3.2 Deaths in the Custody of Canada: The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG).
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Learning Objectives

At the end of the presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Explain the custodial relationship between Canada and Indigenous People.
2. Describe the impact of the Residential School System on the MMIWG Inquiry.
3. Apply the knowledge gleaned to the investigation of deaths of Indigenous People in Canada and abroad.

Abstract

Canada has a dark past with respect to Indigenous people which has long-lasting consequences today. Indigenous people are still referred to as “Indians” by Canada and the Crown and are considered wards of the federal government. The paternalistic legislation known as The Indian Act affects all “Status Indians” living in Canada. Generations of historical trauma (as a result of government policies under the Indian Act, including the residential school system) has created a crisis within Indigenous communities in the form of poverty, violence, food and housing insecurity, increased rates of suicide and incarceration, and barriers to education, employment and healthcare. For decades, Indigenous women and girls have been murdered, found dead or have gone missing in numbers disproportionate to the general population. This has all occurred under governmental control and until recently, has received little attention or investigation.

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Inquiry impacts all aspects of the death investigation system. The historical aspects leading to the completion of the Inquiry will be explored, with emphasis on the link between the residential school system and the deaths of Indigenous people today. Possible
approaches to appropriately handle these deaths before, during and after the post-mortem examination and emphasis will be placed on the team approach to these deaths, and future directions following the Inquiry.