



Rethinking it takes a community to raise a child

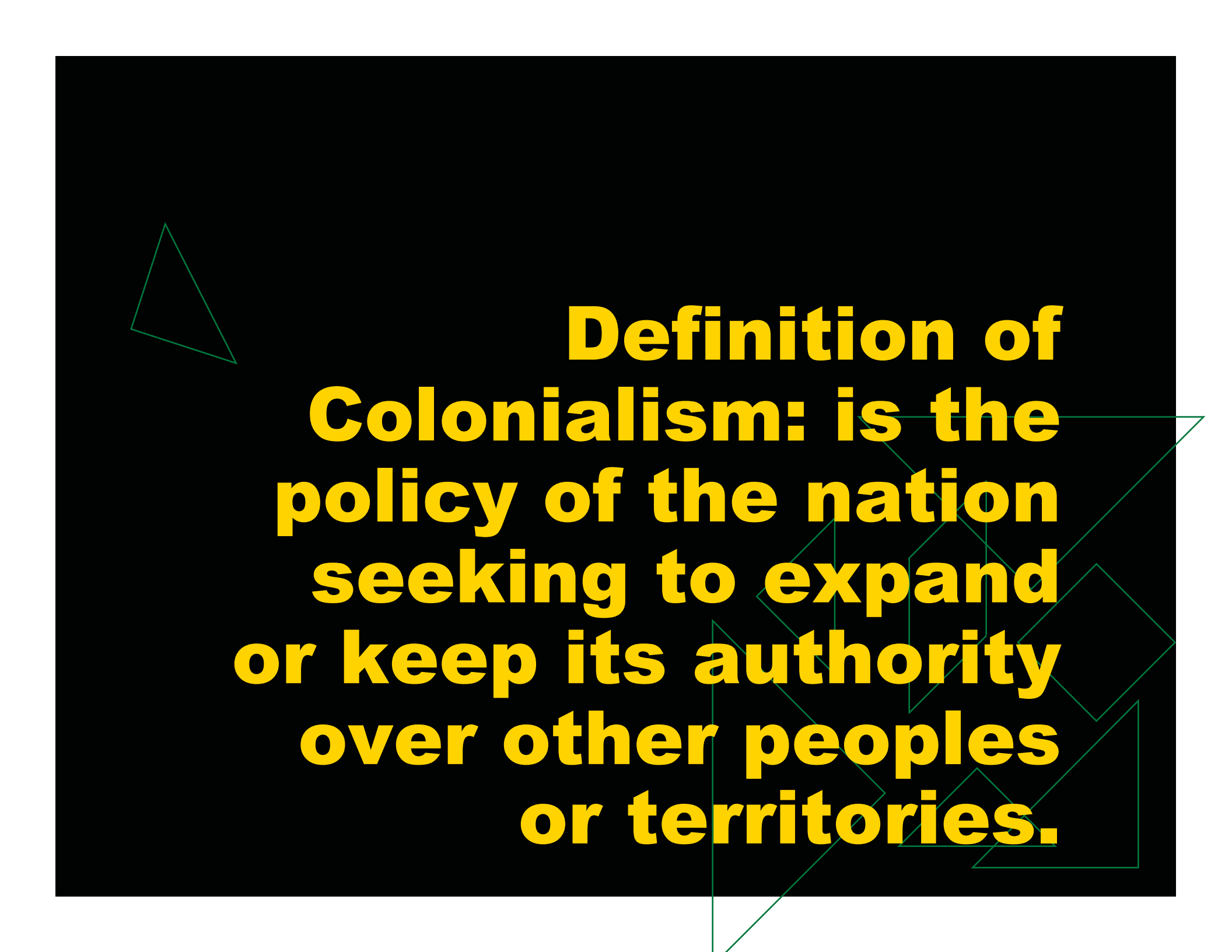


If you could be part of a tree which of the following would you pick?
The base of the tree, the trunk of the tree or the branches of the tree. Choose one and I'll get back to this at the end.



**Historical Impacts on
Community:**
**To begin the discussion,
think of the following
questions:**
**What do you know of the
impact to First Nations?
What has impacted your
community?
If so has there been any
change?**





Definition of Colonialism: is the policy of the nation seeking to expand or keep its authority over other peoples or territories.

REVIEW OF HISTORY

- ◆ 1763-The Royal Proclamation, King George provides a constitutional basis for your laws and recognizes our right to live under own laws.
- ◆ 1800's-The arrival of Europeans, also called the "European contact."
- ◆ 1867-British North American Act (BNA) Indian lands and resources "public" land which should be dealt with as Nations and that the lands in these Nations could not be purchased until the King's government reached agreements with them on Nation-on-Nation level, "at some public meeting or assembly," until then, he pronounced Indian people's to be under "our sovereignty and dominion."

- ◆ 1871-the imposition of European laws and way of life upon First Nations brought about profound cultural clash...with widespread disease, the theft of their land, using up and denying access to natural resources, destruction of indigenous, social, economical and political systems and starvation, erosion of morality structures and a stifling of spirituality, i.e. Only marriages through European law, church were valid, children were considered property of their parents, under extended, under patrilineal society, and the extended family was undermined. Order in Council stating terms of union between the dominion of Canada and British Columbia- the dominion government is given “charge of Indians, and the trusteeship and management of lands reserved for their benefit.

- ◆ 1876- Legislation of the “Indian Act.” All Indians were under the wardship of Canada, not considered citizens of the province of British Columbia or of Canada. The Indian act caused bitterness amongst First Nations that is still manifesting today.

Continued....

- ◆ 1890- Herald the era of the Residential School. The residential school model became the official vehicle for child welfare service. This had the most destructive impact of colonialism, whose goal was to separate children in their formative stages from their first Nation Culture. Not only were the cultural values effectively stifled, but also molding experience of normal family relations was almost completely wiped out. Models of childcare witnessed by First Nations at residential schools were ones marked by dictatorship styles, rote learning, physical abuse, lack of compassion and frequent sexual abuse. Residential school victims were left with little capacity for parenting as well as mature love and healthy sexual relations.

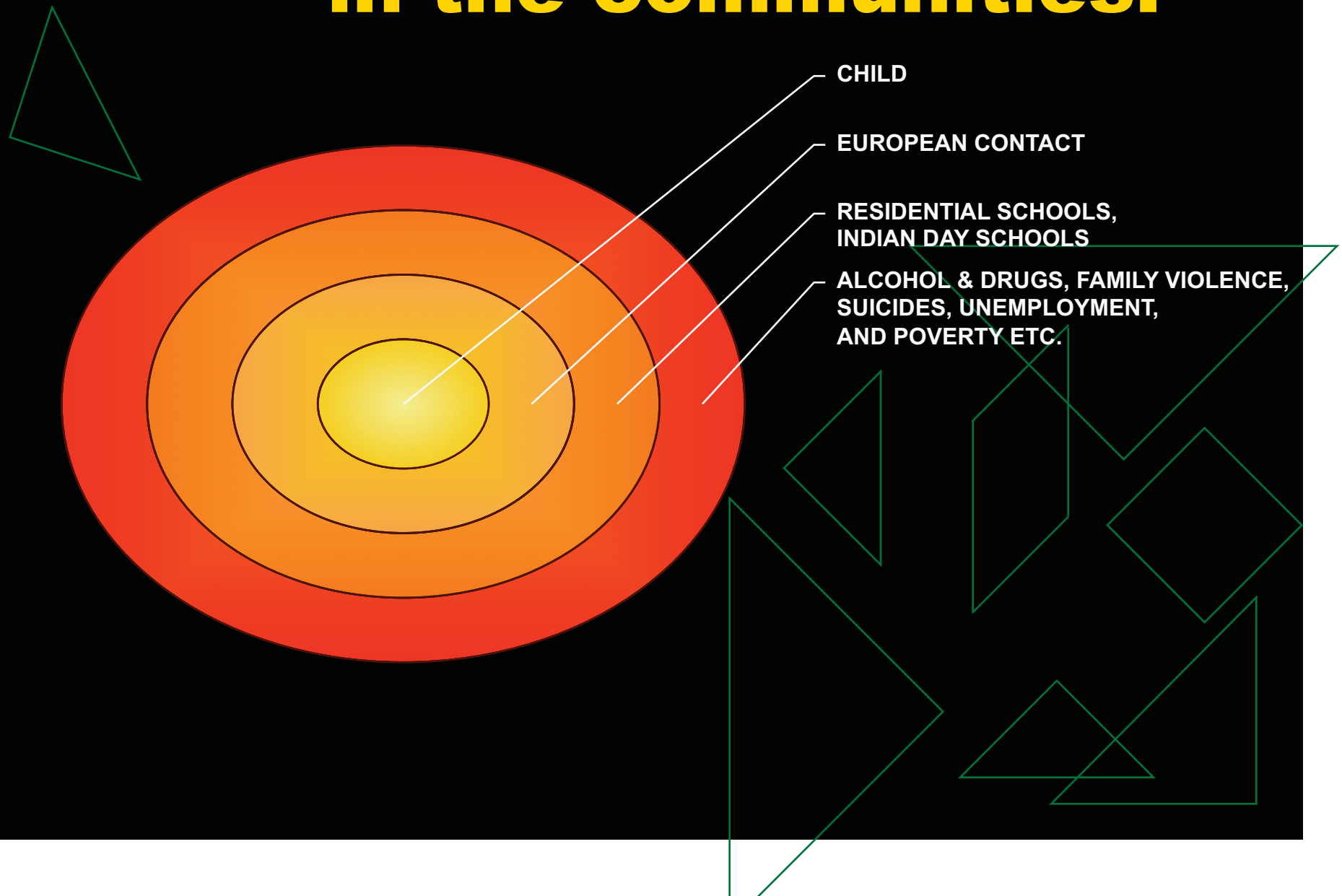
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- ◆ 1901- Infant Act proclaimed authorities to apprehend and place into the care of the Children's Aid Society, children who were deemed abused, neglected or delinquent.
- ◆ 1960's- "THE BIG SCOOP" many Indian children were put into care by the province, 40% of the children in care were First Nations ancestry. This devastation forced removal of First Nation children from their natural home by child welfare authorities and placing of them in non-First Nations foster homes or adopting them out, all in the "BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD."
- ◆ 1969- The "WHITE PAPER," Indian leaders viewed Trudeau's proposal as a strategy to erode Indian Rights with the ultimate goal of "CULTURAL GENOCIDE."

IN CONCLUSION:

- ◆ The imposition of European values has resulted in the subsequent destruction of traditional culture. The failure of social welfare and education policies and programs to achieve their legislative mandate to civilize the Indians – all of these, have inflicted severe damage upon our First Nations peoples. The details of this clash of cultures for First Nations are well known and manifest in First Nations struggle with poverty, addictions, family violence, wide spread diseases, severe emotional damage and much more. With each generation the problems are amplified and each generation the deterioration of parenting skills along with the loss of culture, identity, language and self-worth continues.
- ◆ **THE CYCLE OF DESTRUCTION MUST STOP!!!!**

My view of the present in the communities:



Reviving of the old ways: Back to First Nations Culture- child rearing and raising:

- ◆ Gitksan children are considered the trust and the hope of the future. As such First Nations childcare practices have their own unique way of birthing and child rearing. These practices are rooted in ancestral teachings.
- ◆ Traditional ways have always been based on an understanding that children are allowed to experience many things and participate in their own way as interest and skill dictate.

Continued....

- ◆ The old ways teach us that the needs of the child changes and grows, and that the child must be ready to handle a skill before it can learn. Through the freedom to explore the world a child can test his/her own skills learned. This was an important element in any child's life.

Continued....

- ◆ Child abuse in traditional family was rare. The grandma's and aunts kept a watchful eye on parents; if the behaviour of the parents were not in line with community expectations; they would be teased, shamed or ridiculed into compliance. Implicit in the traditional family culture is that all members of the extended family were responsible for the raising of the children. The responsibility did not solely lie on the parents. Extended relational patterns aid the family by creating a natural support system that centered around the children.

Continued....

- ◆ When serious problems arose in parenting, the clan or extended family had consensus customs that came into play. Utilizing active, listening process the views of all members of the clan were heard. A resolution was always the end product, and if an alternative living arrangement had to be made for the children in question, the child always knew and was familiar with other members of the clan. The arrangement usually involved little adjustment or trauma for the children.

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- ◆ A traditional perspective always starts from the premise that human beings are basically good and that this goodness is particularly evident in children.
- ◆ If children are to learn responsibility, they must be approached with maturity, dignity, respect and consideration.

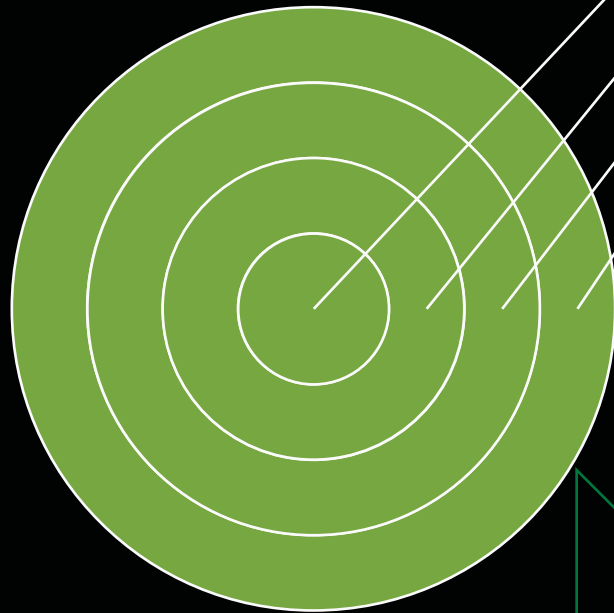
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- ◆ The First Nations focus on the modeling of appropriate behaviour. When a child was not behaving appropriately, it was always cast back on those care givers, who modeled this behaviour. A child was the imitator for the community behaviour.

CONCLUDING COMMENT:

- ◆ First Nations are composed of people who are united by their traditions, customs, values and spiritual practices, despite the impacts of assimilation. It is our (healthy) elders who will play a leading role in providing counsel and teaching of these traditions, and they are a vital element in First Nation communities. Therefore, it is involvement of elders that is fundamental to meaningful, sensitive and appropriate childcare and family support services. Others who were recognized as helpers were the medicine men and women, (they dealt with the emotional, mental and spiritual health of parent and children).

MY VIEW OF THE PAST

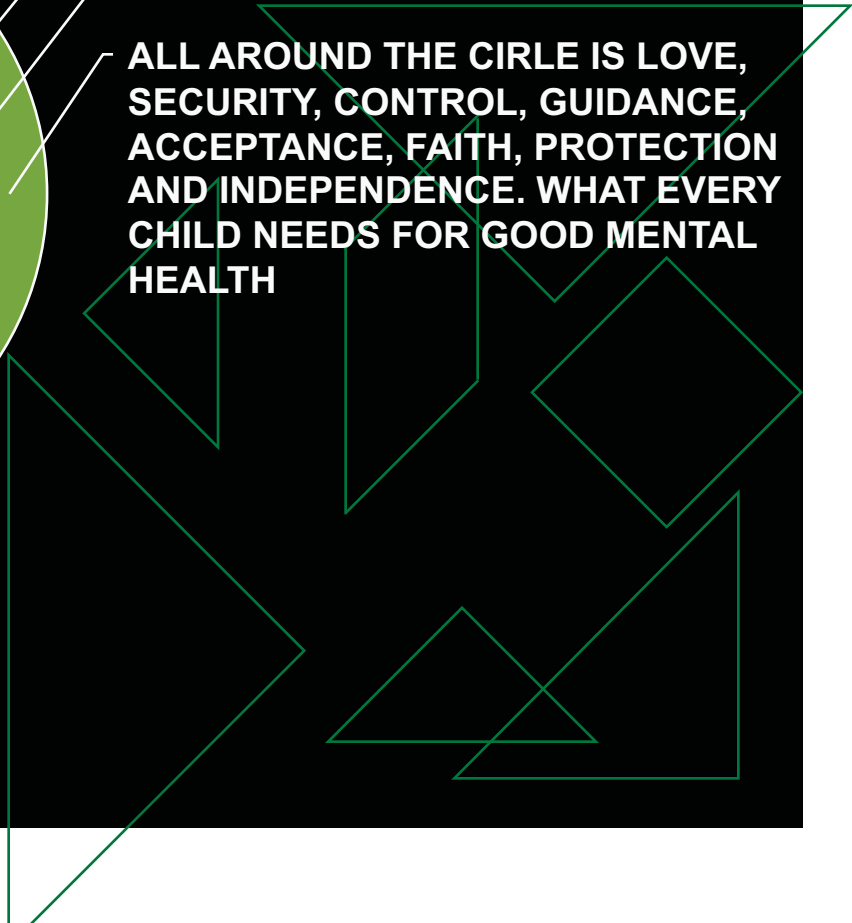


CHILD IN CENTER

FAMILY NEXT

EXTENDED FAMILY

ALL AROUND THE CIRCLE IS LOVE, SECURITY, CONTROL, GUIDANCE, ACCEPTANCE, FAITH, PROTECTION AND INDEPENDENCE. WHAT EVERY CHILD NEEDS FOR GOOD MENTAL HEALTH



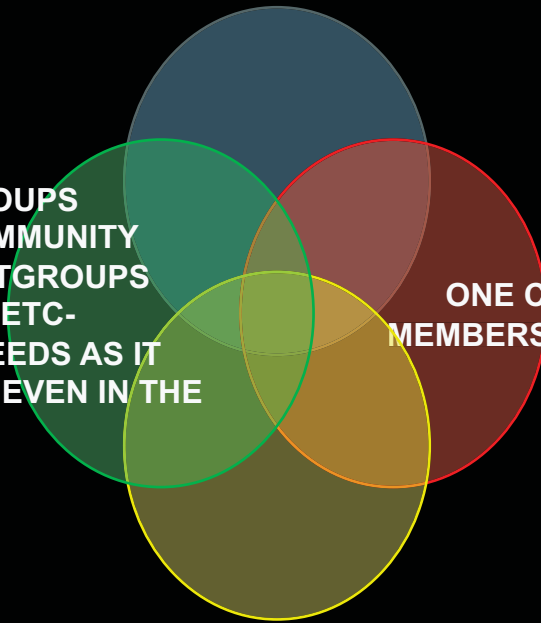
THE FUTURE CIRCLE

CHILD:NUTURING

COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUPS OF ALL AGES VARYING ON COMMUNITY NEED- I.E., AA GROUPS, PARENTGROUPS NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ETC- WHATEVER THE COMMUNITY NEEDS AS IT VARIES FROM ONE TO THE OTHER EVEN IN THE SAME TERRITORY

SELF HELP ONE ON ONE COUNSELLING-:"COMMUNITY MEMBERS NEED TO MAKE THE INDIVIDUAL CHOICE."

PROGRAMS SERVICES, SOCIAL SERVICES-ASSISTING FAMILIES TO BE SELF SUFFICIENT.



HOW THE TREE ENCOMPASSES THE WORKSHOP:

- ◆ THE BASE/ROOTS: STABILITY
- ◆ THE TRUNK: CONTINUED GROWTH – OPENESS FOR CHANGE
- ◆ THE LEAVES/BRANCHES: HOPE
- ◆ MESSAGE: YOU CANNOT DO WITHOUT THE OTHER, YOU NEED ALL PIECES FOR HEALTHY CHANGE.

TODAYS VIEW 6 YEARS LATER....

- ◆ THE SAME QUESTION REMAINS: WHAT IS THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD?
- ◆ WE STILL DEAL WITH THE GENERATIONAL ISSUES THAT EFFECT/DEFECT OUR PARENTING
- ◆ ON ANOTHER NOTE OUR THINKING HAS TO CHANGE TO STRENGTHEN OUR CONTINUED EXISTENCE AS OUR CHILDREN WILL ALWAYS BE OUR FOREFRONT.
- ◆ THOUGHTS....WAYS I SEE THIS CHANGING IS FOR US ALL TO WORK TOGETHER AND PROVIDING AS MUCH FOR OUR PARENTS AS POSSIBLE.

FOR OUR GITXSAN CHILDREN....

- ◆ WE NEED MCFD TO MAKE DIRECT CONTACT ASAP RIGHT ON THE INTAKE PROCESS – A FGC NEEDS TO OCCUR AT THE FRONT END AND NOT THE BACK END
- ◆ A POINT HERE IS PARENT RIGHTS WHERE THEY ARE ASKED IF THEY WANTED BAND INVOLVEMENT AND IN MOST CASES THEY DIDN'T BUT...THEY ARE NOT IN A STATE TO MAKE THAT DECISION- THE MCFD NEED TO ADDRESS SO THAT "FAMILY" "HUWILP/CLAN" IS CONTACTED AS THE CHILDREN ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR SYSTEM

AND....

- ◆ THE SERIOUSNESS TO THIS MATTER IS OUR MATRILINEAL IS GETTING LOST WITHIN THE SYSTEM OF BOTH WORLDS AND IF WE DON'T BEGIN TO WORK HAND IN HAND ON A UP FRONT BASIS OUR CHILDREN SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES

FINALLY,

- ◆ THE ROOTS OF A CHILD ARE FOREVER IN THE PAST, PRESENT AND THE FUTURE – LIKE A TREE IT SHEDS, HAS RE-GROWTH BUT IS AN ENTITY OF BEGINNING TO END BUT KEEPS REVOLVING AS SUCH AS WE DO IN THIS SOCIETY.



AND....

- ◆ This view of re-thinking it takes a community to raise a child in abstract of how we as First Nations need to view our world within the on going change of society.
- ◆ A child's roots are vital to continued existence in the same breath as their connection with family regardless of family stature and dynamics.

AND....

- ◆ Within the Gitxsan system we are a matrilineal system with and with the changing views of society and imposition we have had to compromise where we are losing the importance of who we are and we all belong.
- ◆ It has come to a point where Marti lineage is not sufficient enough to save our children from getting lost in the system. It needs not only to be re-strengthened but revitalized and reviewed as to our roles and responsibilities in today's world.

AND....

- ◆ On a further note we need not only address to the matrilineage but the patrilineal, grandparents both sides, family on both sides, house clan, community, message we need to look at the whole picture and keep spiralling until we reach what is the best interest of the child.

AND....

- ◆ This further extends to other nations but main message is to keep spiralling until there is a place for the child within his familiarity of who he/she is and knows that they belong.
- ◆ Utmost that our children NOT be adopted out and that all avenues have been searched and researched by having delegated agencies involved.

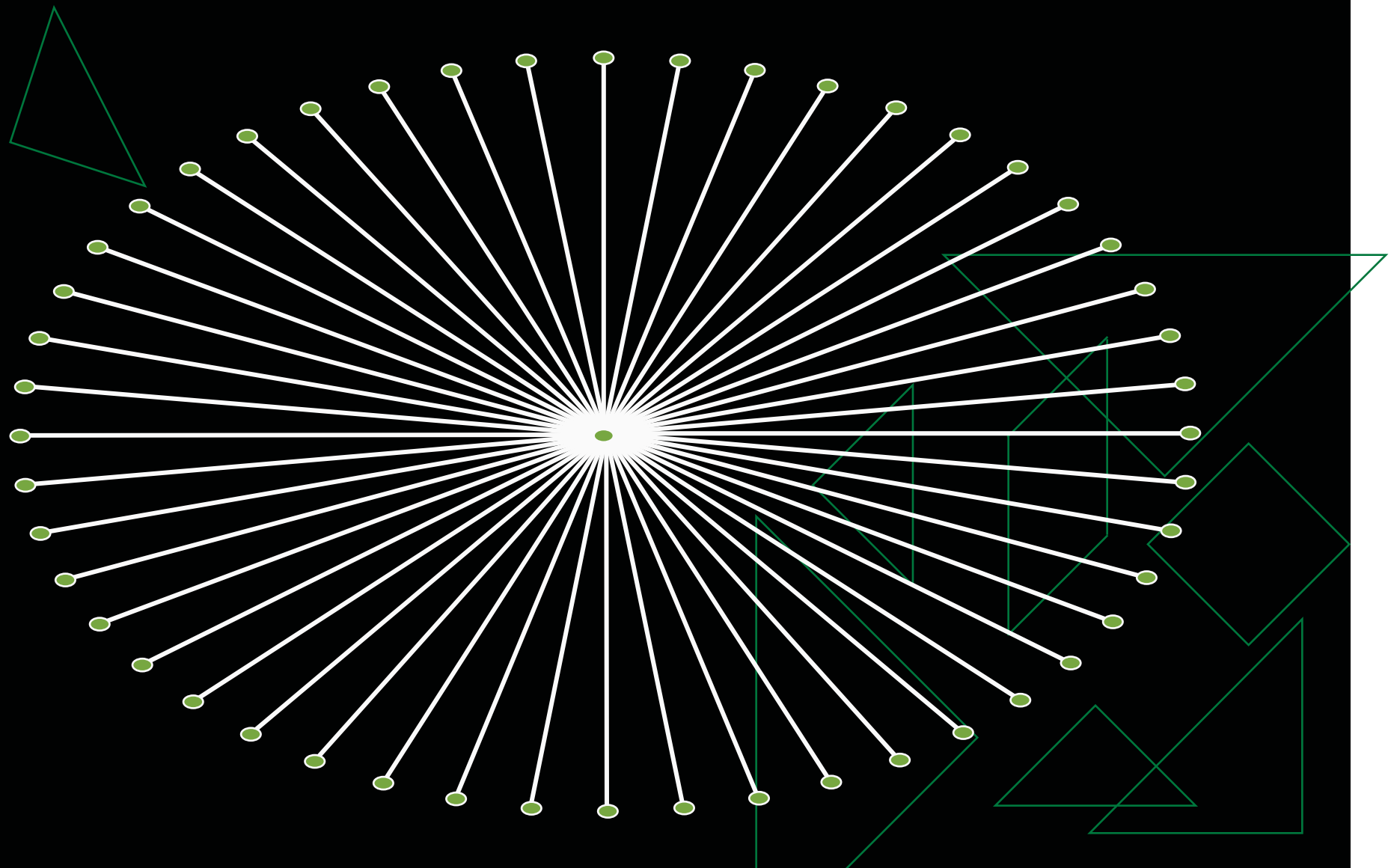
AND....

- ◆ Basically, a symbol of a rippling spiral that has no end and this is a need to ensure our children do not get lost in the system and they do not get spiralled into a confused state of existence of who they are.

CIRCLE OF ENTITY- OUR CHILDREN BELONG

- ◆ Mother's side/father's side, grandparents of both sides, siblings of parents on both sides,
- ◆ Other clans within territory – the grandparents grandparents on both sides
- ◆ Other first nations in the region, other first nations outside region

FAMILY



**NO MATTER THE RACE OR
COLOR OUR CHILDREN
MATTER!!!!**

