
Reconciling Relations: Shifting Counselling Psychology to Address Truth and Reconciliation

Relations de réconciliation : remanier la psychologie du counseling en fonction de Vérité et réconciliation

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ABSTRACT

In 2018, the Canadian Counselling Psychology Conference (CCPC) convened a working group to address how the field of counselling psychology ought to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Attendees were asked to share their perspectives on reconciliation, current efforts toward reconciliation in counselling psychology, and recommendations for the future of counselling psychology in relation to reconciliation. The current paper documents the findings and implications of the working group, offering concrete suggestions for how researchers, educators, clinicians, and trainees in the field can support reconciliation in a good way, shifting counselling psychology to serve Indigenous people and communities better.

RÉSUMÉ

En 2018, le Congrès canadien de la psychologie du counseling (CCPC) a réuni un groupe de travail pour qu'il aborde la façon dont le secteur de la psychologie du counseling devrait réagir à la Commission Vérité et réconciliation du Canada. On demanda aux participants de partager leurs points de vue sur la réconciliation, sur les efforts actuellement déployés en faveur de la réconciliation au sein de la psychologie du counseling et de formuler des recommandations quant à l'avenir de la psychologie du counseling en lien avec la réconciliation. Le présent article expose les résultats et les implications issus du groupe de travail, tout en formulant des suggestions concrètes sur la façon dont les chercheurs, les formateurs, les cliniciens, et les stagiaires dans ce domaine peuvent appuyer convenablement la réconciliation et réaménager la psychologie du counseling pour qu'elle desserve mieux les populations et les collectivités autochtones.

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released its final report based on a seven-year process documenting the history and the continuing impacts of the Canadian Indian Residential School System (TRC, 2015a). The accompanying calls to action (TRC, 2015b) highlighted a number of necessary shifts in public, social, and clinical services that involve psychologists. These documents served as the impetus for a joint task force established by the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) and the Psychology Foundation of Canada (PFC) in 2017. The task force released a report in May 2018 specifically addressing “accountability and responsibility to Indigenous Peoples on behalf of the profession of psychology in Canada” (CPA & PFC, 2018, p. 6). This report contains a number of specific recommendations and guiding principles for the field of psychology as a whole in relation to practice with Indigenous people and communities. Alongside the TRC calls to action, the CPA and PFC report sparked the formation of the working group on which the current paper is based. The working group was undertaken as part of the 2018 Canadian Counselling Psychology Conference (CCPC) in Calgary, Alberta. Entitled “Responding to the TRC in Canadian Counselling Psychology,” the group brought together approximately 20 attendees in morning and afternoon sessions that aimed to address how counselling psychology can and should be responding to the TRC to serve Indigenous people and communities better.

While the working group and the current paper were positioned in relation to the TRC specifically, it is important to acknowledge that the issues inherent in research, training, and practice in counselling psychology with Indigenous people and communities transcend the history and ongoing legacy of residential schools. Psychology as a field has its own problematic history with Indigenous people and communities, which is acknowledged within the task force report (CPA & PFC, 2018, p. 6) and in apologies made to Indigenous Peoples on behalf of the field of psychology in other colonial nation-states (e.g., Australian Psychological Society, 2016; Section 9 Division 39 of the American Psychological Association, 2016). Further, previous works such as the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP; Library and Archives Canada, n.d.) brought to light many similar concerns and areas in need of attention prior to the TRC. Thus, readers are invited to consult these and other available resources for more detailed information on historical and current injustices relevant to counselling psychology and Indigenous peoples. Although it has been five years since the TRC’s publication of the final report (2015a), the implications of this report are only recently being considered within the field of counselling psychology, as reflected by the working group. This paper will provide context with a brief literature review, followed by a description of the themes that emerged from the working group and concluding with a discussion of implications and calls to action for the field of counselling psychology practice.

Literature Review

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued an apology to attendees of the Canadian Indian Residential Schools (IRS; Government of Canada, 2010). That same year, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was established. Its mandate was to enable reconciliation by honouring students of the IRS and their families as a result of them sharing their stories, revealing the truth about survivors' experiences with the IRS to the Canadian public, and creating a permanent record of the IRS legacy (TRC, 2015a). The TRC process involved community and national events across Canada that provided former students and their families the opportunity to give statements about their experiences. Following a seven-year process, the final report and the 94 accompanying calls to action call upon all Canadians to take concrete steps toward reconciliation (TRC, 2015a, 2015b). The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, as cited in the TRC (2015a), defines *reconciliation* as

an ongoing individual and collective process [that requires] commitment from all those affected including First Nations, Inuit and Métis former Indian Residential School (IRS) students, their families, communities, religious entities, former school employees, government and the people of Canada. Reconciliation may occur between any of the above groups. (p. 16)

In the wake of the TRC, many entities and organizations have committed to responding to the calls to action. For example, numerous funding bodies have dedicated monies to Indigenous priorities, several post-secondary institutions have enacted Indigenous strategies, and provinces across Canada have instituted educational requirements that address the IRS and Indigenous education (e.g., Government of Canada, 2020; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2020; University of Calgary, 2020). The TRC has raised significant awareness among Canadians and newcomers of the legacy of the IRS and their ongoing impacts on Indigenous peoples, including how the IRS were a method of cultural genocide in a long history of attempts to eliminate Indigenous people and ways of life (TRC, 2015a). Indigenous children were forced away from their parents and placed in government-funded facilities operated by the Roman Catholic, Anglican, United, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches. The objective was to cut cultural connections with families in order to prevent culture and language transmission through the generations (TRC, 2015a). From the late 1800s until the last school closed in 1996, over 150,000 Indigenous children attended 139 residential schools throughout Canada. The schools were often poorly built, heated, or ventilated. Many survivors of the IRS suffered grave physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual abuse, and some children never returned home (Baskin, 2016; TRC, 2015a).

The IRS consist of one of the many acts of assimilation and attempted genocide sanctioned by the Canadian government, alongside legislation such as the Indian Act, the Royal Proclamation, and the British North America Act, in addition to other formally instituted policies that have all given way to the social inequities and health disparities Indigenous people and communities continue to face (Gray, 2011; Library and Archives Canada, n.d.; TRC, 2015a). Despite the critical role that counselling psychology can and ought to play in addressing these disparities, the field to date has more often reinforced assimilation and oppression of Indigenous peoples through creating and sustaining systems orchestrated around dominating Euro Western¹ colonial ideals of normality and pathology (CPA & PFC, 2018; Duran, 2006; Fellner et al., 2016).

Psychology and the TRC

Sparked by both the TRC and increasing numbers of apologies made to Indigenous people on behalf of the field of psychology (e.g., Australian Psychological Society, 2016; Section 9 Division 39 of the American Psychological Association, 2016), a joint task force was established by the CPA and the PFC to address the roles and responsibilities of psychologists in relation to the TRC and the problematic legacy of psychology's treatment and oppression of Indigenous people (CPA & PFC, 2018). The task force brought together Indigenous and non-Indigenous service providers and granting agencies as well as Indigenous community leaders. The goal was to create a document that offered action-oriented and concrete ways that the field of psychology could support reconciliation.

Using the *Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists* (CPA, 2017) as a framework, the authors of the report concluded that the field of psychology has failed to meet ethical guidelines in all four areas for Indigenous people: respect for the rights of dignity of persons and people, responsible caring, integrity in relationships, and responsibility to society (CPA & PFC, 2018). The report goes on to acknowledge fully the historical and ongoing misconduct of the profession and offers recommendations for psychologists—including researchers, educators, and clinicians—in regard to working with Indigenous people and communities. As a starting point, the report asserts that all practising psychologists should make themselves familiar with this document (CPA & PFC, 2018). From there, it is each person's responsibility to take up a role in reconciliation in ways that are outlined in the report and that are relevant to their respective social and professional locations.

1 The terms *Eurocentric* and *Euro Western* are used interchangeably to refer to approaches to research, theory, or practice that are grounded in what were originally the colonial world views of Western Europe and that now serve as the foundations of ongoing dominating colonial systems and perspectives in colonized nation-states, including Canada and the United States.

Counselling Psychology and Indigenous People

As cited above, the social and health inequities Indigenous communities face today are related directly to both historical and ongoing acts of colonialism (Duran & Duran, 1995; Fellner, 2016, 2018a; Gone, 2008a). Counselling psychology originates from within the same dominating Euro Western colonial ways of knowing, being, and doing that have created these challenges. As such, psychotherapy affirms the very values that have colonized and oppressed Canada's Indigenous peoples since contact, as it involves "a therapeutic system that has its root metaphors deeply entrenched in the causes of the presenting problems themselves" (Duran & Duran, 1995, p. 18). Duran (2006) points out that as churches decreased in power and influence to control people, the field of psychology was increasing in such influence, taking a prominent position in social control. Fields of applied psychology such as counselling and clinical and school psychology determine what is considered psychological normality and reinforce these definitions of normality through techniques that diagnose pathology and aim toward assimilation to the current ethos (Duran, 2006; Duran & Duran, 1995; Fellner, 2016).

The tenets of counselling psychology are deeply grounded in colonial² epistemologies, with modalities built upon systems of superiority and power (Fellner, 2016, 2018a). These tenets and modalities are masked forms of neo-colonialism³ (Gone, 2004, 2008a), enforcing the assimilation of Indigenous people to dominating colonial perceptions of health and healing (CPA & PFC, 2018). This is particularly problematic given that the philosophical underpinnings of the profession are founded upon Euro Western paradigms of dualism and individualism (Gone, 2004), which run counter to the holism and collectivism inherent in Indigenous world views (McCormick, 2009). As pointed out by the task force, psychological approaches have been disruptive of Indigenous family and community structures, while the methods used have been discriminatory and pathologizing (CPA & PFC, 2018). These methods result in over-pathologizing Indigenous people with mental health issues, higher incarceration rates, and more child apprehension while simultaneously failing to address the colonial system and social determinants of health at the root of presenting concerns (Duran & Duran, 1995; Fellner et al., 2016; Gone, 2008a).

In recent years, Indigenous scholars and allies within psychology are increasingly pointing out how the individualistic nature of psychology serves to pathologize Indigeneity, while protecting the field by deflecting from holding socio-political

2 *Colonial* refers to ways of knowing, being, and doing that are rooted in the systems that intentionally exerted and continue to exert power, control, and domination over the Indigenous peoples of the lands now known as Canada, the United States, and other colonized nation-states. These ways of knowing, being, and doing maintain systems of power via their oppressive, assimilative, and discriminatory nature.

3 In the current paper, *neo-colonial(ism)* refers to the myriad ways that colonialism continues to manifest and take on new forms, ranging from very subtle to more explicit processes.

structures accountable (e.g., Fellner, 2019). Consequently, Indigenous peoples have been intentionally left out of determining their own definitions of health, wellness, and healing (CPA & PFC, 2018). With a critical discourse perspective, these Indigenous and allied scholars call for psychological researchers to be aware of trappings that perpetuate a colonial perspective and instead to “advance an anticolonialism of practicing survivance” (Hartmann et al., 2019, p. 12). Likewise, Fellner (2019) writes about the need to shift conventional psychological views from deficit and pathology-based approaches toward embracing and reinforcing traditional and contemporary Indigenous knowledge systems that address creating healthy communities and living well in the face of challenges.

While counselling psychology remains largely rooted within the aforementioned conventions, it is worth noting that, as a field, it is leading the advancement of both cultural and positive psychology. More so than other subfields of applied psychology, counselling psychology has critiqued conventions of homogenizing and pathologizing. Movements toward positive psychology (e.g., Magyar-Moe et al., 2015), relationship-centred practice (e.g., Rogers, 1957), and cultural humility (e.g., Hook et al., 2017) offer alternatives that are more appropriate with Indigenous people (Fellner, 2016). Many counselling psychology programs in Canada have also made efforts in recent years to hire Indigenous faculty, whereas this trend has not yet been observed across the majority of clinical and school psychology programs. While these movements represent an important step toward ethical scholarship and practice with Indigenous people, they remain limited. Education and professional development in the field overall continue to emphasize Eurocentric conventions such as evidence-based practice and mainstream systems of assessment and diagnosis. Further, counselling programs vary widely in how they engage and support Indigenous faculty, ranging from those that encourage more innovative program development and scholarly assessment to those that have Indigenous faculty teach existing curricula and adhere to conventional metrics of scholarship. Thus, while the field has made some important strides, changes are needed to take this work further.

A Call to the Field

In light of the historical and ongoing harms perpetuated in Indigenous communities on behalf of the field of psychology, in addition to the tremendous potential for the field to support Indigenous people in a good way,⁴ psychologists are called to support reconciliation through their work (CPA & PFC, 2018). The recommendations of the CPA and PFC task force report (2018) highlight culturally appropriate ways this may be done, spanning the topics of counselling, education, and research in addressing reconciliation in the field. It is natural

⁴ The phrase “in a good way” is commonly used in Indigenous scholarship to refer to approaches that are genuinely respectful of Indigenous people, protocols, and values. These approaches centre Indigenous voices and desires.

for psychologists to struggle with the truths addressed in this report given that culturally appropriate research, training, and practice with Indigenous people defies much of what we have come to know through our conventional training (Fellner, 2016). Therefore, it is important to engage in this unsettling process with self-compassion and humility (Fellner, 2018a). The report offers a number of concrete suggestions about how psychologists and psychologists-in-training can shift their work in relation to Indigenous peoples in a good way (CPA & PFC, 2018). While many of these recommendations apply to the field of counselling psychology, the report more broadly addresses psychology as a discipline. Engaging attendees of the 2018 CCPC, the current paper aims to highlight recommendations specific to the field of counselling psychology.

Working Group Process

The working group “Responding to the TRC in Canadian Counselling Psychology” convened during the 2018 CCPC in Calgary, Alberta, in both a morning and an afternoon session. The group was facilitated by Dr. Karlee Fellner and Dr. Jennifer Rowett. Student volunteers Melissa Glazer and Maryam Qureshi took detailed notes. The circle was opened in the morning with a smudge and a talking circle, inviting participants to introduce themselves to bring the group into good relation for the day’s work. Both sessions included approximately 20 participants, with the majority attending both the morning and afternoon sessions. The group consisted of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and scholars. While the precise composition of the group was not documented, the majority of the participants were non-Indigenous, yet Indigenous participants spoke the majority of the time. The morning session asked participants to share their perspectives on reconciliation and on current efforts toward reconciliation in counselling psychology. The afternoon session asked participants to share their suggestions and recommendations for the future of counselling psychology in relation to reconciliation with Indigenous people and communities.

Both sessions were facilitated in a traditional talking circle format in order to offer all participants the opportunity to share their perspectives. Talking circles originate in Indigenous lifeways and thus hold sacred meaning among many Indigenous groups. They also have the potential to contribute to the transformation and healing of those participating and of all their relations (Lavallée, 2009). Talking circles are also holistic, engaging spirit, heart, body, mind, and the presence of metaphysical helpers in the conversation (Nabigon et al., 1999). In opening the circle, Dr. Fellner shared her understanding of teachings and protocols of talking circles, asking participants to engage in respectful listening, non-interruption, and confidentiality. In accordance with Dr. Fellner’s teachings, the circles proceeded in a clockwise direction. Once each person in the circle had had a chance to share, the session was opened up for general discussion. Volunteer

note-takers recorded the main points that were raised in both sessions, and these points were synthesized into the following findings.

Working Group Findings

Working group findings comprised eight primary themes: (1) education, (2) relationships with community, (3) traditional and community knowledge, (4) colonial violence of institutions and professions, (5) anti-Indigenous racism and whiteness in counselling, (6) Indigenous approaches to counselling, (7) approaches to change in the field of counselling psychology, and (8) ethics. Each of the themes is described in detail below.

Theme One: Education

The working group discussions centred heavily on the issue of education, both in the broad social sense and in regard to the specific concerns of counsellor training. In general, there is recognition within the field that the Canadian public at large is ignorant regarding Indigenous histories and relations within Turtle Island. Within the applied fields of psychology and counselling, continuing impacts of colonialism and racism remain. The working group identified the critical need for education to support mental health professionals in gaining a better understanding of these issues and of historical and current legislation affecting Indigenous peoples. More broadly, there is an urgent need for individuals in the field to become literate in historical and contemporary Indigenous issues in Canada, especially those that intersect with the health, social, and education sectors. The working group also identified the critical importance of developing specialized counselling psychology training across two critical domains: (1) culturally and contextually relevant training for Indigenous students and practitioners and (2) training that would support non-Indigenous students and practitioners to work in contextually relevant and culturally sustaining ways with Indigenous people. The working group also identified the importance of integrating Indigenous curriculum and pedagogies into education and training. Centring Indigenous knowledges in this way supports increased representation and presence of Indigenous people within the university and within the profession at large.

Theme Two: Relationships with Community

Across the conversations throughout the working group, relationships and working relationally were identified as important in advancing Indigenous people's well-being. In particular, it is important to reflect on the various formal and informal protocols that ought to shape relational engagement with Indigenous communities. In the colonial context of relations between the field of counselling and Indigenous people, there needs to be active reflection and commitment to uphold good relationships with Indigenous Elders, leaders, and knowledge keepers

in a way that prioritizes the rights and self-determinism of Indigenous people. Embedded within these protocols is an understanding that exchanges of knowledge involve appropriate remuneration and non-appropriative use. This relational dynamic requires authentic efforts and accountability on behalf of professionals in the field. Further, the working group considered the importance of increasing the general accessibility of mental health–related training opportunities for communities. This challenges the institutional elitism and socio-economic isolation of post-secondary education and asks the field instead to re-envision itself in more radically accessible and approachable ways. The working group called for the field of counselling psychology to strategize how to abandon meritocracy-informed admissions, moving instead toward models that leverage institutional power to ensure free, public, and open-access pathways into counselling psychology education for Indigenous community members.

Theme Three: Traditional and Community Knowledge

Related to this last point, the working group emphasized that there is a wealth of Indigenous traditional, cultural, and community knowledge that is often excluded and/or underexamined within the field of psychology. When it is considered, it is often done in ways that are trivializing and/or fetishizing. In response, the working group called for a number of processes that would see traditional and community knowledge of Indigenous people advanced in the field of counselling psychology. Specifically, three primary recommendations are (1) to hire Indigenous Elders, community members, and knowledge keepers into university training contexts for the purposes of translating this knowledge in these spaces, (2) to support Indigenous scholars to develop specialized coursework and academic training that advances this knowledge within the university, and (3) to invest substantively in psychological research led by Indigenous people that examines traditional and community knowledges of healing and mental health.

Theme Four: Colonial Violence of Institutions and Professions

The working group discussed at great length the ongoing colonialism of current systems and structures that maintain and advance counselling psychology. Specifically, the working group emphasized the importance of contending with the history of universities, and of psychotherapy and counselling-based fields of research and practice within universities, which are implicated in the history of Canadian colonial policies. Canadian universities were complicit in Indigenous land theft, eugenics, forced sterilization, assimilationist education policies, abductive and abusive child welfare policies, and racist practices in assessment and research. The working group also discussed how the academic foundations of counselling psychology aided in rationales for colonial interference in Indigenous communities. The working group discussed how professional associations and regulatory bodies, which are catalysts for professional advancement, are often

extensions of colonial power, reinforcing colonial policies, gatekeeping Indigenous peoples, and regulating what is deemed valid knowledge. An example that was shared during the working group was a provincial association's inclusion of a keynote speaker regarding evidence-based practice in their 2018 professional development day. The speaker's presentation strongly encouraged all providers to base their practice on thorough literature reviews, matching their chosen treatment modalities to diagnosis based on the results of randomized control trials. In advising a homogeneous application of conventional colonial approaches from a Eurocentric paradigm of practice without acknowledging them as such, this presentation directly contradicted the calls made in the 2018 CPA and PFC task force report.

Theme Five: Anti-Indigenous Racism and White Privilege in Counselling

The working group discussed the ways in which power, privilege, and processes of marginalization and oppression against Indigenous people play out through the structure and the embodiment of whiteness. While the field of counselling psychology often creates space to persevere on the deficits generated by anti-Indigenous racism, the working group critiqued the lack of critical reflection on the social structures that enact this violence in the first place. That is to say, the field does not have a series of Indigenous problems to attend to, but rather it has a white problem. In order to address the pervasive presence of whiteness within the field and to reduce the harm wrought by white privilege, there needs first to be a more elaborate description of its function and process as well as methods of resistance to it. The working group identified that whiteness functionally oppresses Indigenous people in the field through various practices. These practices include (1) the silencing of Indigenous people's critiques, (2) a silence and lack of accountability in the profession on issues for which the field is complicit, (3) white fragility expressed in extremely debilitating guilt and consumption of space and resourcing, (4) covert and overt interpersonal hostility toward Indigenous peoples in the field, Indigenous issues, and Indigenous students, (5) gaslighting through recruitment and use of Indigenous people's labour to bring about change in professions only to have commitments to change reneged upon, and (6) the subversion and the collusion that play out when white supremacist practices purposefully undermine or align themselves with efforts that diminish the self-determinism of Indigenous people who work in the field. To address these issues, the working group called for more contemporary and critical interrogations of dominant racial power structures in the field of counselling psychology that include interventions on the ways that whiteness shapes power relations.

Theme Six: Indigenous Approaches to Counselling Psychology

The working group emphasized the importance of recognizing the long history and current existence of both traditional and contemporary Indigenous

approaches to health, well-being, and healing. Although frequently it is ignored by mainstream psychology, there is a robust knowledge base for these Indigenous approaches and various models for relating to these knowledge bases, including critical, complementary, dialectic, and integrative approaches. For example, the working group discussed both traditional and land-based practices that have thousands of years of community-based evidence for their efficacy in supporting health and wellness, as well as contemporary therapeutic approaches such as Indigenous Focusing-Oriented Therapy (formerly Aboriginal Focusing-Oriented Therapy) and the abbreviated Indigenous Tools for Living Training (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014) that have demonstrated efficacy through consistent community reports and exceptionally high demand and waiting lists for these programs. To date, such approaches often have remained marginalized outside of the field due to issues of institutional and professional racism and colonial violence as cited above. There was also discussion about the importance of holding up and robustly resourcing efforts by Indigenous mental health leaders and community members who have established, often without any institutional resourcing, specialized programs that centre Indigenous approaches to support mental health and well-being. The working group discussed the ongoing issue of culturally relevant and community-based programs in Indigenous approaches to counselling losing funding and/or support on behalf of institutions and organizations, leading to the cancellation of these critically important programs and opportunities.

Theme Seven: Approaches to Change in the Field of Counselling Psychology

The working group resisted the notion that there is a one-size-fits-all approach that would help address the challenges facing the field of counselling psychology in relation to Indigenous peoples. Despite the field's frequent desire to have a common language and a universal method, the working group reflected instead on a variety of approaches to change that should be considered and engaged upon. While much has been said about the importance of reconciliation, there remain real concerns about the limits of this framework. The working group cited concern emerging more broadly within Indigenous community leadership about whose interests reconciliation serves most, in a context in which white power often dictates the terms of reconciliation. While word-based actions such as apologies are framed as the beginning of reconciliation, it is often where actions stop. Therefore, if the field of counselling psychology wishes to engage in this approach to change, there must be concerted attention given to ongoing action and accountability. For instance, the working group made clear that economic and material support was a key structural barrier often felt by those working closely with Indigenous communities and that a way forward must involve greater resource allocation, freedom, and independence.

The group also considered the strategic value of institutionally sanctioned change processes, some of which are already underway in the field, including working groups, task forces, and strategic planning processes. These were seen mainly as processes that help raise standards of engagement with Indigenous people and that potentially reduce harm caused by colonial structures and systems. That said, there was also recognition that these systems, insofar as they are envisioned primarily to advance the profession or the field, cannot achieve Indigenous sovereignty. As such, these interventions are harm reducing but are not sufficient to achieve justice. This leads to another approach to change discussed by the group, and that is the work of critical advocacy, activism, and allyship informed by a politic anchored in the sovereign rights of Indigenous people. It is absolutely critical that in order to address issues of the field's relationship to Indigenous people, efforts must be rooted in Indigenous people's self-determination. There need to be methods of social action within the field that enhance the actual political power of Indigenous people, while leveraging the political power of non-Indigenous people toward justice for Indigenous people.

The working group reflected on the value of the feminist tradition of critical reflexivity and consciousness raising in working to advance Indigenous peoples in the field. However, the group also emphasized the importance of ensuring that these Indigenous feminist and queer practices link consciousness raising of structural violence to cultural and community-based practices that bring about Indigenous sovereignty and freedom. Furthermore, the group emphasized that all approaches to change must be seen in terms of a multi-generational and long view of history, which might see the field itself supplanted by new Indigenous articulations of practice that promote well-being and mental health. Change may not merely reform the field but may see the emergence of a different field altogether.

In the interim, the group emphasized that those of us in the field of counselling psychology must work to reduce harm and to promote Indigenous people's rights through a multisystemic framework, ranging from the highest levels of government, policy development and enactment, education, research, and training to front-line and community-based practices, as well as in the most mundane ways that intersect with our everyday lives.

Theme Eight: Ethics

The working group provided a context in which to reflect deeply on the embodied people and on the place-based ethics emerging within the Indigenous counselling space. In particular, the ethics of humility, accountability, care, pluralism, respect, and honouring all relations were discussed. In terms of humility, a great emphasis was placed on the importance of movements being soft and encouraging all people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, to be cognizant that we will likely make mistakes and/or get things wrong. The working group discussed the value of humility and *not knowing* within Indigenous communities,

placing oneself in the position of learner rather than expert. This challenges the conventional constructs of competence and expertise, encouraging professionals instead to view mistakes as opportunities for learning and repositioning in relation to community knowledge. The call for humility is not an appeal to pacify or to police Indigenous movements for their tone, but instead is a reflection on the relational disposition that is necessary to advance change in a toxic structure and system. We need to build good faith in one another, which allows for real vulnerability.

In terms of the ethics of accountability, the group discussed the importance of evaluating actual actions and of constantly reflecting back to the field that failing to walk the talk of reconciliation has real material consequences. In terms of care, there was a strong emphasis placed on recognizing that speaking of difference, identity, power, privilege, and oppression is a complex and often precarious space for people to enter into and that we must take great care and caution with one another as we enter that work. This, however, should not always be framed in terms of safety, as some spaces are never safe for Indigenous peoples, and thus these are represented more accurately as spaces that require courage and humility on behalf of all involved.

There was a recognition within the working group that, in order for the field to advance in an authentically ethical manner, the hegemonic power of positivist science must be deconstructed through interventions that emphasize epistemic pluralism. While the focus of the discussion was on counselling psychology, this finding applies to the field of psychology and to broader fields of applied health and social sciences overall. Epistemic pluralism entails genuine and humble respect and honour for different ways of knowing, being, and doing. For example, in therapeutic practice, this entails the therapist supporting the client through the client's understandings and ways of living in such a way that the client's world views, values, and protocols are validated and supported throughout therapy (e.g., see Trimble, 2010).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, great consideration was devoted to the question of what it means to work in a way that honours all relations—human, non-human, and otherwise. Specifically, the group considered the language of communal, social, land-based, and place-based relational obligations of care and emphasized that the field of counselling psychology is valuable insofar as it helps reconstitute and enliven relations threatened by colonization.

Implications and Calls to Action

While it has been five years since the publication of the TRC's final report (2015a), the working group findings reflect that there remains much work to do within the field of counselling psychology. The group addressed a number of important themes that call each of us in the field to action. These calls are

congruent with existing calls to the field of psychology overall (e.g., Ansloos et al., 2019; CPA & PFC, 2018) and echo the calls Indigenous people and communities have been making for decades, documented through federal commissions and reports such as those of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Library and Archives Canada, n.d.), the TRC (2015a, 2015b), and the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019). The consistency and the repetition of these calls speak to the critical importance of tangible and meaningful responses on behalf of the field, as very little has been done to date to address the needs of Indigenous people and communities. This requires accountability and responsibility on behalf of each individual who is teaching, learning, practising, or researching in counselling psychology. The current section highlights the ethical imperative for all professionals, scholars, and trainees in the field to create space for Indigenous paradigms in their work and to make concrete changes in their practice, research, and training.

Creating Space for Indigenous Paradigms

Contrary to dominating colonial world views and paradigms of science that assume right/wrong and either/or logics, Indigenous world views and paradigms take an and/and epistemological pluralism that holds that multiple and equally valid realities coexist. As a foundation for ethical practice, training, and research in counselling, those in the field who do not do so already are called to adopt a stance of epistemological pluralism in order to acknowledge authentically and to honour Indigenous paradigms as equally valid to their own world view (Ross, 2014). This is particularly important in psychotherapy, as approaches based firmly in Euro Western world views such as cognitive behavioural therapy pathologize Indigenous ways of knowing and aim to assimilate people to colonial ways of thinking (Ansloos, 2017; Duran, 2006; Gone, 2008a; Trimble, 2010). Providers must recognize their role in neo-colonialism (Gone, 2008b), given that “after the church began to fail to control people ... the medical profession, including the original doctors of the mind, took up the power to control. The work of these doctors of the mind evolved into the present-day mental health system” (Duran, 2006, p. 9). This legacy continues to the present and must be addressed.

Once they recognize the colonialism inherent in dominating approaches to counselling, professionals can then decolonize their work and create space for Indigenous traditional, cultural, and community knowledge. “Our communities know what we need to heal” (Fellner, 2016, p. 320), and the literature speaks loudly to the central role of Indigenous approaches to wellness in Indigenous people’s healing (Ansloos, 2017; CPA & PFC, 2018; Fellner, 2016; Fiske, 2008; Gone, 2008b; Hart, 2002; Linklater, 2014; McCormick, 1995; Mehl-Madrona, 2003; Ross, 2014; TRC, 2015a). These approaches include both traditional and contemporary Indigenous counselling and psychotherapies, from land-based cultural practices that have thousands of years of community-based evidence

to contemporary approaches such as Indigenous Focusing-Oriented Therapy (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014), which has an exceptional reputation for success among Indigenous communities across North America. It is critical for leaders and academics in counselling psychology to advocate for funding and resources in support of community-based programs and professional development workshops in Indigenous approaches to counselling (CPA & PFC, 2018).

Working With Indigenous People and Communities

Whether people are working in research or in clinical practice with Indigenous people, good relationships were identified as foundational to culturally relevant and appropriate approaches. This theme is resounding throughout the literature on research and on health and social services with Indigenous people (Fellner, 2016; Fellner et al., 2016; Gomes et al., 2013; Keast, 2020; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008). Good relationships begin with respecting community-based protocols and connecting with Elders, knowledge holders, and community leaders throughout the work. When working with these community experts, it is important to do so in an authentically engaged way and with appropriate compensation (CPA & PFC, 2018; Keast, 2020). Knowledge holders, ceremonialists, and healers hold the equivalent of one or more doctorates and should be treated as such throughout collaboration (Keast, 2020). Further, work with Indigenous people and communities must prioritize their rights and self-determination (Smith, 2012).

Good relationships also form the basis for ethical scholarship and practice with Indigenous peoples (Ansloos, 2017; Fellner, 2016; Hart, 2002; Wilson, 2008). The working group's discussion about the importance of humility, accountability, care, pluralism, respect, and honouring all relations in ethical engagement is congruent with existing literature and Indigenous values and ethics (Hart, 2002; Lane et al., 1984; McCormick, 2009; Simpson, 2000). Cultural humility has made an appearance in recent counselling literature (e.g., Hook et al., 2017; Paine et al., 2015) and offers an alternative to the potentially dangerous notion of cultural competence. While scholars in the field of cultural competence may not have had this intention, the construct of competence often is taken to mean that one has mastered a set of skills. This concept does not fit with fluid and relational Indigenous world views and poses a threat to ethical practice given that each individual and community must be engaged with free of assumptions from a stance of not knowing (CPA & PFC, 2018; Fellner, 2018a, 2018b). Care in relationships is congruent with the literature speaking to the vulnerability, courage, and consideration needed to enter into conversations regarding identity, difference, power, privilege, and oppression (Gallardo, 2014). Accountability as an ethical imperative is further congruent with Indigenous relational ethics (Wilson, 2008), as is the acknowledgement and honouring of epistemic pluralism (Teffo, 2011). Finally, the working group cited the importance of honouring all relatives of the physical and metaphysical realms in ethical engagement. This may be considered

both in terms of psychotherapy's role in reconstituting and enlivening relations threatened by colonialism and in respecting the role of metaphysical relatives in the therapeutic process (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014).

Good relationships also form the foundation for non-Indigenous psychologists to become allies, a call that is in alignment with the task force report (CPA & PFC, 2018). Becoming an ally requires considerable reflection and genuine efforts to advance Indigenous agendas (Regan, 2010) and Indigenist commitments more broadly (Ansloos, 2017). Duran (2006) refers to the "soul work" (p. 44) that therapists must do in order to be present with Indigenous clients without imposing or projecting internalized colonial dynamics (Fellner, 2016). In advancing Indigenous agendas, being and becoming an ally is an active, verb-based process that requires stepping back and putting Indigenous voices forward as well as using one's privilege to advocate for resources that support community aims. Refer to Theme Three of the results section for specific recommendations that address this call. These recommendations are in direct alignment with the findings of the CPA and PFC report (2018), with the RCAP report (Library and Archives Canada, n.d.), and with the TRC (2015a), as well as with a recent study addressing community-based wellness programs (Keast, 2020).

Shifting the Field of Counselling Psychology

Looking to the future of the field, it is critical to reflect on multiple and multi-faceted approaches to change that genuinely centre Indigenous agendas and maintain attention to tangible action and accountability (Fellner, 2016). Those in the field are called to question and critique word-based actions such as apologies and reports, as actions often stop there, mitigating white guilt with no benefit to Indigenous people or communities. An example of concrete, meaningful systems change includes the recent implementation of a standard of practice by the College of Alberta Psychologists that now requires all psychologists seeking registration in the province to demonstrate foundational knowledge regarding the TRC (Malone et al., 2019). Critical advocacy, activism, and allyship that further Indigenous people's self-determinism and personal and community sovereignty are also authentic means toward change. By virtue of their participation in the field, psychologists are in positions of power and privilege that afford them the ability to advocate for and implement such critical changes from their respective roles (CPA & PFC, 2018).

Currently, the field of counselling psychology is saturated in whiteness and in anti-Indigenous racism, implicitly and explicitly reinforcing deficit narratives about Indigenous people and their ways of knowing, being, and doing (Duran, 2006; Duran & Duran, 1995; Fellner, 2019; Fellner et al., 2016; LaFromboise et al., 1990; Moodley, 2007; Trimble & Thurman, 2002). Instead, the field must pathologize and problematize the dominating racist and oppressive power structures, systems, and processes within the field that perpetuate the challenges faced

by Indigenous communities (Duran, 2006; Duran & Duran, 1995). Such critical reflection requires (a) taking accountability for and challenging white fragility, (b) interpersonal hostility toward Indigenous people and issues, (c) tokenistic use of Indigenous people's labour, (d) undermining Indigenous people's sovereignty as it relates to mental health (Tuck & Yang, 2012), (e) silence and complacency in relation to issues within the profession, and (f) silencing or otherwise subverting Indigenous people's critiques of the field.

Challenging these processes is part of actively allying with Indigenous people and requires significant shifts in training in counselling psychology. Consistent with existing literature and reports (Ansloos et al., 2019; CPA & PFC, 2018; Fellner, 2016), findings pointed to the critical need for professionals, scholars, and students in counselling to be well versed in the historical and ongoing colonialism and racism both in the field and in Canada overall, as well as the TRC report, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous-specific jurisprudence in the Canadian constitutional and legislative context, and the RCAP. It is critical for all students and professionals to learn the historical and ongoing colonial violence within the field and within systems in which it is implicated, including Indigenous land theft, eugenics, forced sterilization, assimilationist education policies, abductive and abusive child welfare policies, and racist practices in assessment and research (e.g., Ansloos, 2017; Blackstock, 2019; Duran, 2006; LaFromboise et al., 1990; Lavallée & Poole, 2010; McCormick, 2009; Trimble & Thurman, 2002). These historical and contemporary contexts need to be incorporated into all training programs and be required professional development for those already working in the field (Ansloos et al., 2019; CPA & PFC, 2018; Fellner, 2016). In order for this to take place, education and professional development must be decolonizing, given that institutions and regulatory bodies continue to reinforce colonial policies and practices (Fellner, 2018a; Keast, 2020).

Decolonizing education involves incorporating Indigenous curriculum and pedagogies into both clinical and research training (Ansloos et al., 2019; CPA & PFC, 2018; Fellner, 2018a; Keast, 2020). Ultimately, these shifts must provide culturally and contextually relevant training for Indigenous students and practitioners as well as training that supports non-Indigenous students and practitioners to work in contextually relevant and culturally sustaining ways with Indigenous people (Ansloos et al., 2019; CPA & PFC, 2018). It is critical for the field of counselling psychology to acknowledge the various ways Indigenous students have been excluded from entry into the field, to make meaningful changes to admissions and programming that ensure free, public, and open-access pathways into education for Indigenous students, and to support Indigenous ways of thinking, being, and doing within programs (Ansloos et al., 2019; Fellner, 2018a; Keast, 2020). Making these changes requires financial and structural support and calls upon leaders and scholars in the field to advocate for greater resource allocation

toward Indigenous agendas, as well as supporting Indigenous sovereignty in educational, clinical, and research program development and implementation. Examples of such programs include the University of Victoria's Indigenous Community Counselling program (Westad, 2014), the University of Calgary's *Poomiikapii* and *Niitsitapiisinni* community-based Master of Education programs (Denslow, n.d.; Keast, 2020), the University of Toronto's Indigenous trauma and resiliency Master of Social Work (Boisseau, 2019), and multiple community-based clinics across Canada (see Waldram, 2008). Unfortunately, due to continued systemic racism and colonialism, such programs—including some of those cited—often lose funding and are discontinued despite their tremendous benefit to communities. It is critical for those in the field to advocate for and/or to provide economic and material support for community aspirations and programs.

Ultimately, shifting the field requires promoting Indigenous people's rights through a multisystemic framework, ranging from the highest levels of government, policy development and enactment, education, research, and training to front-line and community-based practices, as well as in simple ways that intersect with our everyday lives (Ansloos et al., 2019; CPA & PFC, 2018). While institutionally sanctioned processes such as Indigenous strategies, task forces, and working groups may raise standards of engagement with Indigenous people and communities, such processes are best understood as harm reduction given that they typically do not advance Indigenous sovereignty unless they involve critical advocacy, activism, and allyship as mentioned above. Thus, a multi-faceted, multi-generational approach to change that ultimately aims to sustain a field of genuine Indigenous approaches to practice is needed.

Conclusion

Through detailing the findings of the "Responding to the TRC in Canadian Counselling Psychology" working group convened during the 2018 CCPC in Calgary, the current article offers a guiding framework for researchers, clinicians, educators, and trainees in the field of counselling psychology to shift their work toward authentic reconciliation with Indigenous people and communities. This framework opens space for reconciling relations with Indigenous people in a good way, addressing (1) education, (2) relationships with community, (3) traditional and community knowledge, (4) colonial violence of institutions and professions, (5) anti-Indigenous racism and whiteness in counselling, (6) Indigenous approaches to counselling, (7) approaches to change in the field of counselling psychology, and (8) ethics. Approaching these important shifts in the field authentically with humility and care creates opportunities for healing the historical and ongoing harms of counselling psychology against Indigenous communities, offering possibilities for innovative, engaging, community-based work that will help the field best serve community agendas in culturally relevant

ways. Drawing upon these concrete recommendations, readers are called to take responsibility for reconciliation:

Take [this] story, for instance. It's yours. Do with it what you will. Make it the topic of a discussion group at a scholarly conference. Put it on the Web. Forget it. But don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story.

You've heard it now. (King, 2003, p. 60)

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