**Understanding Empires, Colonization, and Decolonization**

**Colonization** is invasion: a group of people taking over the land and imposing their own culture on the original inhabitants.

Modern colonization dates back to the [Age of Discovery](https://www.thoughtco.com/age-of-exploration-1435006) in the 15th century, as European nations expanded their influence and wealth, they claimed land in the ‘new world’, ignoring the Indigenous people and their voices. The goal was to create an **empire**—lands of many people united under the rule of one country.

Spain, France, England, The Netherlands, Belgium and Portugal colonized much of Africa and Asia, and North America (including the Caribbean) during this time.

Look at the maps on the weebly to see how the world has changed.

**Decolonization** is the process of trying to repair the damage caused by colonization. All of us, Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, can work towards decolonization, although our paths will look a little different.

Vocabulary

Draw a picture to illustrate each of these terms.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Colonization | Decolonization |
| Empire | Independence |

### What are some ways to decolonize as a non-Indigenous person?

* Decolonizing starts by learning the true history of Canada and sharing what you learn with others.
* Listen and don’t judge Indigenous peoples when they share their experiences and perspectives.
* Never tell someone to “Get over it” when they talk about their or their ancestors’ experience with colonization. These events may include historical or intergenerational trauma and they may still be happening. People can and do heal from [trauma](https://teentalk.ca/hot-topics/mental-health-2/) but it takes support and time.
* Challenge your own values and beliefs. Sometimes this will feel uncomfortable or difficult. Decolonization isn’t easy, but it is important. Don’t run away from these feelings, instead, examine and question where they are coming from.

### What are some ways to decolonize as an Indigenous person?

* Continue the connection to the land, languages, cultures and ceremonies.
* Connect with organizations and community groups that are resisting colonization, or start one yourself. Some examples include [NYSHN](http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/), [Kanikanichihk](http://www.kanikanichihk.ca/" \t "_blank), and [AYO](https://ayomovement.wordpress.com/).
* Seek out your Elders and Medicine people. They have knowledge to share.
* Know that if you’re dealing with [discrimination](https://teentalk.ca/hot-topics/appreciating-diversity-2/discrimination/) it is **not**your fault and you deserve support. It can help to talk with someone you trust about your experiences such as a family member, teacher, school guidance counsellor, elder or a phone line like the [Klinic Crisis Line](http://klinic.mb.ca/crisis-support/" \t "_blank), which is 1-888-322-3019 or (204) 786-8686. It’s free to call and open 24/7.

### What are some ways we can all decolonize?

* Celebrate and learn Indigenous knowledge, heroes and history.
* Learn the real names for [Indigenous nations](https://trcm.ca/lets-talk-treaties/treaties-with-the-crown/)and for this land. There are hundreds of nations across what we now call Canada. Start by learning the original names of the people in the area you live.
* Organize and march together against colonial practices. (For example, Sept. 30th)
* Learn about the ways of life, ceremonies, languages, and cultures of the Indigenous peoples who live in your area.
* Sit in a circle. Do it in class, at meetings or any other time you are in a group. In Western practices, the leader or person with power goes to the front of the group. This creates a power imbalance. When we sit in a circle, we use Indigenous practices to sit as equals.
* Learn about the treaties and what[treaty land](https://trcm.ca/lets-talk-treaties/treaties-with-the-crown/) you are on. Know that we are all treaty people with rights and responsibilities, but also learn about the [complicated and unjust history of how the treaties were written and signed](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/treaties-from-1760-1923-two-sides-to-the-story-1.1081839).
* Speak out against racism when you see it. Challenge the notions and stereotypes that continue against Indigenous peoples.