

- targeted
- adaptable
- Primary
- Intermediate
- Middle
- Senior

Selecting actions to strengthen relationships

identifying and developing actions that will strengthen relationships and contribute to reconciliation among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada

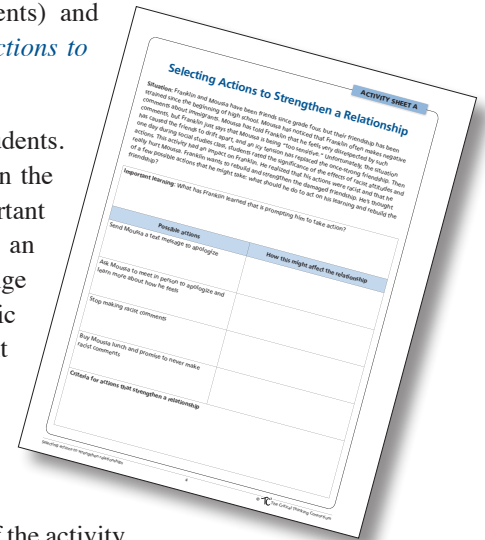
- Objectives:**
- understand how historical events in communities and other locations have affected relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada
 - understand how learning and new understanding can be used to build stronger relationships
 - use criteria to select actions that could enhance relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada

How can we use our learning to strengthen relationships?

Use the following activities to develop the strategy

Introduce the strategy

- Organize students into small groups (2-3 students) and provide each student with a copy of *Selecting Actions to Strengthen a Relationship* (Activity sheet A).
- Review the situation from the activity sheet with students. Draw students' attention to the top of the table on the activity sheet and ask them to suggest any important learnings Franklin may have had. Suggest that an important learning or lesson may lead to a change in how someone sees, feels, or thinks about a topic or situation. An important learning or lesson might also influence a person's intentions or behaviours.
- Invite students to note their ideas on the activity sheet, and then share with the class.
- Draw students' attention to the left-hand column of the activity sheet. Ask groups to determine which of the possible actions would build upon Franklin's learning and strengthen the relationship. As students consider the options, guide them to describe how each might affect the relationship.
- Invite students to share their decision and thinking with the class. As students share, co-develop the criteria for an action that strengthens a relationship. Alternatively, present or refine the following criteria:
 - *Builds trust:* Are all the individuals involved truthful and honest about the causes and effects of the situation? Do all individuals involved feel that their voice is heard and genuinely considered?
 - *Demonstrates empathy and kindness:* Do the actions reflect a respectful understanding of how the wrongs affected other people?

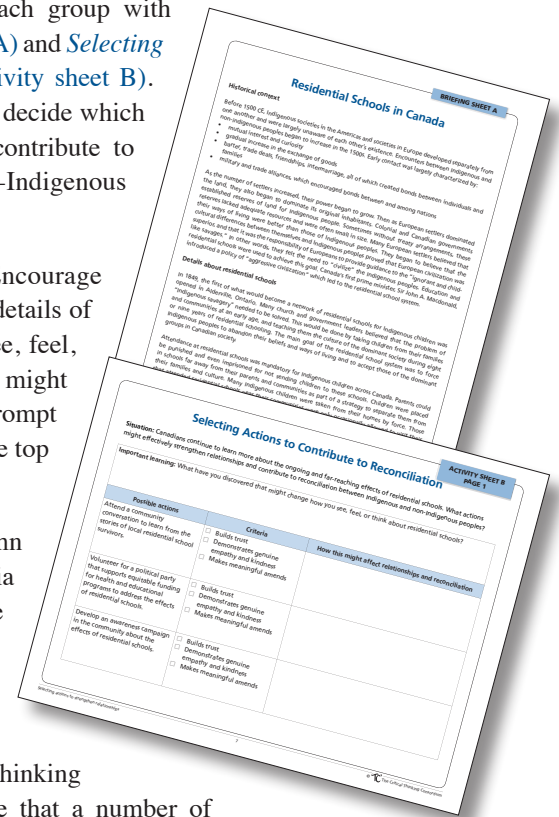


- *Makes meaningful amends:* Are the actions developed by all individuals and groups involved in the situation? Are the actions feasible? Do the actions address the conditions that damaged the relationship?

- Encourage students to note the criteria at the bottom of their activity sheet. Consider displaying the criteria on chart paper or on a whiteboard for use later in this lesson.
- Explain that the criteria can help determine which actions might build upon important learning to reconcile and strengthen relationships.
- Demonstrate how the criteria can be used to rate the possible actions. Prompt students to use the criteria to reconsider their decision. Ask students to share their decisions and thinking with the class.
- Encourage students to use the criteria to help them think of another action that might strengthen the relationship between the two friends.
- Invite students to suggest other situations where this strategy might be useful. Explain that inquiring into local histories may lead to important learning about events that negatively affected relationships. For example, Canadians are learning more about the truth of residential schools and other actions and policies that continue to impact Indigenous peoples. What actions could build upon this learning and strengthen the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples? This lesson will explore how this strategy can be used to help identify such actions.

Practise the strategy

- Organize students into pairs and provide each group with *Residential Schools in Canada (Briefing sheet A)* and *Selecting Actions to Contribute to Reconciliation (Activity sheet B)*. Explain that their task is to use the strategy to decide which actions might strengthen relationships and contribute to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.
- Ask students to read the briefing sheet. Encourage students to reflect on how learning about the details of residential schools might change how they see, feel, or think. These important learnings or lessons might also influence their intentions or behaviours. Prompt students to note their important learnings at the top of the activity sheet.
- Draw students' attention to the left-hand column of the activity sheet. Ask them to use the criteria to assess each of the possible actions. Encourage students to note how each action might affect relationships and reconciliation in the right-hand column.
- Invite students to share their decisions and thinking with the class. As students share, emphasize that a number of thoughtfully-considered actions will strengthen relationships and contribute to reconciliation.
- Conclude the activity by inviting groups to use the criteria to help them think of another action that might strengthen relationships and contribute to reconciliation. Invite students to share their ideas with the class.



Apply the strategy to learn more about a local history

- Provide students with a blank copy of *Selecting Actions to Strengthen a Relationship* (Activity sheet C) and encourage them to use the strategy in a variety of situations:
 - Assessing actions proposed to address the present-day impacts of a historical event in the community.
 - Developing an action plan to rebuild and strengthen a relationship between individuals or groups in the community.

Assess the use of the strategy

- Encourage students to use *Assessing My Understanding: Selecting Actions to Strengthen Relationships*.
 - Allow students opportunities to apply the strategy two or three times without assessment.
 - Guide students in interpreting and using the rubric to assess their own responses.
 - Encourage students to use the rubric whenever they use this strategy.
 - To use the rubric for teacher assessment of student work, remove the first person (student) reference from each descriptor.

Selecting Actions to Strengthen a Relationship

Situation: Franklin and Moussa have been friends since grade four, but their friendship has been strained since the beginning of high school. Moussa has noticed that Franklin often makes negative comments about immigrants. Moussa has told Franklin that he feels very disrespected by such comments, but Franklin just says that Moussa is being “too sensitive.” Unfortunately, the situation has caused the friends to drift apart, and an icy tension has replaced the once-strong friendship. Then one day during social studies class, students rated the significance of the effects of racist attitudes and actions. This activity had an impact on Franklin. He realized that his actions were racist and that he really hurt Moussa. Franklin wants to rebuild and strengthen the damaged friendship. He’s thought of a few possible actions that he might take: what should he do to act on his learning and rebuild the friendship?

Important learning: What has Franklin learned that is prompting him to take action?

Possible actions	How this might affect the relationship
Send Moussa a text message to apologize	
Ask Moussa to meet in person to apologize and learn more about how he feels	
Stop making racist comments	
Buy Moussa lunch and promise to never make racist comments	
Criteria for actions that strengthen a relationship	

Residential Schools in Canada

Historical context

Before 1500 CE, Indigenous societies in the Americas and societies in Europe developed separately from one another and were largely unaware of each other's existence. Encounters between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples began to increase in the 1500s. Early contact was largely characterized by:

- mutual interest and curiosity
- gradual increase in the exchange of goods
- barter, trade deals, friendships, intermarriage, all of which created bonds between individuals and families
- military and trade alliances, which encouraged bonds between and among nations

As the number of settlers increased, their power began to grow. Then as European settlers dominated the land, they also began to dominate its original inhabitants. Colonial and Canadian governments established reserves of land for Indigenous people. Sometimes without treaty arrangements, these reserves lacked adequate resources and were often small in size. Many European settlers believed that their ways of living were better than those of Indigenous peoples. They began to believe that the cultural differences between themselves and Indigenous peoples proved that European civilization was superior, and that it was the responsibility of Europeans to provide guidance to the "ignorant and child-like savages." In other words, they felt the need to "civilize" the Indigenous peoples. Education and residential schools were used to achieve this goal. Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, introduced a policy of "aggressive civilization" which led to the residential school system.

Details about residential schools

In 1849, the first of what would become a network of residential schools for Indigenous children was opened in Alderville, Ontario. Many church and government leaders believed that the problem of "Indigenous savagery" needed to be solved. This would be done by taking children from their families and communities at an early age, and teaching them the culture of the dominant society during eight or nine years of residential schooling. The main goal of the residential school system was to force Indigenous peoples to abandon their beliefs and ways of living and to accept those of the dominant groups in Canadian society.

Attendance at residential schools was mandatory for Indigenous children across Canada. Parents could be punished and even imprisoned for not sending children to these schools. Children were placed in schools far away from their parents and communities as part of a strategy to separate them from their families and culture. Many Indigenous children were taken from their homes by force. Those that attended residential schools near their communities were only occasionally allowed to visit their families, if at all. Students were not permitted to speak their language or practise their culture. If they did, they were often severely punished. There was a lack of nutritious food and many students were forced to do manual labour. Overcrowded living conditions were common and children were forced to sleep outside in winter. Some reported cruel and inhumane punishments such as forcing children to wear soiled underwear on their head. Students suffered diseases and, in some cases, died while in residential schools. Survivors of residential schools have reported that they experienced sexual and mental abuse, beatings and severe punishments.

Residential Schools in Canada

Significance of residential schools

There were 132 federally-supported residential schools across Canada, and the last residential school run by the Government of Canada was closed in 1996. This number does not include residential schools that were run by provincial and territorial governments and churches.

Approximately 80,000 survivors of these schools are alive today. Many survivors have struggled to engage in family, social, and work activities. Being away from their parents for long periods of time, survivors were not able to learn valuable parenting skills. Removing children from their homes prevented parents from teaching their children languages and other valuable aspects of culture. As a result, many Indigenous peoples no longer speak their languages or follow traditional cultural practices. Abusive behaviours learned from residential school have contributed to cycles of abuse and trauma passed from one generation to the next. In many cases, the abuses and hardships associated with attending residential school have caused post-traumatic stress disorder. As a result, Indigenous communities continue to experience some of the highest rates of substance abuse, violence, crime, and disease in Canada.

Selecting Actions to Contribute to Reconciliation

Situation: Canadians continue to learn more about the ongoing and far-reaching effects of residential schools. What actions might effectively strengthen relationships and contribute to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples?

Important learning: What have you discovered that might change how you see, feel, or think about residential schools?

Possible actions	Criteria	How this might affect relationships and reconciliation
Attend a community conversation to learn from the stories of local residential school survivors.	<input type="checkbox"/> Builds trust <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates genuine empathy and kindness <input type="checkbox"/> Makes meaningful amends	
Volunteer for a political party that supports equitable funding for health and educational programs to address the effects of residential schools.	<input type="checkbox"/> Builds trust <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates genuine empathy and kindness <input type="checkbox"/> Makes meaningful amends	
Develop an awareness campaign in the community about the effects of residential schools.	<input type="checkbox"/> Builds trust <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates genuine empathy and kindness <input type="checkbox"/> Makes meaningful amends	

Selecting Actions to Contribute to Reconciliation

<p>Respectfully challenge uninformed and inaccurate comments about residential schools and their effects.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Builds trust <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates genuine empathy and kindness <input type="checkbox"/> Makes meaningful amends</p>	
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Builds trust <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates genuine empathy and kindness <input type="checkbox"/> Makes meaningful amends</p>	
<p>Criteria for an action that strengthens a relationship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Builds trust</i>: Are all the individuals involved truthful and honest about the causes and effects of the situation? Do all individuals involved feel that their voice is heard and genuinely considered? • <i>Demonstrates empathy and kindness</i>: Do the actions reflect a respectful understanding of how the wrongs affected other people? • <i>Makes meaningful amends</i>: Are the actions developed by all individuals and groups involved in the situation? Are the actions feasible? Do the actions address the conditions that damaged the relationship? 		

Selecting Actions to Strengthen a Relationship

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Assessing My understanding: Selecting Actions to Strengthen Relationships

Name: _____

Use the scales below to assess your understanding of the strategy for selecting actions to strengthen relationships. Include examples to show how you have met the success criteria. Remember to describe the next steps in your learning.

Success criteria	How am I doing?
<p>I am able to use criteria to identify and assess actions that will strengthen relationships.</p> <p>Examples:</p>	<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> </div> <p>Next steps (e.g., add more evidence, use criteria, ask for help):</p>
<p>I am able to think of actions that would strengthen relationships and contribute to reconciliation.</p> <p>Examples:</p>	<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> </div> <p>Next steps (e.g., add more evidence, use criteria, ask for help):</p>