Bovair, Emily Coates, Seapieces Marsland, Sandra Dobra, Karen Wasylenka, and Desi Terry (guest). Committee members who were unable to attend were: Keelan Comelson, Lorry Reed, Marcie Nugent, Raena Peasley and Patti Petrucka.



Elder **André Letendre**

André Letendre is a Métis knowledge and ceremonial keeper from Batoche, SK. He is a dedicated father and grandfather. In his present employment as Cultural System Advisor, André is committed to system advancement, relationship building and sharing his cultural knowledge within Saskatchewan Health Authority and its partners.



Graphic Artist **Betty Pewapsconias**

Betty Pewapsconias (She/They) is a Nehiyaw Iskweh from Minihikosis First Nation, in Treaty Six Territory. She was raised in her reserve on her family's ranch and is the youngest of four siblings. During her upbringing, Betty had found her passion for Art at the age of 5, and throughout the years had developed her skills by learning to design posters, participating in high school performances, and graduating as an Honour Roll Art Student in 2015.

She then attended post-secondary at the University of Saskatchewan for three years before taking an academic break to take up Artistic opportunities that came her way. Since 2017, Betty has co-founded and became the Artist/Designer for Indigenous Novelty Company, Neechimoose Novelties, and proudly shares her passion for Community Action and Art as Program Coordinator at Chokecherry Studios. Betty draws inspiration from the Resiliency she feels within the Indigenous Community. Her artwork intends to remind her Indigenous Kin that Resiliency is rooted in their Identity, and hopes to inspire Radical Self Love through Art.



First Nations and Métis Peoples in Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan is home to many different distinct nations of First Nations Peoples, including **Nêhiyawak** (Plains Cree), **Nahkawiniwak** (Saulteaux), **Nakota** (Assiniboine), **Dakota** and **Lakota** (Sioux), and **Denesuline** (Dene)^[1]. Saskatchewan is also home to **Lii Michif** peoples (Métis). It is important to note; provincial boundaries are a non-Indigenous concept while kinship ties are not. Many families are artificially separated and the need for Métis collectives to negotiate with provincial governments that separated families in this way. Recently, this is changing from Nation to Nation agreements between Métis Nations and the federal government.

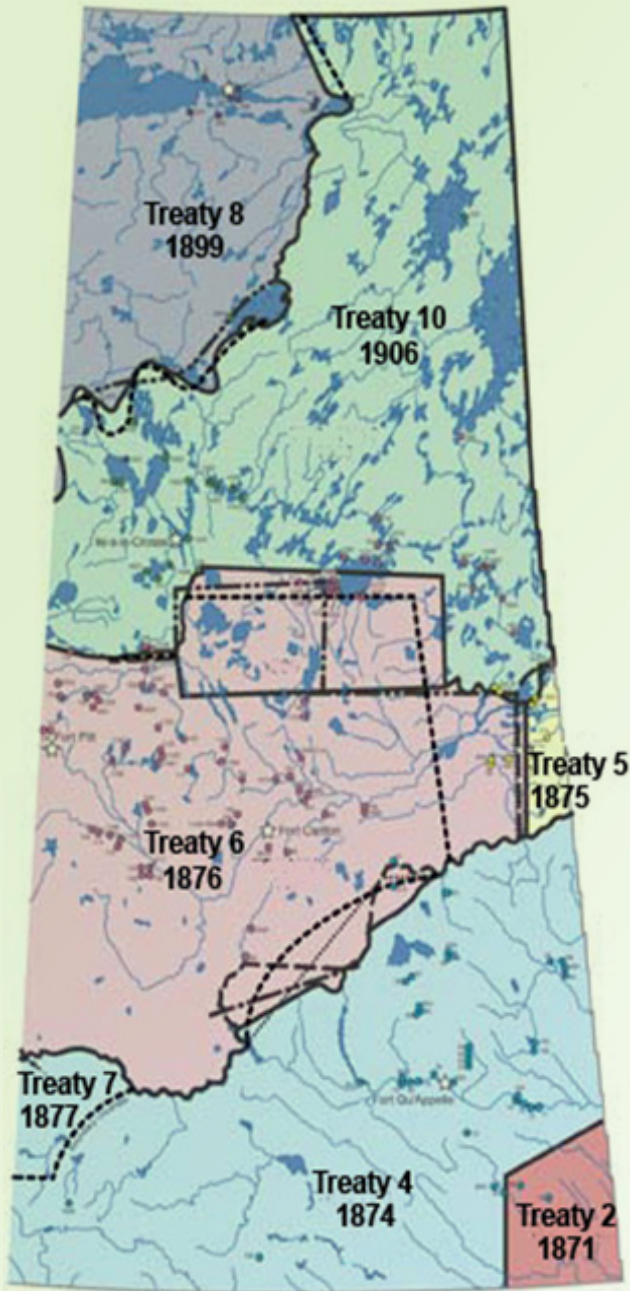
Stonechild^[2] reports that “Of the [First Nations and Métis] Languages, Nêhiyawêwin (Cree language), part of the Algonquian language group, is the most spoken in Saskatchewan, with about 20,000 speakers. Nahkawêwin (Saulteaux language), primarily spoken on eleven First Nations mainly in southeastern Saskatchewan, is the westernmost dialect of the Ojibway language. Nakota, Dakota and Lakota are dialects of the Siouan language found mainly in the United States, but only a few fluent speakers of the latter two languages remain in Saskatchewan. There are approximately 5,100 speakers of Dene, most of whom are found in northern Saskatchewan.”

Michif is the unique language of the Red River Métis and one of many Indigenous languages traditionally spoken by this multilingual people. It is a systematic synthesis of mostly French and Cree with some Ojibwe and, lately English admixtures. There are words and grammatical patterns that are unique to Michif and not found in its “parent languages”. Three different speech forms called Michif are spoken by Métis people, but they are not dialects of each other and therefore, not completely intelligible. All varieties of Michif can be considered “critically endangered” but are being actively revitalized by first language speakers and learners^[3] (Heather Souter, Indigenous Language Revitalizationist, 2022).

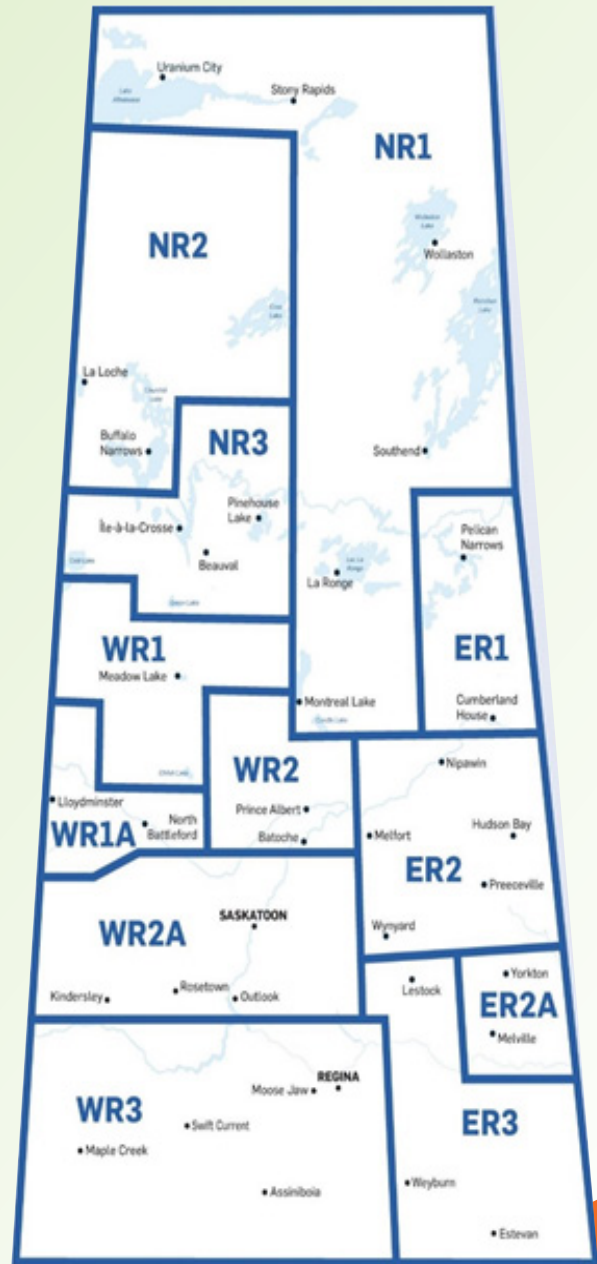
Saskatchewan contains 74 First Nations as well as several Métis communities. There are 782 reserves, settlements, and villages. Reserves in Saskatchewan were created between 1874 and 1906 by Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10^[4]. According to Statistics Canada, “in 2016, there were 175,015 [First Nations] people in Saskatchewan, making up 16.3% of the population”^[5]. The total number of Registered Indians on the lists of the 74 Saskatchewan First Nations in 2003 was 114,248.48. As for the Métis Nation, it is believed to comprise close to 80,000 individuals^[6].

1. Stonechild, Blair. 2011. “Indigenous Peoples of Saskatchewan – Indigenous Saskatchewan Encyclopedia – University of Saskatchewan.” Usask.ca. 2011. https://teaching.usask.ca/indigenoussk/import/indigenous_peoplesof_saskatchewan.php.
2. Stonechild, Blair. 2011. “Indigenous Peoples of Saskatchewan – Indigenous Saskatchewan Encyclopedia – University of Saskatchewan.” Usask.ca. 2011. https://teaching.usask.ca/indigenoussk/import/indigenous_peoplesof_saskatchewan.php.
3. Heather Souter, Interview by SASW Committee Member, Saskatoon, February 26, 2022.
4. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. 2017. “Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census – Province of Saskatchewan.” Www12.Statcan.gc.ca. February 8, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-PR-Eng.cfm?TOPIC=9&LANG=Eng&GK=PR&GC=47>.
5. Wallace, Sarah Isabel. 2019. “Reserves in Saskatchewan | the Canadian Encyclopedia.” Www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca. January 21, 2019. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/reserves-in-saskatchewan>.
6. Stonechild, Blair. 2011. “Indigenous Peoples of Saskatchewan – Indigenous Saskatchewan Encyclopedia – University of Saskatchewan.” Usask.ca. 2011. https://teaching.usask.ca/indigenoussk/import/indigenous_peoplesof_saskatchewan.php.

Map of the Treaties



Métis Nation Regions



1. Office of the Treaty Commissioner - Treaty Boundaries Map for Saskatchewan - http://www.otc.ca/resource/purchase/treaty_boundaries_map_for_saskatchewan.html?page=2

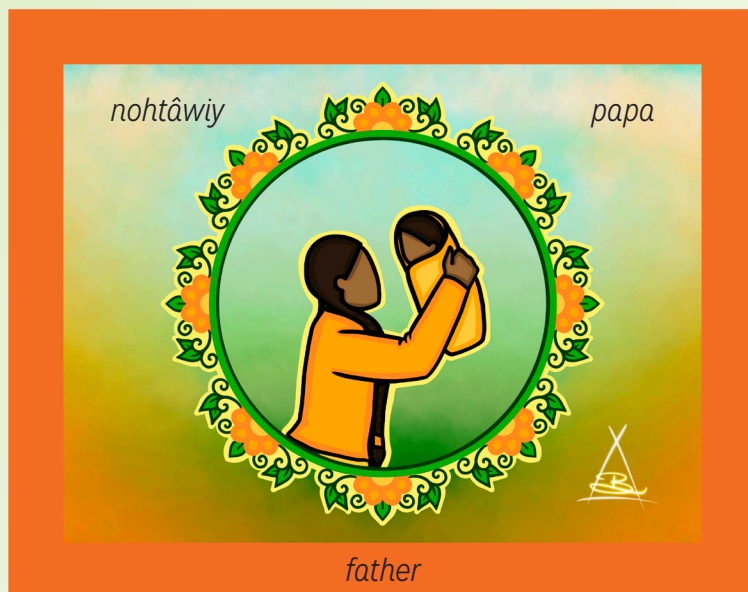
2. Metis Nation Saskatchewan - <https://metisnationks.com/governance/>

The Treaties

We are all treaty people. The treaties impact everyone. These treaties are known as the numbered treaties which are an agreement made between First Nations people and the Crown. In Saskatchewan there is treaty 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10. First Nations peoples entered into an agreement with the Crown to establish Nation to Nation relationships. With the signing of the treaties ceremony was conducted. There was commitment made by First Nations people to honor the Spirit of this living document for "As long as the sun shines, grass grows, and the rivers flow"^[1].

Many promises made by the Crown were not honored and altered. Following the signing of the treaties, the government enacted policies such as the Residential School, and "Sixties Scoop" to assimilate and take over the administration of the First Nations population. The residential school system forced First Nations families to send their children to residential schools run by churches to be "Civilized and Christianized" and "kill the Indian in the child"^[2,3].

Métis people were also directly impacted by colonial policies and the residential school system. Many Métis children were in day schools, residential schools and sanatoria which often get left out of the discussion^[4]. In the 1800's the Canadian government created a script system where Métis people were provided a certificate for land entitlement. The government colluded with their cronies and allowed them to set up tents beside the script tents in order to buy the script from the Métis thus dispossessing the Métis who could not live with their relatives on the reserve.



The disruption of First Nations and Métis culture by colonization, colonial policies and ongoing neo-colonialism is a contributing factor to the ongoing plight for fairness and equitable services for First Nations and Métis people. The high mortality rate, chronic diseases, and mental health and addiction among First Nations and Métis people and communities can be attributed to the historic legacy of these policies. The history and legacy of residential schools in Canada combined with the current findings of thousands of First Nations and Métis children in unmarked and undocumented graves. First Nations and Métis peoples today are still advocating for the Crown to uphold its side of the agreements.

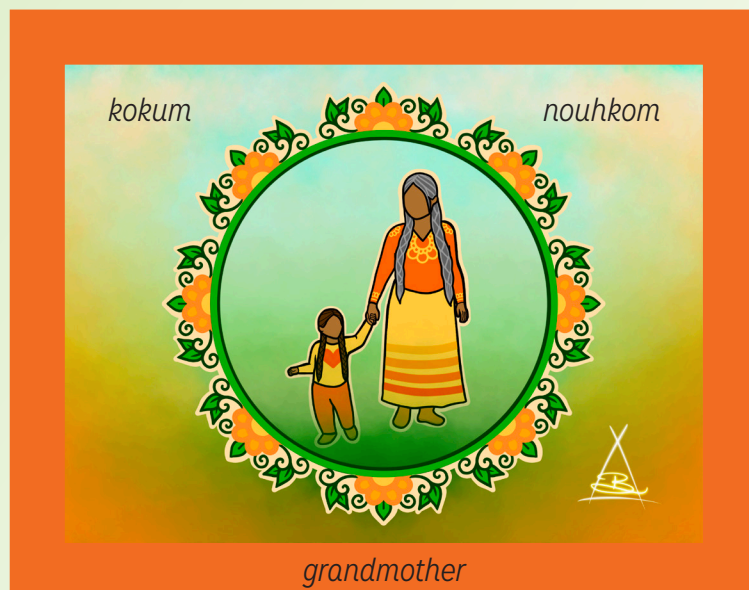
1. Indigenous Treaty Right", University of Saskatchewan, accessed September 13, 2021, https://teaching.usask.ca/indigenoussk/import/indigenous_treaty_rights.php
2. Oliver V, Flicker S, Danforth J, Konsmo E, Wilson C, Jackson R, et al. 'Women are supposed to be the leaders': intersections of gender, race and colonisation in HIV prevention with Indigenous young people. *Cult Heal Sex* [Internet]. 2015;17(7):906-19.
3. Archibald L. Decolonization and healing: Indigenous experiences in the United States, New Zealand, Australia and Greenland [Internet]. 2006. 73 p. Available from: www.ahf.ca
4. Heather Souter, Interview by SASW Committee Member, Saskatoon, February 26, 2022.

Cultural Humility

The attempt to “Christianize and Civilize” First Nations and Métis children by the government and churches had left most survivors with no identity, language, and culture and was labeled as “cultural genocide” by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). TRC defines cultural genocide as “the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group... families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next”^[1]. The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) was the catalyst for the TRC. In the nine years, from 2007 to 2015, the TRC interviewed 6,500 witnesses across Canada. Those who were interviewed shared their stories and experiences in residential schools. When the final report was released in 2015 it had six volumes and 94 calls to action.

The intention of the TRC is to “facilitate reconciliation among former students, their families, their communities and all Canadians.” SASW’s response to the “Calls to Action” by the drafting of this document was done in the Cultural Humility Approach to engage in meaningful reconciliation practices for social work leadership. We make a distinction between supporting First Nations and Métis culture and what constitutes the “wise practice” for providing culturally safe social services to First Nations and Métis people. Culturally safe service provision can be promoted through “cultural humility”.

Cultural Humility helps build a trustworthy and honest relationship between the caregiver and the client, as the caregiver humbly acknowledges, understands and, is ready to learn the beliefs and experiences of the client. To provide culturally safe and appropriate social services to First Nations and Métis people, social workers and decision-makers must understand and recognize the history, worldviews, and cultural values of the First Nations and Métis people.



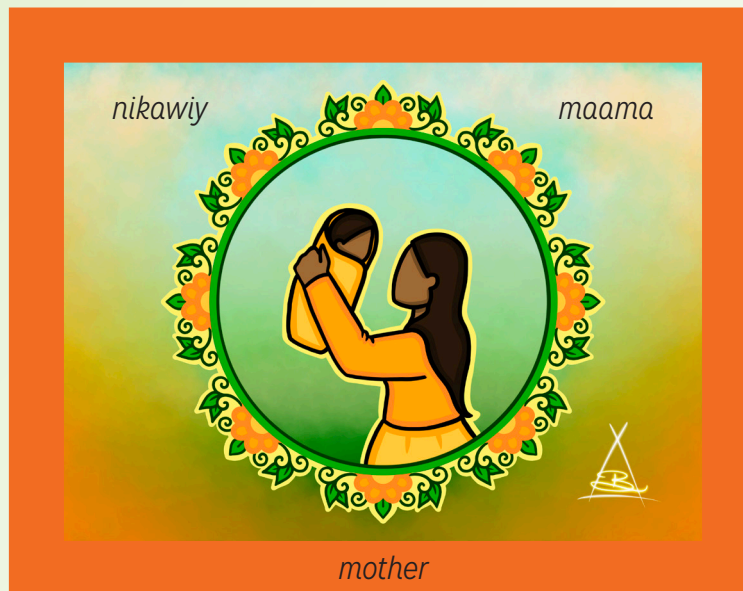
Cultural Humility in social work is a lifelong commitment of self reflecting and critiquing self to address power imbalances to help build, develop, and maintain respectful, meaningful, and ethical relationships. Wholistic Cultural Humility is based on the fundamental values of truth-telling, relationship building and respect for all life (everything and everyone).

1. Honoring the truth, reconciling for the future: summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Honouring_the_Truth_Reconciling_for_the_Future_July_23_2015.pdf
2. Indigenous Treaty Right”, University of Saskatchewan, accessed September 13, 2021, https://teaching.usask.ca/indigenoussk/import/indigenous_treaty_rights.php

Lost by *David Junior Delorme*

I was a child when they took me away,
I was scared and sad, nearly every single day,
I missed my family, my mom, and my dad,
I wanted to leave because I was so sad,
They cut my hair short and changed all my clothes,
I was punished for speaking my language and missing my home,
Many of us ran but could not escape,
We prayed for our existence to take new shape,
Some of us died at the school,

We were often beaten and punished when breaking their rules,
It is a struggle every single day,
My hope is for strength and for this I pray,
Sometimes I feel lost and sometimes I feel sad,
Sometimes I feel happy and sometimes I feel mad,
I am trying hard to heal,
So, my family will feel,
All the love that I have to share,
And for them to know I will always be there!



Standards for Cultural Humility in Social Work Practice

The SASW has developed 10 standards in cultural humility for standards of practice in social work. These standards were developed for social workers to reflect on and use in their daily practice.

These Cultural Humility Standards of Practice for Social Workers have been developed on the cultural foundational inspiration of Wholistic sacred teachings of LOVE, RESPECT, WISDOM, HUMILITY, COURAGE, TRUTH, and HONESTY.

A social worker will support, treat fairly, and engage in respectful dialogue and behavior with First Nations and Métis peoples whereby developing and maintaining respectful relationships.

A social worker will engage in life long learning and self reflexivity practices to begin to understand First Nations and Métis paradigms.

When possible, a social worker will provide or secure social work services in the language chosen by the First Nations and Métis people. If using an interpreter, the social worker will, when possible, engage an independent and qualified professional interpreter.

A social worker will provide or secure social work services with respect to First Nations and Métis Knowledge Keepers and Elders to provide appropriate and ethical support in relation to the protocols, customs, and cultural practices of First Nations and Métis people.

A social worker will seek to attain knowledge and explore their relationship to First Nations and Métis communities within their geographical area including cultural, spiritual, and land connections from a shared First Nations and Métis perspective.

A social worker will advocate for First Nations and Métis peoples in the event of witnessing unfair treatment, racism, and discrimination.

A social worker will gather knowledge about First Nations and Métis history, cultures, and experiences in Saskatchewan and advocate for cultural humility training in social work education and practise.

A social worker will advocate for cultural humility, education in First Nations and Métis history, cultures, and experiential learning and training in the workplace.

A social worker will acknowledge First Nations and Métis children; and, their families and communities which are impacted by the large number of children in care in the child welfare system. A social worker will advance towards a First Nations and Métis lead community-centred-approach within the child welfare system.

A social worker will engage in reflective practise to advocate for the enhancement of First Nations and Métis focused services in social work, justice, education, employment, and health.

Developing Cultural Humility

"When first meeting with Elder André Letendre, he emphasized the importance of focusing on the idea of cultural humility, rather than cultural competence. When I reflected on his words, I was left with the impression that as a social worker, I need to fully acknowledge that developing ethical relationships is a lifelong process where I need to come from a place of humility to leave my heart open to continue to listen and learn and grow. I cannot write a section of this document on how to grow in regard to cultural humility without acknowledging that I am still engaging in the process of learning how to develop and maintain ethical relationships within the context of my own work. Within this document there are some excellent resources I would encourage you to check out as part of your lifelong journey to cultural humility."

- Written by a SASW Standards of Practice Committee Member

Sakamoto emphasizes the importance of developing ethical relationships by, "stepping aside... to make space for different ways of knowledge."^[1] You might be asking yourself what the next steps from here might be in both your individual practice as well as what your agency can do. I highly encourage you to read this resource prepared by the Indigenous Working Group of the British Columbia Association of Social Workers. It is a well laid out "Toolkit for Reconciliation/Decolonization of Social Work Practice at the Individual, Workplace, and Community Level"^[2]

The New Brunswick Association of Social Workers states in their cultural competence standards regarding work with Indigenous Peoples that:

"It is important for social workers to demonstrate to clients that they are inclusive. One way to do this with Indigenous clients is by decolonizing our workplace. Decolonizing our workplace means going beyond tokenism or the mantra of "treating everyone the same," to one where we actively acknowledge and support the self-determination of Indigenous peoples, including cultural, spiritual, and land connections."^[3]

Following the release of the TRC final report, the Canadian Association of Social Workers pledged to move Canada forward from recognition of truth, to reconciliation, acknowledging this with the statement: "the profession of social work recognizes the very specific role and responsibility it has in supporting the implementation of the TRC recommendations with emphasis on those specific to Child Welfare." Words need to be followed by concrete actions to hold tangible meaning. As the SASW, we need to take ongoing steps to honour the TRC action commitments. We hope that this document is one step in the right direction.

1. Sakamoto, I. (2007). An anti-oppressive approach to cultural competence. *Canadian Social Work Review*, 24(1). 111
2. BCASW. (2016, April). *Towards a New Relationship: Toolkit for Reconciliation/ Decolonization of Social Work Practice at the Individual, Workplace, and Community Level*. Retrieved from <http://www.bcasw.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/BCASW-Reconciliation-Toolkit.pdf>.
3. NBASW. (2021, May). *Cultural Competence Standards Regarding Social Work with Indigenous Peoples*. Retrieved from <https://www.nbasw-atsnb.ca/assets/Uploads/Cultural-Competence-Standards-EN2.pdf>.