



National Family and Survivors Circle



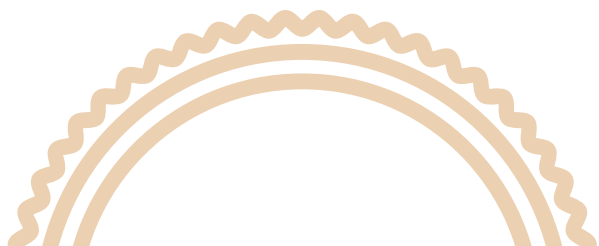
National Family and Survivors Circle Vision and Mission

The National Family and Survivors Circle's contribution to the 2021 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People National Action Plan: Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People is entitled "The Path Forward – Reclaiming Power and Place". The complete document is accessible at <https://familysurvivorscircle.ca>.

This content is a summary of key components from "The Path Forward – Reclaiming Power and Place." The National Family and Survivors Circle (the "NFSC") envisions a reality where Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people continue to reclaim our Power and Place in our lands, territories, and within our Nations, Peoples, and communities. The role of the NFSC in working towards this vision is to continually advocate that all governments, agencies, and organizations who have a responsibility in ending the genocide, centre families and survivors in their work. We are committed to working with them to assist in creating pathways for families and survivors to be engaged in this work through true partnerships that are decolonizing and dignified.

Confronting and Disrupting Colonialism – Understanding Violence and Genocide

The National Inquiry identified four pathways that continue to enforce the historic and contemporary manifestations of colonialism, and that continue the genocide. Confronting and disrupting these four pathways of trauma, social and economic marginalization, lack of will to change, and ignoring the agency and expertise of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and families and survivors, is crucial in creating transformative change. Understanding violence and genocide is critical to a decolonizing approach. It must be recognized that violence is inherent to the colonial state, past and present. In a colonial context, language is widely used to conceal violence, obscure offender responsibility, conceal victim responses and resistance, and blame and pathologize victims.



Justice demands that the voices of those who have been directly harmed are heard. Genocide is the word used by many families, survivors, and witnesses that shared their truths with the National Inquiry. Based on the application of international and domestic legal understandings of genocide to these truths and evidence gathered by the National Inquiry, the Final Report concluded that the violence Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are subjected to and are targeted for amounts to a race-based genocide. The efforts to end the genocide, to repair the harm caused and heal individually and collectively, must now match, and exceed, the intentions and actions that fueled the genocide.

The Path Forward: A Decolonizing Approach that Centres Families and Survivors

The path forward for transformative change involves a decolonizing approach that centres families and survivors and our lived experience, expertise, and agency. **A Decolonizing Approach** is a Principle for Change identified in the Calls for Justice. It is “a way of doing things differently; it challenges colonial influence under which we live by making space for Indigenous perspectives that are often cast aside.” An interconnected Principle for Change is **Inclusion of Families and Survivors** which recognizes that “the implementation of the Calls for Justice must include the perspective and participation of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people with lived experience, including families of the missing and murdered and survivors of violence.”

Implementation of the Calls for Justice must be informed by all Principles for Change and by the Four Pillars developed by the NFSC. The NFSC’s understanding of the Principles for Change are provided in our complete document. Further insight into the principles of “Cultural Safety”, to include “Cultural Humility” which speaks to the dismantling of the ideas that colonial cultures are the norm and superior, and of “Trauma-informed Approaches”, to include “Dignified Approaches” which speaks to the goal of always working in ways that respect people and their realities and that uphold their dignity. Both are consistent with our understanding of violence and genocide discussed earlier.

The **Four Pillars** relate to working with families and survivors and are fundamental in properly applying the Principles for Change. They must further inform the Guiding Principles as defined in the “Guiding Principles” section of the National Action Plan. **Inclusion** is about taking a lived experience centred approach that recognizing the agency, knowledge, experience, and expertise as valuable and a key part of the information guiding all decisions. **Interconnectedness** is central to Indigenous worldview and in the context of implementing the National Action Plan, speaks to how all governments, agencies, and organizations need to ground their work with families and survivors that respects their interconnectedness with each other, the interconnected nature of the root causes and solutions, and must take a “whole of government” approach in their work including the need for jurisdictional cooperation and partnerships.

Shared **accountability** involves the will to support and carry out transformative changes at all levels. Specific mechanisms and forums to report on actions taken and to track and monitor effectiveness are essential to hold all governments, agencies, and organizations accountable. They must include families and survivors within them and be accessible and transparent by providing direct, clear, and comprehensive communications to families and survivors. **Impact** speaks to how actions must be felt on the ground by Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, families, and survivors. Families and survivors should be included in evaluation and monitoring processes.

Giving life to our vision and ending the genocide requires us collectively reaching **six Goals** identified by the NFSC: 1) profound and sustained political and institutional will, demonstrated through concrete commitments and responsive actions; 2) keeping families, survivors, and Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people central to decision making, actions, and tracking success; 3) actions must be rooted in the recognition of Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, families, and survivors as rights holders and respect their unique distinctions and needs; 4) actions must be designed and implemented through an Indigenous holistic, interconnected lens; 5) measuring success through an Indigenous worldview and through the lived experience of Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, families, and survivors; and 6) accountability and recourse.

The NFSC believes all Calls for Justice are priorities. We recognize the challenges with coordinated implementation and the need to be strategic in order to be effective. We have identified **30 Immediate Actions**, the corresponding Calls for Justice, and the governments, agencies, institutions, and organizations that, with the inclusion of families, survivors, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, have obligations to take action. They focus on prevention, supports for families and survivors, and systemic issues. We believe the Calls for Justice are interconnected and inseparable.

An **Accountability Framework** is imperative in ensuring the Calls for Justice are actioned in a way that dismantles colonial structures and ends the genocide. An **Independent oversight body** must be at arm's length of all governments, agencies, and organizations and must have the legal authority to require reports from all governments, agencies, and organizations who have responsibility to implement the Calls for Justice and the National Action Plan. It should be inclusive of families and survivors.

Recourse is related to this oversight body and speaks to a mechanism for reversing rights violations and abuses. We believe the best body for these matters would be the National Indigenous and Human Rights Ombudsperson as called for in Call for Justice 1.7. All governments should take concrete actions towards establishing this position before June 3, 2022. In the interim and while the office of the Ombudsperson is being established, the NFSC believes Canada must engage international bodies at the United Nations level to play an oversight role in Canada's implementation of the Calls for Justice and the National Action Plan.



Other characteristics of an accountability framework include: **safeguards** - timelines and mechanisms to ensure continuation of implementation even when government or organizational leadership changes; **transparency and accessibility** - for Indigenous families, survivors, women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people being able to easily access information about actions being taken with clear and frequent communication to families and survivors; and **measuring transformative processes and transformative outcomes** through Indigenous Data Sovereignty, decolonizing data, and proper data infrastructure.

All families that want to be part of the process must be provided pathways for engagement with partners in the National Action Plan implementation work to come. As the holders of expert knowledge and experience, the NFSC members and all families and survivors, are all subject matter experts. Our expertise is the evidence upon which decisions need to be made. We are prepared to work with all partners to coordinate and validate efforts. Mutual and clear understanding of structure, process and roles and responsibilities now and moving forward will be key to supporting relationships. Families and survivors must see their expertise and agency in processes and in the outcomes. This cannot be limited to the NFSC: all families and survivors, especially families and survivors from distinct Nations, Peoples, and communities, should see their expertise and agency inform and be included by partners responsible for implementation of the National Action Plan and the Calls for Justice. Further, their inclusion must respect their agency, freedom and independence of thought, perspective, and beliefs. When families and survivors are engaged through various pathways, these pathways, and the work to be done transparently will provide certainty of roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

As the members of the NFSC we take our role in this process as a sacred responsibility. As the NFSC members we remain committed to this process, and we remind all partners to think about how we work together.

