

Government of
Northwest Territories

MY PATH

LEARNER'S GUIDE



Living Well Together



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Tessa Macintosh.



Introduction

Welcome to your *My Path Learner's Guide*. This learner's guide is the print companion to your *Living Well Together* online learning modules.

The *My Path Learner's Guide* is intended to help promote deeper learning through self-reflection and personal action-planning.

As a learner, you will take your own lessons away from your *Living Well Together* learning experience, just as you will develop a unique vision and personal plan for putting reconciliation into practice.

As GNWT employees and as Northerners, we are all on this journey together, even though the paths we take may be different.

How is this guide used?

You will use your *My Path Learner's Guide* to respond to the *My Path* reflection questions you encounter in each of the modules. These reflections will help you understand how to think and work in a more culturally sensitive way. Both the reflection questions and space for responding to them are provided in this guide.

You'll also refer to this guide when creating your reconciliation action plan at the end of this training. An action plan template as been provided for you.

You can also use this learner's guide to:

- ▶ Record your thoughts, feelings and ideas as you progress through the training.
- ▶ Review the respectful practices covered online in module eight.
- ▶ Stimulate discussions with a learning partner or work group.

Self Care & Support Quick Reference

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Introduction

Living Well Together is a comprehensive self-directed learning program. You will get the most out of your learning experience if you have a plan and are aware of the resources and supports available to you in advance.

Self Care & Support in the top toolbar of each of the online modules provides a variety of resources to assist you as a self-directed learner. You can access these resources at any time from any module. However, critical information from *Self Care & Support* has been included here for quick reference. You're strongly encouraged though to review the full information in the online modules.

Emotionally Challenging Content

Some of the content in this training may be emotionally challenging for you to review. Certain content may even trigger past trauma or vicarious trauma in some learners.

Be sure to follow the self care and vicarious trauma prevention strategies provided in *Self Care & Support* in the online modules.

Take a moment now to review the following signs of trauma activation and vicarious trauma. These will help you recognize if you or a fellow learner maybe experiencing emotional difficulty during the training.

Signs of Trauma Activation & Vicarious Trauma

- ▶ Difficulty managing your/their emotions
- ▶ Difficulty accepting or feeling okay about yourself/themselves
- ▶ Difficulty making good decisions
- ▶ Problems managing boundaries (e.g., taking on too much responsibility, having difficulty leaving work at the end of the day, trying to control other people's lives, etc.)
- ▶ Problems in relationships
- ▶ Physical problems such as aches, pains, illness or accidents
- ▶ Difficulty feeling connected to what's going on around and within you/them
- ▶ Loss of meaning and hope
- ▶ Trouble sleeping and having nightmares

Crisis Support & Counselling Information

If you are feeling distressed or in crisis at any time, the NWT Help Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for any resident of the NWT at: **1-800-661-0844**.

If you are a former student or Survivor of residential schools, or are a relative of a residential school student, and are feeling distressed at any point, contact one of these crisis support resources:

- ▶ The 24 hour National Indian Residential School Crisis Line for former students: **1-866-925-4419**
- ▶ First Nations & Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line at: **1-855-242-3310**
- ▶ First Nations & Inuit Hope for Wellness Online Chat at: hopeforwellness.ca

Counselling is available across the NWT for eligible former students, Survivors and their relatives through the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program. Learn more by going to *Counselling Information* in the online *Self Care & Support* material or by calling **1-800-464-8106**.

Employee & Family Assistance Program

All GNWT employees can access mental health supports through the GNWT Employee and Family Assistance Program.

The Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) can help you and your family find solutions for a wide range of life's challenges, including mental health concerns.

You and your eligible family members can receive confidential support over the telephone, in person, online and through a variety of health and wellness resources.

Counselling is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by phone, web or mobile app.

For immediate assistance, contact EFAP at **1-844-880-9142** or visit workhealthlife.com

For more information, visit the GNWT HR website: <https://my.hr.gov.nt.ca/employee-services/efap>

Suggestions for Online Learning

If you are new to online learning, try these suggestions for getting the most out of your learning experience.

1. Set realistic and specific goals.

For example,

- I'll spend one hour a week reviewing material and doing *My Path* reflections.
- I'll review my progress at a monthly meeting with my supervisor/learning partner.

Tip: *A Learning Plan template is provided at the end of this section.*

2. Create an effective schedule.

- ▶ Limit your learning sessions to one hour segments. This will help you maintain your focus.
- ▶ Do the training at work. This helps you symbolically “leave” behind difficult material when you go home.
- ▶ Avoid scheduling your sessions late in the day when your energy may be low.
- ▶ Build time into your learning sessions to finish with a wellness activity such as listening to one of the songs featured in the module or doing a *Wellness Break* from the module.

3. Prepare your work area.

- ▶ Use headphones to listen to the audio. It'll improve your listening experience without disturbing your work neighbours.
- ▶ Get a glass of water to sip during your session.
- ▶ Have your *My Path Learner's Guide* or a personal journal handy.

4. Enlist support.

- ▶ Find a learning partner or organize a learning group. Consider setting group goals and a shared training schedule, or do group learning sessions. This is a great way to enhance your learning and to stay on track.
- ▶ Before you begin the modules on colonization and residential schools, identify someone you can contact to debrief your sessions with. Tell them when you're starting these modules so they can check in with you.
 - If you need extra support, consider asking this person to review the material with you.
- ▶ Do not hesitate to get help if you're feeling distressed at any point during this training. See the contact information for the crisis support and counselling resources.

5. Monitor your progress.

- ▶ Review your learning plan and goals regularly. Is the plan still working for you? Are you making progress on your goals? Adjust the plan if necessary.
- ▶ Track and acknowledge your successes (e.g., when you complete goals you have set in your learning plan and schedule).
- ▶ Meet with your supervisor or with your learning partner(s) to discuss your progress. Discussing what you're learning, your successes and challenges, etc. is a great way to stay engaged and to deepen your learning.

Learning Plan Template

Goals for Training	Status

Special Topics of Interest	Support People

Modules	Training Dates	Training Times
1. Getting Oriented		
2. Exploring the Truth		
3. The History of Colonization – Acknowledging the Past & Its Legacy		
4. The Residential School System – Acknowledging, Understanding & Healing		
5. Negotiation and Renewal – Exploring the Contemporary Relationship between Indigenous Peoples, the Crown & the GNWT		
6. Toward Reconciliation – Exploring Perspectives		
7. Exploring Cultures & Contemporary Issues		
8. Stronger Together – Reconciliation in Practice		

Reflection Questions

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Module 1: Getting Oriented

Module one introduces *Living Well Together*. In module one, you consider the significance of Indigenous cultural awareness and sensitivity training to the GNWT as a public government and to you as a member of the public service. You also review essential information about the training such as its structure, learning outcomes and main features.

What’s your perspective?

To this point in module one, you’ve heard why this training is a critical initiative for the GNWT, but what’s your perspective on the training?

- 1. Is this Indigenous cultural awareness and sensitivity training important to you? Why or why not?

- 2. How might you as a GNWT employee and as a Northerner benefit from this training?

- 3. How might the Indigenous peoples and communities you provide programs and services to benefit from GNWT employees taking this training?

As you move through the training, think back to your responses here and consider the ways in which your perspective has been changing.

Module 2: Exploring the Truth

Module two starts *Truth*, the first series of modules in *Living Well Together*. In this module, you explore the truth process in Canada – what it is and why it is necessary. You’re also introduced to some of the common themes you’ll encounter in the upcoming modules.

Your Starting Point

Much of the content in modules two through five focuses on historical events. Understanding the forces that have shaped these events is as important as knowing what these events were and the impact they have had.

Online this *Starting Point* presented the following four thought-provoking statements to help you reflect on your understanding of some of these forces.

1. The version of Canadian history that most people in Canada have learned is incomplete.
2. All peoples in Canada are equally privileged.
3. White people have been historically privileged in Canada. This privilege extends to present-day Canada.
4. The history of Canada has an impact on all Canadians; Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike. Our shared history affects us all.

To what extent did you agree or disagree with the perspectives presented in this *Starting Point* activity?

Your Final Reflection: Reference Points

Review the following list of the contemporary references and issues introduced in this module. Select at least two topics that you would like to understand in greater detail. As you progress through *Living Well Together*, watch for the factors that have influenced these topics.

You will be covering a lot of content and may find this process helpful for linking contemporary affairs with some of their historical influences.

Topics Related to Socio-economics, Culture and Language

- Implications of our demographics in the NWT
- Loss and revitalization of Indigenous languages
- Disparities in income and employment in the NWT
- Systemic barriers faced by Indigenous peoples in the GNWT
- Affirmative action in the GNWT
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships with the Land
- Recognition and the role of Traditional Knowledge
- Sustainability of Indigenous traditional economies

Topics Related to Government Relations

- Indigenous self-government in the NWT
- The distribution of powers between Indigenous governments, the federal government and the GNWT
- The implications of tri-lateral negotiation of self-government and comprehensive land claim agreements
- The nation-to-nation relationship in theory and in practice
- The honouring of the terms of historic and modern treaties
- Indigenous peoples' relationship with public servants

Module 3: The History of Colonization

Module three begins with an overview of the origins of the Dene, Inuvialuit, Cree and Métis, then delves into the history of colonization in Canada. In this module, you examine colonial policies and programs and their impacts on Indigenous peoples.

What is colonization?

- 1. What new information did you learn about colonization from watching the video, *The History of Colonization* by Stephen Kakfwi?

- 2. Was there anything you learned in the video that surprised you? If so, what was it?

- 3. Did you notice any themes or recurring ideas in what Stephen Kakfwi was explaining?

Times of Darkness

- 1. What individual government policy or program do you think has had the greatest impact on Indigenous peoples in the NWT?

Suggestions for Taking Action on Decolonization

1. Think critically about the assumptions or attitudes you have that may be rooted in colonization.
2. Think critically about the privilege or lack of privileges that you may have as a result of colonization.
3. Have a discussion with colleagues about how colonization has affected the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in your community and/or workplace. Consider who does and does not have power and privilege.
4. Learn more about the history of the Indigenous communities you work in and how they have been affected by the colonial policies and programs you have been learning about.
5. Ask the Indigenous clients and communities you work with what their needs and goals are and how you, as a GNWT employee can best support them in getting their needs met and goals accomplished.
6. Address stereotypes and assumptions about Indigenous peoples and/or racism when you encounter them in yourself or by others.
7. Look for systemic barriers in programs, services or employment in your area of work and ways to eliminate them.
8. Pair up with a colleague to check in regularly with for support.

Your Final Reflection

1. Does knowing the history of colonization change your view of your role as a GNWT employee? In what ways?

2. What systemic barriers, including systemic discrimination and racism, do you see in the policies, programs and/or services within your department or the wider GNWT? What might you do to help eliminate them? (Remember, speaking up is an action too.)

3. What examples of decolonization are you seeing in the GNWT today?

Module 4: The Residential School System

Module four explores the history of the residential school system and its impacts in the North and across Canada. In this module, you hear from former students, Survivors and intergenerational Survivors of residential schools.

What happened?

- 1. What has surprised you most about what you learned?

- 2. What is something you heard that was challenging?

Former Students Share Their Stories

- 1. Which story or stories affected you the most? Why was this?

- 2. What thoughts (or feelings) will you carry with you from the stories you've heard?

3. In what ways will these stories affect the way you think about or approach your work with Indigenous community members and communities?

The Northern Context

1. Do you work in any of the communities where there was a residential school or day school residences? If not, are you aware of how many children in the communities you do work with were sent away to school?

2. How might this affect the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in these communities?

3. How might this affect the community members' view of and approach to you as a GNWT employee?

Intergenerational Impacts

- 1. What examples of intergenerational impacts have you observed in your work with Indigenous communities?

- 2. How might you use what you have learned about intergenerational impacts to inform your work as a GNWT employee?

Your Final Reflection

- 1. How are you feeling right now? If you need support, consult the *Self Care and Support* resources.

- 2. Of the things that you learned in this module, what has had the biggest impact on you? How so?

- 3. What is one thing from this module that you plan to learn more about?

4. In what ways will your new knowledge affect how you do your job as a GNWT employee?

5. How can you use your new knowledge to have more respectful and stronger relationships with the people and communities you work with?

Module 5: Negotiation & Renewal

Module five explores the negotiation and renewal of the nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous peoples, the federal government and the territorial government in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In particular, you consider treaty relations, Indigenous rights and social and political activism.

Your Starting Point

1. What events or actions do you see in the news or in your community that suggest negotiations are taking place and renewal is happening? Consider events you see occurring not only between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples but also between Indigenous peoples, the GNWT and the Crown.

2. What activities do you see occurring in the GNWT that reflect negotiation and renewal? Consider agreements you see being negotiated, and policy and program changes you may have noticed.

Your Final Reflection

1. What surprised you the most about what you learned in this module? What did you find surprising about it?

2. In this module, you learned about several areas of Indigenous rights. Which area(s) of these rights relate to your work with the GNWT?

3. What initiatives are underway or have been put in place in your work with the GNWT to recognize and affirm those rights?

4. How might these rights shape the programs and services that your department offers?

Module 6: Toward Reconciliation

Module six starts *Reconciliation*, the second series of modules in *Living Well Together*. In this module, you explore the meaning of reconciliation and its importance to Indigenous – non-Indigenous relations at all levels. You’re also introduced to the cultural safety model as an integral component in strong and respectful relationships.

Questions currently under review.

Your Starting Point

1. What does reconciliation mean to you?

2. How important is it that you as a Northerner and as a GNWT employee take specific and tangible actions to support reconciliation?

3. In what ways have you already directly or indirectly experienced reconciliation?

4. What are some examples of things you may already be doing to support reconciliation?

Perspectives on Reconciliation

1. Identify contemporary issues in Indigenous – non-Indigenous relations and in Indigenous communities that relate to your area of work.

2. Add one or more activities toward reconciliation that could involve you in your work with the GNWT.

Your Final Reflection – Revisiting Your Starting Point

1. What does reconciliation mean to you?

2. How important is it that you as a Northerner and as a GNWT employee take specific and tangible actions to support reconciliation?

3. What are some examples of things you may already be doing to support reconciliation?

Module 7: Exploring Cultures & Contemporary Issues

Module 7 explores, at a high level, the worldviews, cultures and communities of Dene, Inuvialuit, Métis and Cree in the NWT. In this module, you consider special topics such as culture and language revitalization and Traditional Knowledge.

Questions currently under review.

Module 8: Stronger Together

Module 8 is the final module in *Living Well Together*. In this module, you explore reconciliation within the GNWT. You consider reconciliation initiatives in the GNWT and how similar initiatives might be developed in your department. You also review respectful practices and approaches for strengthening relationships with the Indigenous peoples, communities and stakeholders you work with as a GNWT employee. Your final training activity is to develop a personal reconciliation action plan.

Your Starting Point

Your *Starting Point* activity for this module is to review the *Personal Reconciliation Action Plan* template in this guide and to revisit what reconciliation means to and for you personally. (Check back to your responses in the *Starting Point* and *Final Reflection* questions in module 6.)

Reconciliation Initiatives in Your Department

1. Do you recognize any similar practices or initiatives happening in your department?

2. What new ideas could be applied to further support reconciliation in your department’s programs or services?

3. What current initiatives in your department might you now be thinking of as reconciliation initiatives?

Reconciliation through Culturally Sensitive Communication

- 1. In the spirit of reconciliation - what changes might you consider to improve your communication with Indigenous peoples?

- 2. What, if any, unique communication needs have you observed in the communities and clients you work with?

Reconciliation through Cultural Protocols

Review the respectful practices covered in module 8 and answer the following questions. See the *Summary of Respectful Practices* section at the end of this guide.

- 1. Which of these practices do you already use?

- 2. Which of these practices do you feel you need to start using?

3. What is at least one upcoming situation in which you will be able to put these practices to work?

4. Who can you consult to gather any additional information you need?

Your Final Reflection: Personal Reconciliation Action Plan

Your final task in *Living Well Together* is to complete your reconciliation action plan - a list of the things you plan to do in your daily life to contribute to reconciliation in the spirit of working and living well together.

This action plan asks you to consider:

- ▶ The meaning of reconciliation in your daily work and personal life
- ▶ The opportunities you see for reconciliation and effective relationship-building
- ▶ The unique strengths, abilities and/or resources you have to offer
- ▶ The actions you will take to contribute to reconciliation and effective relationship-building
- ▶ The conditions and resources that need to be in place for you to carry out these actions

Although this plan focuses on your work life, we strongly encourage you to consider what you can do as a community member too.

Tips for a Use-able Action Plan

1. Your plan will be most useful if the actions on it are actually action-able by you. Make sure you have the authority, ability and resources to carry out these actions.
2. Phrase your actions as SMART goals: specific actions that are measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based. Here are a few examples.
 - I will learn how to say and practice saying “hello” and “thank you” in one of the 11 official languages each month.
 - I will research and attend one Indigenous community event per month.
 - I will identify 1 way per month I or my department can improve programs or services to Indigenous peoples.

Tips for Keeping Your Action Plan Alive

Consider your action plan a living document. Here are a few tips to keep your plan alive.

- ▶ Share your plan with a colleague or your supervisor who has also completed the action plan. Set a schedule to discuss each other’s progress, successes and challenges.
- ▶ Put deadlines to your actions. Set a schedule to review and update your plan and deadlines.
- ▶ Ask for feedback. Are you applying the respectful practices you learned in this training appropriately? What can you be doing better?
- ▶ Track your successes and the outcomes of your actions. If you do something or have a success that isn’t on your plan – add it! Turn your plan into a success tracker.

Reconciliation Action Plan

Vision: What does reconciliation mean to me?

Opportunities for Action	My Unique Strengths & Abilities	Ways I Can Contribute

My Goals & Actions	Support Needed	Timeframe	Successes

Summary of Respectful Practices

Content currently under review.

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Speaking Up Against Racism

Being culturally competent and contributing to culturally safe spaces for Indigenous peoples includes speaking up against racist, discriminatory or stereotyping behaviour when you encounter it. Speaking up sends the message that the behaviour is unacceptable, while giving individuals an opportunity to change their behaviour for the better. Speaking up can be hard to do, so here are some steps and strategies you can use.

Five-Steps for Speaking up Against Racist Comments & Bias

Step 1: Avoid assuming the person was intentionally trying to offend or hurt.

Step 2: Avoid accusing the person of being racist or biased directly.

Step 3: Describe the impact the offensive behaviour is having on you.

Step 4: Ask a question to prompt them to think about what they actually meant and its impact.

Step 5: Offer information to increase awareness.

Additional Strategies for Addressing Racism & Bias

The five-step strategy may not work in every situation where you encounter racist or biased behaviour, but you can still take action. Here are three additional strategies you can also try.

Strategy 1: Use the subtle approach to send the signal you disapprove.

Strategy 2: Escalate the issue to your supervisor or manager and let them address it.

Strategy 3: Call the behaviour or comment out as being unacceptable, racist or untrue, etc.

Tips for Moving Beyond Angry Responses

1. Calmly acknowledge the person's feelings.
 - "I hear you and can see that you're angry."
2. Ask a question that invites the person to reflect on their reaction.
 - "What is it about this discussion that is making you so upset?"
3. Respectfully and calmly provide information to correct the bias or assumption.
 - "I would like to point out that fewer than 30% of GNWT employees are Indigenous, even though Indigenous peoples make up more than 50% of our population."
4. Invite the person to reconsider their view.
 - "How does this information affect your view?"

Remember to try to keep the lines of communication open and to give people the chance to change their view.

