

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation 2026

On September 30, we recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day, a day to honour the children who never returned home from residential schools, the Survivors who did, and the families and communities who continue to live with the profound and lasting impacts of the residential school system.

For those of us who work in healthcare, this day carries particular responsibility.

The history of residential schools is inseparable from the broader history of colonial policies and systems that caused harm to Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The consequences of those systems did not end when the last residential school closed. Their effects continue across generations and are reflected in the experiences many First Nations, Inuit and Métis people have within institutions and systems, including healthcare.

As naturopathic doctors, our work is grounded in relationships. We listen to patients, seek to understand their experiences and circumstances, and recognize that trust is fundamental to providing good care. Truth and Reconciliation asks us to bring that same willingness to listen and learn to our understanding of Indigenous experiences, including experiences of healthcare.

Reconciliation is not something that can be accomplished through a single statement or commemorative day. September 30 provides an important opportunity to reflect, but the responsibility extends throughout the year. It requires continued learning about the history and ongoing impacts of colonialism and residential schools, listening to Indigenous voices and perspectives, examining the assumptions and practices within our own institutions and professions, and considering how each of us can contribute to safer and more respectful relationships.

As a professional association, BCND also has a responsibility to continue learning and to consider how reconciliation is reflected in our work, our relationships and the way we support the profession. We recognize that this is ongoing work and that meaningful progress requires humility, consistency and a willingness to listen.

This year, I encourage members to use September 30 as an opportunity not only to remember, but to deepen their understanding. Read the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Learn about the history of the lands and Indigenous communities where you live and practise. Listen to the experiences and perspectives of Indigenous people. Take part in Indigenous-led learning opportunities. Consider what reconciliation means within your own practice and relationships with patients and communities.

On behalf of the Board of BC Naturopathic Doctors, I extend our respect to residential school Survivors, their families and communities, and our remembrance to the children who never came home.

There is much still to learn and much work still to do. BCND remains committed to listening, learning and contributing to that work with respect and intention.

Dr. Vanessa Lindsay, ND, BCND President

On behalf of the Board of Directors