

Indigenous Myths & Misconceptions

Misconception: Terminology

The terms 'Aboriginal', 'Native', 'Indian' and 'Indigenous' are sometimes used to describe a homogenous group of people. In fact, there are three distinct cultural groups known as the 'Inuit', the 'Métis' and 'First Nations' in Canada. Each of these three groups of peoples has its own unique history, culture and spirituality. And further, for example, within the 'First Nations' of Alberta there are 45 distinct nations in three different Treaty territories, each with their own unique history, culture and spirituality.

As a general rule, most individuals prefer to be referred to by the specific nation to which they belong (Blackfoot, Cree, Dene, etc.). Sometimes the term 'Indigenous' has also been wrongly used by the news media. For instance, "The Indigenous are...", would be properly used instead as "The Indigenous peoples are...".⁹