

Indigenous advocacy

with Tamara Bernard

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls exhibition 'See Me'

Talking points

Knowledge & Comprehension

1. How much more likely are Indigenous women to face violence than non-Indigenous women?
2. How has Tamara's work been motivated by her family's personal history?
3. What is the Indian Act? In what ways has this act impacted Indigenous women and girls, and led to misleading data?

Analysis

4. Why do you think the collection of stories that Tamara exhibited was called 'See Me'?
5. What are the ongoing impacts of separating Indigenous children from their families?
6. Tamara mentions how the majority of Canadian history has been written by non-Indigenous authors. How do you think this has impacted the way that policies such as the Indian Act and the Residential School System have been seen?

Evaluation

7. Tamara says, "We also need long term sustainable funding for Indigenous gender-based violence programmes and services. We need to develop Indigenous informed and culturally grounded services, invest and support Indigenous approaches, and foster decision making by Indigenous communities." What impact do you think each of these actions would have on Indigenous women and girls?

Activity

As Tamara says, the legacy of colonialism is "complex and far-reaching." She believes that ensuring Indigenous women and girls are seen and heard is one way of addressing the injustices they have suffered. The 'See Me' exhibition that Tamara coordinated included personal accounts, articles and artwork to honour the memories of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. This is an example of how stories can be shared in different forms to convey a message and to encourage people to think differently.

Choose one of the following ideas that Tamara's article touches on:

- Without understanding colonialism, victims are often blamed.
- Stories that challenge colonial ideas can humanise and bring hope, healing and empowerment.
- Many voices need to be heard if the system is to be fixed.
- We need to bridge the divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups.
- What it means to be an ally.
- Have the courage to learn from different perspectives.

Now, think about a creative way you can share your chosen statement and your interpretation of it. You could prepare a persuasive speech, write a poem, produce a song or piece of music, create a piece of artwork or take a sequence of photographs that convey your thoughts. The legacy of colonialism is a difficult and sensitive subject, so be sure to reflect on your chosen idea carefully and thoughtfully.

Take inspiration from:

- What Tamara says in the article. For example, "There is an invisible heavy backpack that many Indigenous women carry." This is a strong metaphor that conveys a powerful message.
- The artwork in this brochure was created by Sean Couchie. You can see more of his artwork on his Instagram page ([instagram.com/sean_couchie](https://www.instagram.com/sean_couchie)) and watch him talk about the work he produced for the 'See Me' exhibition in this video from the Atlohso Family Healing Services: [youtube.com/watch?v=d36DfcX8_7w&t=2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d36DfcX8_7w&t=2s)

If possible, curate an exhibition of the responses you and your classmates produce. Talk to each other and reflect on how reading Tamara's article, producing your piece and sharing each other's work has made you think about the concepts chosen and the larger theme of colonialism.

More resources

- Listen to this podcast episode of Tamara explaining her work: [youtube.com/live/DfqBZ_WVARo](https://www.youtube.com/live/DfqBZ_WVARo)
- Watch Tamara's TED talks on Truth and Reconciliation ([youtube.com/watch?v=KurlZLxTUFw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KurlZLxTUFw)) and how Indigenous women are more than missing and murdered ([youtube.com/watch?v=fyLSRQ5kx8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyLSRQ5kx8)).
- Read through the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report: [mmiwg-ffada.ca](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca)