Surrey First Peoples Guide for Newcomers

Ethical Engagement with Indigenous People Guide: Curriculum

SURREY LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

Ethical Engagement with Indigenous People Guide
Surrey LIP
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Contents

Acknowledgements

This work is taking place on the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of SEMYOME (Semiahmoo), qʼiċəyˀ (Katzie), kʷikʷəƛ̓əm (Kwikwetlem), qʷɑ:nˀƛ̓ənˀ (Kwantlen), qiqéyt (Qayqayt), xʷməθkʷəyˀəm (Musqueam) and sc̓əwaθən məsteyəxʷ (Tsawwassen) First Nations. The knowledge, traditions and ongoing contributions of these communities are significant in providing context to the work of this resource. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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Our Purpose

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Our Purpose

Littlecrane Consulting created this documentation on behalf of the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) to provide an understanding of what it means to ethically build relationships and collaborate with Indigenous peoples in the province of BC. Alongside land based First Nations and urban Indigenous communities in BC, settler groups, including immigrants, newcomers, and refugees, are making efforts to be in right relations with Indigenous People who have called these territories home since time immemorial.

This document is for immigrant, refugee and newcomer-serving communities and individuals to raise awareness and understanding of ethical engagement with Indigenous People. The following information is grounded in research and literature that can help build awareness about ethical engagement and partnerships with local First Nations and Indigenous communities across the province.

Indigenous communities are experiencing many systemic and overlapping effects that stem from oppressive policies. Until the last few decades, most Canadians were unaware of the horrors of colonization's historical and current-day impacts. The roots of these historical policies that founded Canada dehumanized Indigenous People. Current-day policies and systems uphold discriminatory elements that are still felt in our communities.

Settlers can educate themselves about past and present harms rooted in cultural genocide, colonialism, racism, and many human rights abuses and violations in Canada. You can also learn about the daily and constant micro-aggressions that Indigenous Peoples face in our neighbourhoods, communities and places we call "home." Settlers can learn and grow on a journey of allyship informed by Indigenous intentions for this work. They can strive to be in right relations and seek justice alongside Indigenous Peoples.

While we have a long way to go, we can start to make steps to be in right relations based on the five-threaded values of this work:

- Empathy
- Decolonization
- Reciprocity
- Solidarity
- Embodied Understanding

This document uses the terms "right relations" and "reconciliation" interchangeably. Some Indigenous People can have strong emotions surface when they hear the word reconciliation. 2023 marks the eighth year since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released a list of 94 Calls to Action. In 2022, the Yellowhead Institute found that only thirteen recommendations have been implemented in the past eight years. At this pace, it will take until 2065 to implement all the calls to action.

The report found that a “tremendous amount” still must be done, from health, education, and child welfare to justice and Indigenous languages to advance reconciliation.

This chronic inaction reflects a painful history of empty promises in Canada. Talking without action can cause more harm than good and works to deepen the divide between our respective communities.

Similarly to the TRC’s calls to action, many other published reports made firm recommendations about improving the well-being and livelihood of Indigenous People to be on the same level as other Canadians, with little to no action. These reports include:

- The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (1999)
- Aboriginal Justice Inquiry (1999)
- The Canadian Human Rights Case on First Nations Child Welfare (2007)
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action (2015)
- Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Women and Girls (2019)
- In Plain Sight – Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discriminationin BC Health Care (2020)

It is time to build strong relationships grounded in the values of empathy, decolonization, reciprocity, solidarity and embodied understanding. With this opportunity, settler groups are responsible for understanding Indigenous people’s history, context and lived realities before they can meaningfully and ethically engage. Indigenous peoples have stewarded these territories – where you carry out your important work – since time immemorial.

Values to Guide this Work

The purpose of these Threaded Values is to find ways to thread through the Big Ideas in practice. As we go through each of the Big Ideas, we will be relating each idea back to these values as a way to understand them from various perspectives.

1. Empathy:
The ability to understand and share the feelings of another. The ability to empathize with Indigenous lived experience is essential to engaging ethically. If we are not able to understand another's perspective and context, it will have great impacts on our ability to engage ethically.

2. Decolonization:
"Decolonization doesn't have a synonym"; it is not a substitute for 'human rights' or 'social justice,' though undoubtedly, they are connected in various ways. Decolonization demandsan Indigenous framework and a centering of Indigenous land, Indigenous sovereignty, and Indigenous ways of thinking. – Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang

Decolonization asks us to surface, define and disrupt dominant systems that uphold oppressive systems.

3. Reciprocity:
The practice of exchanging things with others for mutual benefit, especially privileges granted by one country or organization to another. By questioning our motives to engage, ensuring we have proper resources to engage and compensating those we engage well, wecan ensure that our engagement does not over burden those we hope to learn from.

4. Solidarity:
Unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group.

5. Embodied Understanding:
Human understanding is profoundly embodied. That is, it is rooted in how our bodies and brains interact with, process, and understand our environments in a way that recruits bodily meaning, neural simulation, and feeling to carry out both concrete and abstract conceptualization and reasoning.

Definitions

Assimilate (v.), assimilation (n.): "encouraging them or coercing them to abandon their culture, languages, and way of life, and to adopt the culture of the colonizers."

Colonize (v.), Colonization (n.): "Colonization is a process where one group of people moves into the territory or area of another group then ultimately takes over and changes the lives of the colonized. Colonization has happened all over the world: the British and French in North America; the British in India; the Dutch in South Africa; the Spanish in Latin America; and the Portuguese in Brazil. Today many Indigenous groups are living with the impacts of colonization, and they are fighting for self-determination."

"Colonization occurs when a new group exercises control over an Indigenous group. The colonizers impose their own cultural values, religions and laws, and make policies that are in their favour, and against the Indigenous peoples. They seize land and control access to resources and trade. As a result, the Indigenous people become dependent on the colonizers."

Culture (n.): "An expression of a community's worldview and unique relationship with the land. Indigenous cultures across Canada are diverse, but there are commonalities amongst them." Traditionally, their societies were communal: every member had a role and responsibilities,there was equality between men and women, nature was valued, and life was cyclical."

Enfranchisement (n.): Enfranchisement is a legal process to terminate a person's Indigenous status and status rights and to confer full Canadian citizenship. This process was initially voluntary under the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857 and became legally compulsory under the Indian Act of 1876, which was in place until 1961. The aim of enfranchisement was the assimilation of 'civilized' individuals and Bands into settler society and meant that Indigenous men could own property (subtracted from allotted reserve lands) and vote in Provincial and Federal elections (Indigenous women were not given any legal rights at the time). Enfranchisement continued until 1985, in cases where, when an Indigenous woman married a non-Indigenous person, she would lose her status.

With enfranchisement, status holders would lose their status if they:

- Served in the Canadian Armed Forces
- Earned a college or university degree
- Left their reserves for long periods, e.g. for employment
- Became an ordained minister
- Became a professional, e.g. a doctor or lawyer

Elder (n.): "In Indigenous cultures, Elders are cherished and respected. An Elder is not simply an older or elderly person, but rather, they are usually someone who is very

knowledgeable about the history, values and teachings of his or her culture. He or she lives their life according to these values and teachings.

For their knowledge, wisdom and behaviour, Elders are valuable role models and teachers to all members of the community. Elders play an important role in maintaining the tradition of passing along oral histories."

First Nation (n.): "In Canada, First Nations is the term used to refer to people who are Indigenous and who do not identify as Inuit or Métis. In the past, First Nations people used to be referred to as "Indians." There are 634 First Nations across Canada and over 60 distinct Nations.

First Nations is the accepted term today instead of the term "Indian" which is considered an offensive colonial term."

Indigenous (n, adj.): "Indigenous is a term that is being heard more and more in Canada. It is being used synonymously with Aboriginal and is the preferred term. Both Indigenous and Aboriginal are collective nouns for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. It is important to note that there are often regional and personal preferences for terms."

Indian (n.; adj.), Indian status (n.): No, it is not okay to use the word "Indian." The use of the term "Indian" in Canada is considered outdated and offensive.

However, the term is still in use in legal documents such as the Indian Act and in the Constitution Act (1982). The term "Indian" is used when referring to a First Nations person with status under the Indian Act. The Indian Act defines who is and who is not an Indian. Those with status have cards that "Certify their Indian Status."

Indian Act (n.): The Indian Act was another attempt to assimilate First Nations people into European society as quickly as possible. Under section 91(24) of the British North America Act (1867), the Federal government was given jurisdiction or control over "Indians and Landsreserved for Indians".

Land claim (n.): "The Government of Canada officially calls modern treaties Comprehensive Land Claims."

Oral Tradition (n.): "Indigenous peoples pass along values and histories through oral storytelling. Oral histories and stories have been passed down from generation to generation and are essential to maintaining Indigenous identity and culture. People repeat their history and stories to keep information alive over generations. Often it is the role of particular people within each community to memorize the oral history with great care. These people are often called Witnesses."

Reconciliation: "Truth and Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this

country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour."

Reserve (n.): "Land that has been set apart by the Federal government for the use and benefit of an Indian band." Not all Indigenous people live on reserves. In 2011, the statistics were as follows for the First Nations people who reported being Registered Indians:

- 49.3% (637,660) lived on a reserve in Canada
- In Quebec, 72% lived on reserve, the highest proportion amongthe provinces
- In New Brunswick, 68.8% lived on reserve
- In Nova Scotia, 68% lived on reserve
- In Ontario, 37.0% lived on a reserve
- In Newfoundland and Labrador 35.1% lived on reserve

Many First Nations people would like to live on their reserves but there are many reasons why they cannot – often there are not enough houses, the reserves are too far away from their employment, or the infrastructure is insufficient.

Self-Determination (n.): "The United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples includes the right to self-determination. The Assembly of First Nations describes self-determination as a Nation's right to choose its own government and decide its own economic, social and cultural development. Today, Indigenous people are exercising Aboriginal Rights and Title for self-determination and benefitting from the wealth and resources of this land that is now called Canada."

Settler-colonialism (n.): First, settler colonizers "come to stay": unlike colonial agents suchas traders, soldiers, or governors, settler collectives intend to permanently occupy and assert sovereignty over Indigenous lands.

Second, settler colonial invasion is a structure, not an event: settler colonialism persists in the ongoing elimination of Indigenous populations, and the assertion of state sovereignty and juridical control over their lands. In 2009 Stephen Harper said "Canada does not havea history with colonialism."[1] This statement was widely criticized because 1) the Canadian government had issued the apology for the Residential School System in 2008 2) colonialism in Canada is still alive and well. Indigenous people still feel the impacts of unjust laws in place today. Despite notions of post-coloniality, settler colonial societies do not stop being colonial when political allegiance is obtained.

Third, settler colonialism seeks its own end: unlike other types of colonialism in which the goal is to maintain colonial structures and imbalances in power between colonizer and colonized, settler colonization trends towards ending colonial difference in the form of a supreme and unchallenged settler state and people. However, this is not a drive to

[1] The Vancouver Sun Community Blogs, Really Harper, Canada has no history of colonialism?, The Vancouver Sun, September 27, 2009. https://vancouversun.com/news/community-blogs/really-harper-canada-has-no-history-of-colonialism.

decolonize, but rather an attempt to eliminate the challenges posed to settler sovereignty by Indigenous peoples' claims to land, by eliminating indigenous peoples themselves and asserting false narratives and structures of settler belonging.

Status and Non-Status Indians (n.): A "Status Indian" (or "Registered Indian") is a person recognized by the federal government as being entitled to be registered under the Indian Act, as an "Indian".

"Non-status Indians" refers to people who identify as First Nations (Indians) but who are not entitled to registration on the Indian Register pursuant to the Indian Act. Some may also have membership in a First Nation.

Sovereignty (n.): "Historically, First Nations managed their lands and resources with their own governments, laws, policies, and practices. Their societies were very complex and included systems for trade and commerce, building relationships, managing resources, and spirituality."

Treaties (n.): Early settlers "viewed treaties as a process transferring title and control of Indigenous land to non-Indigenous people and governments."

"In signing treaties with First Nations, the British government, followed by the Canadian government (after 1867), viewed treaties as the completion of transfer of title to the Crown."

"First Nations viewed themselves as equal partners (a Nation) when signing treaties and believed that under the treaties they would still have access to their way of life and their traditional territories."

Terra Nullius (n.): "European map-makers drew unexplored landscapes as blank spaces instead of interpreting these blank spaces as areas yet to be mapped, they saw them as empty land waiting to be settled. When Europeans arrived in North America, they regarded it as terra nullius or "nobody's land". They simply ignored the fact that Indigenous people had been living in these lands for thousands of years, with their own cultures and civilizations. For the newcomers, the land was theirs to colonize. As time passed, the newcomers began to take over land that was part of the traditional territories of Indigenous people who had occupied this land long before the arrival of the newcomers."

Traditional territory (n.): Land that a First Nation has lived on or used since time immemorial where they have a primary sacred, cultural, and economic connection to this land.

"The geographic area identified by a First Nation as the area of land which they and/or theirancestors traditionally occupied and used. Often parts of these territories were shared with neighbouring nations."

What is Indigenous Ethical Engagement (IEE)?

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What is Indigenous Ethical Engagement (IEE)?

From Sarah Beer – a non-Indigenous ally:

As settlers, reflecting on how we support meaningful and authentic action on the TRC Calls to Action and local Indigenous needs, interests, and priorities is essential. Therefore, we must honour their right to self-governance, self-determination, and self-reliance in any process.

Many Indigenous Peoples continue to say, "Nothing about us without us." Settler groups need to hear this and take action accordingly when engaging with Indigenous peoples. This process requires deep humility and willingness to listen and learn how to build better relationships with Indigenous Peoples in our communities. Here, we offer how this can be done – through the following resources created by Indigenous peoples.

- **Cultural Awareness** is an attitude that includes awareness about differences between cultures.

- **Cultural Sensitivity** is an attitude that recognizes the differences between cultures and that these differences are important to acknowledge in health care.

- **Cultural Competency** is an approach that focuses on practitioners attaining skills, knowledge, and attitudes to work more effectively and respectfully with Indigenous patients and people of different cultures.

- **Cultural Humility** is an approach to health care based on a humble acknowledgement of oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding a person'sexperience. It is a life-long process of learning and being self-reflective.

- **Cultural Safety** is an approach that considers how social and historical contexts, as well as structural and interpersonal power imbalances shape health and healthcare experiences. "Safety" is defined by those who receive the service, not those who provide it. Practitioners are self-reflective and self-aware with regard to their positionof power and the impact of this role on patients.

From: Differences between cultural safety and related concepts (from Ward, Branch, & Fridkin, 2016, p.30)

What Can I Do?
Begin to Listen and Learn

Satsan is a Wetseweten hereditary chief of the Frog Clan and was the chief legal strategist for the Delgamuux case, a precedent-setting legal case in Canada that affirmed the inherentrights of Indigenous Peoples. Notably, the case proved Wetseweten and Gixtan territories were never legally settled. During colonization, British law stated that settlement must happen by either treaty (agreement) or by surrender through war, neither of which occurred in most of BC. So, when you hear the word "unceded," it refers to how the lands were illegallysettled (in other words, stolen).

"Especially since the Canadian public is finally tuned into the fact that reconciliation needs to be done but in terms of the principles of recognition and respect. From the First Nations'perspective, we know Canada very well, but from the Canadian public perspective, they don't know us. So, to affect [real] reconciliation, we need to harness those two principles." – Satsan

We know that many people who immigrate to Canada are, in fact, interested in educating themselves about Indigenous history and peoples. Many newcomer initiatives support Indigenous education, cultural awareness and safety, and solidarity work. In one such solidarity-building project, the Surrey LIP partnered with the Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre to bring Indigenous, newcomer and refugee youth to the Kwantlen First Nation longhouse. The Building Solidarity Between Indigenous and Refugee Communities in Surrey Project allowed these groups to learn from each other's history. Connections were made organically over experiences of displacement, discrimination, and violence.

During the facilitation, newcomers witnessed and, at times, were part of ceremonies, singing, dancing, sharing circles, and exercises that opened their perspective on Indigenous life. One notable gathering was the Indigenous & Refugee Youth Intercultural Dialogue. During one sharing circle, newcomer and refugee youth in attendance reported that anti- Indigenous racism is immediately embedded in their family systems a few weeks after arriving in Canada. This statement prompted the leaders and facilitators present to assertthat discrimination against Indigenous People is so subtly and intricately woven into the fabric of Canadian culture that it grows organically in families with no knowledge of Indigenous historical and present realities.

The TRC's calls to action addressed the need for more robust education for Newcomers in call 93:

In collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, we call upon the federal government to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.

Newcomer-serving organizations can further help their community members to continue their learning in a good way. Building on the interest of the immigrant, newcomer, and refugee population, we invite you to begin to listen and learn. We invite you to explore what it means to be in right relations with Indigenous peoples and what it means to engage with Indigenous organizations, communities and people ethically.

What Do We Mean When We Say Engagement?

Before we talk about Indigenous Ethical Engagement, we need to explain what we mean when we say "engagement"?

Engagement involves a wide range of activities with diverse groups and communities, such as:

1. **Having conversations in a group** about a wide range of topics
2. **Building relationships with people** in our neighbourhood or in the city that we live in
3. **Gathering together** for cultural, social and other purposes
4. **Sharing information, ideas, and knowledge**
5. **Making decisions together** about things that impact us
6. **Mediation and conflict resolution** when there are challenges

Engagement encompasses a wide range of activities. In essence, engagement is about building better communities together. Engagement activities can also be tied to research. The history of researching Indigenous People in Canada has a dark past. Unethical research practices have informed policies still in use today:

"In his academic article 'Administering Colonial Science,' published in 2013, Mosby revealed how nutritional studies and experiments were performed in Indigenous communities and residential schools in the 1940s and '50s. The tests were apparently done, explained Mosby, without the informed consent or knowledge of the Indigenouspeople involved. What isn't yet widely known, said Mosby, a professor of history at Ryerson University, is how these experiments are directly connected to Canada's Food Guide."[2]

The deeply unethical and sometimes violent history of research has had personal impacts on myself and my family. For example, some of my Aunties and Uncles[3] were victims of the Health Canada experiments at the Brandon residential school in Manitoba[4]. When one Auntie would run away, the rest of their siblings would be punished severely for every day that they were gone. This has had lasting impacts on our family system, including decades-long conflict between the siblings due to their treatment. My Aunties and Uncles also experienced lifelong health impacts due to their treatment in residential schools. This is what I mean when I say that many impacts in our communities have systemic causes. The legacy of residential schools has contributed to intergenerational trauma,which can affect many generations.

Historically in western academia, the nature of research often extracted knowledge from Indigenous communities with little or no reciprocity. Although research practices and ethics requirements are transforming to address this, the extractive nature of research can still be felt in our communities.

To learn about how to ethically collect, protect, use and share data using Indigenous engagement, see the First Nations Principles of OCAP. OCAP asserts that "First Nations [should] have control over data collection processes, and that they own and control how this information can be used."[5]

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[2]The Dark History of Canada's Food Guide: https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/how-food-in-canada-is-tied-to-land- language-community-and-colonization-1.5989764/the-dark-history-of-canada-s-food-guide-how-experiments-on-indigenous- children-shaped-nutrition-policy 1.5989785#:~:text=Historian%20Ian%20Mosby%20 (Submitted%20 by,in%20the %20 1940s%20 and%20'50s.

[3] I capitalize Aunties and Uncles with the intention of showing respect and to deeply honour my family for their strength, prayers and forethought for future generations, including myself.

[4] Psychic Experiments conducted on Brandon Residential School Kids (2015) CBC

[5] https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/#:~:text=Principles%20of%20OCAP-,%C2%AE,this%20information%20can%20be%20used.

Barriers to Engagement

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The First Nations Principles of OCAP®

The First Nations principles of OCAP® establish how First Nations' data and information will be collected, protected, used or shared. Standing for ownership, control, access and possession, OCAP® is a tool to support strong information governance on the path to First Nations data sovereignty. Given the diversity within and across Nations, the principles will be expressed and asserted in line with a Nation's respective worldview, traditional knowledge, and protocols.

If you work with First Nations, consider how you interact with First Nations data.

Ownership refers to the relationship of First Nations to their cultural knowledge, data and information. This principle states that a community or group owns information collectively in the same way that an individual owns their personal information.

Control affirms that First Nations, their communities, and representative bodies are within their rights in seeking to control all aspects of research and information management processes that impact them. First Nations control of research can include all stages of a particular research project from start to finish. The principle extends to the control of resources and review processes, the planning process, management of the information and so on.

Access refers to the fact that First Nations must have access to information and data about themselves and their communities regardless of where it is held. The principle of access also refers to the right of First Nations communities and organizations to manage and make decisions regarding access to their collective information. This may be achieved, in practice, through standardized, formal protocols.

Possession while ownership identifies the relationship between a person and their information in principle, possession or stewardship is more concrete: it refers to the physical control of data. Possession is the mechanism by which ownership can be asserted and protected.

Barriers to Engagement

The history of settler "engagement" with Indigenous Peoples goes back to first contact. This was when European settlers created legislation, such as the Indian Act, to justify the colonization of Turtle Island and carry out government-led and driven human rights violations targeting Indigenous Peoples. The Indian Act aimed to control and conquer.

The roots of settler interactions and relations are embedded in a history of horrific and unethical acts that deeply affect Indigenous peoples, families, communities, and governance systems today.

Urban Indigenous Context

Land-based Nations and urban Indigenous communities are far under-resourced despite the common misconception that they "get everything for free." These funding inequities directly influence the Indigenous community's capacity to meet the many requests to engage with non-Indigenous organizations and research projects.

Here's a story from the Surrey Indigenous Leadership Committee:

"There has been dramatic population growth of the urban Indigenous community in Surrey, BC. This dramatic population growth has been a wake-up call to decision-makers and funders. Historically, little attention has been paid to providing funding or services to Indigenous People in Surrey. The result is that few [policies] or programs support Indigenous People living in Surrey. There are even fewer Indigenous-directed social service providers in Surrey. The [existing few] are underfunded and stretched to adequately providethe breadth of services the community [seeks].

At the same time, but at a national level, Canada has started to assess the history of settler colonialism and cultural genocide. Through the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the inquiry into murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls, Canadians are seeking to reconcile their relationship with Indigenous people. In this context, more and more organizations and governments are seeking to deepen their understanding of [engaging] diverse and underrepresented voices in public policy decision-making processes.

Indigenous people are one of the underrepresented voices, especially in Surrey. The net result of these Community level demographic trends and National level conversations is that more and more organizations, funders and governments are seeking to understand theneeds and interests of Indigenous people in Surrey.

While we encourage this to continue, we are aware of [emerging] challenges. [At] one end of the spectrum are organizations attempting to engage Indigenous People by doing the same thing they do for non-Indigenous engagement. It rarely works, and Indigenous

people often do not participate. Alternatively, some organizations realize that they do not have the competency to engage the Indigenous community and are seeking to partner with Indigenous organizations to access the Indigenous community. This could be ideal, except Indigenous organizations in Surrey are under capacity and already stretched to deliver their programs and services. As a result, they may not be able to meet the demands of other organizations and governments to quote 'engage the urban Indigenous Community in important matters.'

In this scenario, both parties who want Indigenous People engaged may end up frustrated or disappointed.

Finally, many Indigenous People are becoming frustrated with engagement as it [still] seems like an extractive process. Indigenous people give -- and non-Indigenous people consultants or researchers take -- and the knowledge and power imbalance continues without returning anything of value to the Indigenous participants or community. When I [worked] for an Indigenous organization early in my career, I was astonished to learn that our centre received up to 40% less funding than mainstream organizations to offer the same services to the same size populations. Indigenous organizations are often victims of paternalistic policies that require them to do up to 25 times the amount of reporting compared to the requirements of mainstream organizations for the same services. This meant that our centre paid Indigenous workers less than what mainstream organization's staff received for the exact same positions. The reporting requirements meant that staff were often over-burdened with 'busy work,' and they felt this impacted their ability to offer the wrap-around supports needed by our community members. The culmination of these systemic impacts, coupled with the personal experiences of Indigenous staff, led to staff burnout and high turnover, which in turn influenced the organization's ability to offer effective services.

For land-based Nations, capacity issues that impact the ability to engage can be much more severe, and the roots of these issues go back to the time of contact.

I want to pause here to say: One of our core values is to take a strength-based approach to all our work concerning Indigenous people. We often only hear traumatic, heavy stories about our people and community. The dominant culture, including mainstream media, focuses on the deficits in a way that pathologizes or puts the blame on Indigenous People and communities when the lived realities of Indigenous people have been manufactured by decades of inequity, violence and oppression. We are highlighting these deficits not as a critique of Indigenous People but to put the onus back on the systems that have created these conditions. This is one of the reasons the Canadian version of reconciliation can be so frustrating – we can speak of the importance of our relationship, and they can acknowledge parts of the history. But until we address the underlying root causes that continue to undermine Indigenous People's basic human rights, nothing will change. This strategy [benefits] Canada as, under their law, they are on shaky ground when honouring Indigenous sovereignty."

Land-Based Nations

First Nations people have been living in North America for thousands of years. Since the arrival of European settlers in the 1600s, First Nations people have endured a history of colonization, forced assimilation, residential schools, and cultural genocide.

Today, First Nations people still face systemic issues that prevent them from engaging with settler populations due to capacity constraints. One of the significant capacity constraints First Nations people face is a lack of resources. The Canadian government provides funding for First Nations communities, but the funds are often inadequate to address the complex social and economic issues they face.

Many communities lack basic infrastructure such as clean water, reliable electricity, and adequate housing. They also have limited access to healthcare services, education, and job opportunities. This lack of resources means First Nations people have limited capacity to engage with settler populations as they struggle to address their basic needs.

Another significant capacity constraint is a lack of political power. The history of colonization and the residential school system has resulted in the loss of traditional governance structures for many First Nations communities. This leaves them without adequate representation in Canada's political system. They may lack the resources to engage in advocacy and lobbying efforts.

Trust

A lack of cultural capacity is another barrier that prevents First Nations people from engaging with settler populations. Settler populations often have a limited understanding – that is informed by misconceptions – of Indigenous history, culture, and traditions. Settlersmay lack the knowledge and skills to engage respectfully with First Nations people. This lack of cultural capacity can lead to misunderstandings, miscommunications, and mistrust between the two communities.

A lack of trust is a significant capacity constraint that prevents healthy relationship building between our two respective communities. The legacy of colonization and residential schools has created a deep mistrust between First Nations people and the Canadian government. This mistrust is also evident in relationships with settler populations. Settler populations may lack trust in First Nations people due to stereotypes and inaccurate information perpetuated by the media and popular culture.

Now let's look at the legal history that has created these challenging conditions for ethical engagement.

History of Colonial Laws

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History of Colonial Laws

Terra Nullius and the Doctrine of Discovery

The Doctrine of Discovery and Terra Nullius were documents created by the Catholic Churchin the 13 and 14th centuries. These documents legitimized the African slave trade and the colonization of many Indigenous lands, including North America.

The Doctrine of discovery granted "free and ample faculty…to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens [Muslims] and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions,and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit. Romanus Pontifex, 1455

The Doctrine of Discovery and Terra Nullius claimed that the people they found there (Indigenous people of North America), in their view, were not civilized. Because they were not Christian, they were often called heathens – and were considered less than human.

Much of Canadian and US laws are still based on these documents since the founding of both countries was not possible without legitimizing the theft of lands. The resources extracted from these lands were what founded both countries. US legal doctrine is based on the Doctrine of Discovery. For example, in the 1835 Tennessee Supreme Court case Tennessee v. Forman, the court ruled:

"The principle declared in the fifteenth century as the law of Christendom that discovery gave title to assume sovereignty over, and to govern the unconverted natives of Africa, Asia, and North and South America, has been recognized as a part of the national law, for nearly four centuries."

Because the original inhabitants were not Christain, early "explorers" considered the land "empty." Tara Williamson, a Cree poet, provocateur, and pop singer, wrote, "In precisely this way, the legal foundation of Canada is built on the premise that Indians do not exist as people. The state has a strong interest in upholding this lie: its legitimacy — its very existence — depends on it."

The TRC's Call to Action 45.1 recommends that Canada "repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples such as the Doctrine of Discovery." On March 3rd, 2023, the Catholic church formally repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery.

Indigenous leaders are criticizing the statement because the Vatican also said the "documents had been "manipulated" for political purposes by colonial powers "to justify immoral acts against Indigenous peoples…."

Chief Marion Buller, the first female First Nations judge in British Columbia, stated, "I think [the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery [is] important step for all governments in Canada, however, to go back and rethink how the crown thinks it has control or underlying title for all lands in Canada."

The Gradual Civilization Act

The principles of the Doctrine of Discovery were reinforced by the Gradual Civilization Act in 1857, which aimed to assimilate Indigenous Peoples into Canadian society by imposing European values and norms. The Act offered Indigenous People Canadian citizenship if they renounced their cultural practices and adopted Euro-Canadian customs, including Christianity and private property ownership. This process was intended to eradicate Indigenous peoples' identity, traditions, and sovereignty. The process also paved the way for the Canadian government's forced relocation of Indigenous People onto reserves whichmake up 0.2% of our traditional territories, while Canada considers the rest – 98.8% "crown lands" The Act also forced all Indigenous children to residential school which created immense trauma for the entire community.

At the Surrey Indigenous & Refugee Solidarity event, during the Circle and the Box workshop, one Elder remarked,

"Imagine your neighbourhoods and towns today. Now imagine what your world would be like if all of your children were taken away. You wouldn't hear them playing in the streets. Your entire world would be very different. Now imagine that if you resisted at all, you would be sent to jail. Imagine the impacts this had on our communities. Entire family systems were broken. In our culture, children are the centre of our society. We do everything with the next generations in mind. We live in balance with the world around us to sustain our land for the ones yet to come. These policies were designed to exterminate us and our culture by hurting the center of our communities, our purpose, our children."

The Doctrine of Discovery and the Gradual Civilization Act suggest that settler colonialism is primarily concerned with subjugating and exploiting Indigenous peoples rather than respecting their inherent rights and self-determination. These laws severed Indigenous people's connections to lands and rights while becoming civilized Crown subjects.

The Indian Act

The Indian Act has historically defined who is an Indian and who isn't while asserting complete jurisdictional control over Indians and their lands in Canada. To this day, people with Indian Status cards are born "wards of the state," which means they do not have the full legal status of a natural person (a designation usually given to an orphan or someone

mentally unfit to care for themselves). The Canadian government will say that they ended the policy of deeming us a ward of the state in 1951. However, Satsan asserts that the jurisdictional control exercised over us by the Indian Act still controls every aspect of the lives of First Nations people living on reserve today. He calls it a "cradle to grave legislation". For example, I was shocked to learn that the Indian Lands Act of 1860 transferred jurisdiction over aboriginal peoples to the coloniesof British North America, taking power away from traditional systems of governance.

The Indian Act was strategically designed to eliminate distinct cultures and languages of Indigenous people, position them as wards of the Crown, and regulate every aspect of their lives. The Indian Act was initially intended for extermination but later changed to assimilation. This has led to a loss of identity among Indigenous people, causing devastatingconsequences such as high rates of suicide.

In 1867, Canada became a country with the passing of the British North America Act; Section 91(24) assigned the Federal Government the responsibility for all "Indians and lands reserved for Indians." Under the Indian Act, Indigenous People:

- Needed a pass to leave their small reserves
- Needed to acquire a pass to sell livestock or crops. This controlled Indigenous People's ability to participate in the economy meaningfully and made them generationally poor
- Could not practice traditional ceremonies such as the potlatch, sundance, and all other ceremonies. These important ceremonies embedded traditional land-basedlaws, such as the potlatch economy and the Cree sacred law practice of Miyo Pimatisiwin (1925-1951)
- Were banned from using traditional and ceremonial clothing unless for a performance (often for settler audiences)
- Could not vote (Indigenous People were not extended the vote until 1960)
- Could not form their own political groups (1925-1951)
- Could be removed as Chief by the Indian Agent if the Chief stood up to the federal government
- Could not hire a lawyer – If lands were expropriated illegally, Indigenous people could not fight in courts with a lawyer. It was illegal for status Indians to hire lawyers or seek legal advice, fundraise for land claims, or meet in groups. Many had to stop organizing but others continued to do so secretly to fight for their rights.
- Were forced to send children between the ages of 6 to 17 into residential schools. (See Residential Schools)

In the early decades of the Indian Act, the federal government established the role of Indian Agents to control life on the reserve. Today the Indian Act is still administered by the federalgovernment through two federal ministries: Crown-Indigenous Relations and Indigenous Services Canada.

Today, the act continues to govern the lives and well-being of First Nations people in Canada. The Act has been described as a form of apartheid because it separates First Nations people from the rest of Canadian society and imposes numerous administrative and legal restrictions on their lives. Among the Act's many rules and policies are those that control First Nations people's access to land, resources, education, and fundamental human rights. Today, the Indian Act restricts First Nations people's rights and opportunities.It governs land ownership, housing, and economic development on reserves. It requires extensive federal oversight for many forms of economic activity. The Act also limits First Nations people's ability to govern themselves. The federal government retains the final say over many important decisions affecting their communities. The ongoing impact of the Indian Act has been devastating, with Indigenous People in Canada facing disproportionately high rates of poverty, addiction, and suicide relative to the general population. Despite these ongoing injustices, Indigenous People in Canada have been fighting back against the Indian Act for decades, pushing for greater self-governance and control over their lives.

Today, land-based communities are vastly under-resourced because of Canada's history of land theft. Arthur Manual called this a "0.2% economy" because land-based nations were forced onto reserves that make up 0.2% of Canada. He asks – how can a nation meaningfully grow its economy without access to its lands and resources? We must consider the historical contexts that influence land-based nations' ability and capacity to engage.

The Indian Act separates Indigenous peoples from the rest of the Constitution, causing them to fight for their rights. First Nations have fought through various means, including direct action on the land and legal battles such as Delgamuukw v British Columbia (1997) and Mikisew Cree First Nation v Canada (2005). These cases led to legal recognition of aboriginal title and rights, consultation and accommodation obligations by governments, and affirmation of self-government under Section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982.
To inform yourself on Indigenous perspectives on reconciliation, research section 35 of the constitution and what this means for land-based nations.

Reconciliation

What is Reconciliation?

Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada refers to the efforts made by the government and non-Indigenous Canadians to address the historical and ongoing injustices and harms inflicted upon Indigenous peoples throughout Canada's colonial history.

Reconciliation involves several elements, such as acknowledging and apologizing for past wrongdoings, addressing the impacts of residential schools, supporting Indigenous languages and cultures and working towards meaningful self-determination for Indigenous communities. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to document the experiences of residential school survivors and to make recommendations to promote healing and reconciliation. The report, published in 2015, calls for numerous changes to address the lasting effects of residential schools, including child welfare services, education, justice, and health.

The TRC definition of reconciliation states that "Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour."

Reconciliation is an ongoing process that requires the commitment and participation of all Canadians to address the historical and systemic injustices that continue to affect Indigenous peoples today. Young Indigenous people are calling for the resources and space to enact reconciliation within their communities first. Since Indigenous people have been systematically under-resourced, there is a need for more funding and support for cultural revitalization that helps with community healing programs.

History of Inaction

Indigenous communities face intersecting impacts that span many sectors. It is important to note that although Indigenous communities are often pathologized and blamed for these impacts, they are systemic and are outcomes of historic and ongoing acts of colonization.

These impacts include, but are not limited to:

- Issues around undermining inherent rights and sovereignty. Most of the land in BC is considered unceded territory, which means that the lands here were never legally settled by the Canadian state

- Overrepresentation in the opioid crisis, Indigenous children and youth ingovernment care, and the justice system
- Systemic racism spans all government sectors namely health care, child and family services, the justice system, education and social services (including thenon-profit sector)
- The impacts of fire and flooding and other environmental impacts related to climate change include loss of habitat and species.
- Food security and sovereignty
- Emerging research supports what our communities have always known – that many of our ancestors and relatives are buried in unmarked graves at residential school sites.
- Intergenerational trauma
- General misconceptions on many aspects of Indigenous life, including funding models and strategies applied by the provincial and federal government
- Narratives around reconciliation promise new relationships, supports, and righting of historical wrongs but are followed with little or no action
- Natural resource extraction on unceded territories that are unsupported by land-based nations. In instances where land-based nations would support a project, they are given piece-meal and insignificant fees.
- Insufficient and substandard housing on reserve and overrepresentation of Indigenous people who are homeless in urban centres

Settler Engagement Issues

The history and present-day engagement issues are important to understand when settler groups intend to engage and build relationships with Indigenous Peoples. Due to a lack of awareness and education, settler groups can easily fall into the deeply rooted – unethical and problematic engagement practices that continue today. To prevent settlers from repeating history, we must first recognize the traps we can all fall into. The following is not an exhaustive list, but some identifiable engagement attitudes, behaviours and practices to avoid:

1. **Paternalism:**

The deep-rooted, ongoing paternalistic attitudes and behaviours of "well-meaning" people who hold a "we know best" mentality that prevents Indigenous Peoples from leading on issues with their solutions.

2. **Saviourism:**

Similarly to paternalism, a saviour mentality is when people think "they are somehow in the position that should enable them to have more power in solving the problem than the people who are impacted [by the problem]."

3. **Guilt:**

The 4R's youth movement is an Indigenous and youth-led organization that seeks to meaningfully advance reconciliation. In a published article, they reference Harsha Walia when addressing guilt as a major barrier to meaningfully engaging Indigenous people and communities:

"If you're driven by guilt, you're not ready. You should be well aware that as a country, Canada was established through a process called colonialism. Colonialism has built institutions and structures, systems, that continue to shape and govern present-day society and subsequently continue to harm, ignore, or disadvantage Indigenous people to the benefit of non-Indigenousgroups (that's privilege).

Maybe you're feeling overwhelmed by the complexity of these issues and feeling kind of guilty. After all, [maybe] you've never really had to worry about the actual impacts of these issues in your daily life (and this is not coincidental since the systems were built that way).

If you're motivated by guilt, you're not ready to live in solidarity with Indigenous people and communities. You're consciously unpacking what it means to be privileged, which is an excellent start. But in order to contribute to changing these systems, you need to be able to think at a systems (macro) level, which means being able to reflect critically on your positionality without fixating on it (which, in itself, is a privilege). Guilt is an individualistic and internalized experience that centers you — rather than those whose lives are directly and violently impacted by oppressive systems. Your guilt might demonstrate an astute level of mindfulness, but absolving it can't be your only interest in solidarity work."

4. **Misconceptions:**

Unfortunately, misconceptions and misinformation about Indigenous people are woven into the fabric of Canadian culture. Indigenous people witness this in many ways:

- How mainstream media outlets must disable commenting on stories about Indigenous People because of intense racist and hateful remarks.
- How mainstream media often focuses on Indigenous trauma, deficits which have systemic causes.
- Rampant misconceptions around taxes, Indigenous funding, crime, addiction, ability

Until recently, the public education system taught misinformation about Indigenous People's history. This history, which would often glorify the colonization of Canada, asserts

that Indigenous People are primitive, and in some cases, that some tribes went extinct whenthey were pushed out of their territories.

Similarly, systemic racism is also present in reporting processes across many sectors, including healthcare, justice, child andfamily services, and non-profit sector which further promotes misconceptions about First Nation people.
To read more about common myths about Indigenous people, visit:

- Indigenous Corporate Training – Insight on 10 Myths about Indigenous People
- The University of Alberta – Exposing Five Myths

5. Indigenous Erasure

"From this Indigenous perspective, colonialism has always been and will always be about erasing me. The very foundation of this country relies on my non-existence. This erasure continues through literal killings (at alarming rates in the cases of suicide and murdered andmissing Indigenous peoples), administratively through legislation and policy, or socially, in the pressure to assimilate into mainstream Canada." – Tara Williamson

Indigenous erasure is nothing new. We have learned how policies and practices sought to erase Indigenous People and their identities. Indigenous People and knowledge holders can experience a different erasure when working with non-Indigenous organizations or research projects.

Suppose you are developing a contract with an Indigenous person or group providing you with a culturally-specific perspective, especially when they provide cultural teachings. In that case, it is inappropriate to claim that your organization will "own the copyright" to that knowledge (See OCAP Principles).

Columbusing is when you "discover" something that's existed forever. It exists outside your own culture, nationality, and race. Similarly to early colonizers who said they "discovered" North America, western academic scholars have sometimes asserted they "discovered" knowledge that Indigenous People have always known. These acts have been immensely demoralizing for Indigenous People.

It is important to credit Indigenous People when you utilize the knowledge they have generously shared.

6. Institutional Oppression

Institutional oppression refers to oppression against Indigenous staff, but it is also relevant to working with Indigenous People. Like racism, these mechanisms can be subtly embeddedin your organization. You must be able to be reflective on an organizational level to assess whether you are ready to engage Indigenous People.

Len Pierre Consulting offers workshops to grow cultural safety for your organizations. Len outlines the mechanisms of institutional racism in the following table:

Mechanisms	Example
Unacknowledged trauma	Colour blindness, Multiculturalism "regardless ofculture"
Institutions	Buildings and sites are named after white heterosexual upper-class males Reward for conformity
Reward for Conformity	Equality vs. Equity for people and communities Ideology
Ideology	Pathologizing cultural values (i.e. communication)
Invisibility	No visual representation of the local First Nationscommunities on which your site is built
Burden of representation	"The Indigenous people won't engage with us..." or asking Indigenous staff people to speak on behalf of all Indigenous cultures publicly
Internalized racism	Denial of ancestral heritage to gain the structuraladvantage of privilege
Micro-aggressions	"Everyone can succeed if they work hard enough..."(meritocracy)
Isolation	Hiring an Indigenous staff person to take on allIndigenous patients and clients without social, emotional, cultural and professional support in place

What other barriers and issues have you seen, heard, or made the mistake of doing when relating to Indigenous peoples and communities?

Engagement Code of Conduct

Importantly, when we talk more specifically about Indigenous Ethical Engagement, we refer to ethical principles and codes of conduct. The following principles are important to keep in mind when engaging with Indigenous peoples:

1. The First Peoples Principles of Learning by the BC Ministry of Education and First Nations Education Steering Committee,
2. The Ally Bill of Responsibilities © Dr. Lynn Gehl, Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe
3. SUILC Recommendations – Engagement

We encourage you to consider the wide range and diversity of Indigenous cultures and perspectives. It is important to adapt or learn to become culturally adaptable, as Indigenous communities will have their specific principles, protocols, and practices.

First Peoples Principles of Learning

The First Peoples Principles of Learning was developed to give guidelines to teachers to reflect on their teaching practice and develop with their students to engage in authentic Indigenous learning experiences. The First Peoples Principles of Learning represent an attempt to identify common elements in the varied teaching and learning approaches that prevail within particular First Nations societies. It must be recognized that they do not capture the full reality of the approach used in any single First Peoples' society. These principles have application to ethical engagement in that you can assess wise practices when learning from Indigenous people and communities.

- Learning ultimately supports the wellbeing of the self, the family, thecommunity, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense ofplace).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.
- Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
- Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.
- Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.
- Learning involves patience and time.
- Learning requires the exploration of one's identity.
- Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

Being an ally is an ongoing, lifelong journey that requires humility, empathy, perspective-taking, and taking action to advance justice and equity for Indigenous peoples. Being an ally to Indigenous People involves understanding the historical and ongoing injustices and systemic issues faced by indigenous communities. It means acknowledging and respecting their cultures, traditions, and sovereignty while actively advocating for their rights, needs, and concerns. It involves listening to and learning from Indigenous People,amplifying their voices, and supporting their self-determination, and leadership.

Allies should also work towards dismantling the systems of oppression that perpetuate Indigenous marginalization while promoting indigenous visibility, representation, and inclusion.

It is important to note that non-indigenous people cannot claim they are an ally. An Indigenous person must give them this title.

Ally Bill of Responsibilities

© Dr. Lynn Gehl, Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe

Responsible Allies:

1. Do not act out of guilt, but rather out of a genuine interest in challenging the larger oppressive power structures;

2. Understand that they are secondary to the Indigenous people that they are working with and that they seek to serve. They and their needs must take a back seat;

3. Are fully grounded in their own ancestral history and culture. Effective allies must sitin this knowledge with confidence and pride; otherwise, the “wannabe syndrome” could merely undermine the Indigenous people’s efforts;

4. Are aware of their privileges and openly discuss them. This action will also serve to challenge larger oppressive power structures;

5. Reflect on and embrace their ignorance of the group’s oppression and always hold this ignorance in the forefront of their minds. Otherwise, a lack of awareness of their ignorance could merely perpetuate the Indigenous people’s oppression;

6. Are aware of and understand the larger oppressive power structures that serve to hold certain groups and people down. One way to do this is to draw parallels throughcritically reflecting on their own experiences with oppressive power structures. Reflecting on their subjectivity in this way, they ensure critical thought or what others call objectivity. In taking this approach, these parallels will serve to ensure that non-Indigenous allies are not perpetuating the oppression;

7. Constantly listen and reflect through the medium of subjectivity and critical thought versus merely their subjectivity. This will serve to ensure that they avoid the trap thatthey or their personal friends know what is best. This act will also serve to avoid the trap of naively following a leader or for that matter a group of leaders;

8. Strive to remain critical thinkers and seek out the knowledge and wisdom of the critical thinkers in the group. Allies cannot assume that all people are critical thinkers and have a good understanding of the larger power structures of oppression;

9. Ensure that a community consensus, or understanding, has been established in terms of their role as allies. Otherwise, the efforts of the people will be undermineddue to a lack of consultation and agreement;

10. Ensure that the needs of the most oppressed – women, children, elderly, young teenage girls and boys, and the disabled – are served in the effort or movement that they are supporting. Otherwise, they may be engaging in a process that is inadequate and thus merely serving to fortify the larger power structures of oppression. Alternatively, their good intentions may not serve those who need the effort most. Rather, they may be making the oppression worse;

11. Understand and reflect on the prevalence and dynamics of lateral oppression and horizontal violence on and within oppressed groups and components of the group,such as women, and seek to ensure that their actions do not encourage it;

12. Ensure that they are supporting a leader's, group of leaders', or a movement's effortsthat serve the needs of the people. For example, do the community people find this leader's efforts useful, interesting, engaging, and thus empowering? If not, allies should consider whether the efforts are moving in a questionable or possibly an inadequate direction, or worse yet that their efforts are being manipulated and thus undermined, possibly for economic and political reasons;

13. Understand that sometimes allies are merely manipulatively chosen to further a leader's agenda versus the Indigenous Nations', communities', or organizations' concerns, and when this situation occurs act accordingly;

14. Do not take up the space and resources, physical and financial, of the oppressed group;

15. Do not take up time at community meetings and community events. This is not their place. They must listen more than speak. Allies cannot perceive all the larger oppressive power structures as clearly as members of the oppressed group can; And finally,

16. Accept the responsibility of learning and reading more about their role as effective allies.

Chi-Miigwetch!

SUILC Recommendations for Indigenous Engagement:

- Indigenous people should have access to specifically designed engagement activities and processes to facilitate their participation and inclusion
- Reimburse individuals for their contribution to your work.
- Partner with Indigenous organizations based in Surrey.
- Design an approach to engagement that specifically reflects Métis culture and community.
- Getting approvals for engagement and partnerships at appropriate levels.
- Use Indigenous methodologies for hosting engagements and conversations.
- Design engagement activities that build community.
- Ensure transparency with regard to OCAP principles.
- Share control over the knowledge generated by co-developing the report recommendations.
- Hire Indigenous consultants

There is no "one size fits all" approach to ethical engagement and right relationship building.You will need to learn from local First Nations and Indigenous communities about how they wish to develop relationships, partnerships and collaborative efforts with you and your group.

How to be an Ally to Indigenous People from the David Suzuki Foundation:

- Past: https://youtu.be/3sVg0Cvqh3k
- Present: https://youtu.be/UsyyYeVHGJ0
- Future: https://youtu.be/McVEgEA4qvg https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ip3yGEKGCX4

Engagement 101: Six Core Engagement Principles

Surrey Curriculum Guide

Engagement 101: Six Core Engagement Principles

There is much to do, but we can keep finding our way together! We offer some Core Guiding Principles:

1. Investigate Personal and Organizational Motivations to Engage Indigenous Peoples

Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community / Strategy Network published the Allyship Toolkit that has been used broadly by Indigenous communities across North America. They state that the first step to becoming an Ally is to investigate personal motivations to begin this work. This can also apply to organizations and research projects seeking to engage the Indigenous community. Reflect on what we have learned previously:

- The overburdening of Indigenous communities to engage,
- The chronic under-resourcing of both land-based and urban Indigenous communities
- The dark history of research involving Indigenous people in Canada and
- The many systemic impacts faced in our communities

We must start this work by deepening and reflecting on our intentions for the engagement to ensure our motivations are not centering the needs of the non-Indigenous organization or research project. Further, to ethically engage we must consider the needs of the communities we seek input from. We must not over-burden them with our requests and, in turn, re-create colonial structures and processes in our work that can cause harm to Indigenous peoples. The following questions from Allyship Toolkit are questions you should ask yourself in theearly planning stages of your work:

- Does my interest derive from the fact that the issue is currently “buzzing”?
- Does my interest stem from the fact that the issue will meet quotas or increase thechances of any funding?
- Does my involvement hijack the message and insert my own opinions or values insteadof respecting those of the Indigenous communities? Am I doing this to feed my ego?”

These movements and struggles do not exist to further one’s own self-interest, nor are they there as “extra-curricular” activities.

Solution: journal your responses to the questions above. Challenge the status quo in your organizations that are asking you to engage with Indigenous people to further the organization's agenda and not advance Indigenous rights.

2. Actively Listen to Understand and "Do Better"

Oral history and deep listening have been Indigenous practices since time immemorial. When the TRC initiated a public inquiry about the experience of residential schools, thousands of Survivors shared what they had been through and continue to go through as a result. At this point, there are books, videos, podcasts, and events, where Settlers on Turtle Island have opportunities to actively listen to Indigenous voices, experiences, and wisdom.

Settlers can begin engaging with Indigenous Peoples by beginning to deeply listen to Survivors, Elders, and Traditional Knowledge Keepers to enhance our understanding of Indigenous needs, interests, concerns, and priorities. Start by researching what already exists – make sure not to overburden Indigenous People with engagement if the information exists elsewhere.

Listening with an open heart and mind, we can enhance our understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, and land-based teachings. Centering Indigenous wisdom will enhance our understanding of how we can live in right relations with Indigenous peoples. Find additional resources to start your learning journey in the Learning Resources section.

Solution: Prepare yourself to be challenged. This work is not easy and may bring up tough emotions. Make sure you have the tools to support your learning in a place with someone safe to debrief with, a counsellor or a trusted mentor.

3. Decolonize Ourselves and Education

Canadians growing up have received what many Indigenous and non-Indigenous allies have called a "colonial education." For example, we have learned about "explorers" coming to Canada in search of land and resources. We have been taught false narratives and myths about our colonial history and about Indigenous peoples as a people. Although there has been progress in what is taught in schools and the media, the settler population has a lot oflearning and "unlearning" to do. We must decolonize how we think, listen, see, and be.

A key engagement principle is to "decolonize ourselves and our education." We need to know the truth about the experiences of the First Peoples in Canada, Local First Nations, and urban Indigenous Peoples. We need to understand the facts and historical legacies of the Indian Act and understand how Indigenous communities are moving forward in the spirit of Self-Determination, Self-Government, and Self-Reliance (The 3Ss).

We need to hear and understand the experiences and intergenerational effects of Indian Residential Schools. We need to better understand Indigenous teachings, knowledge, and culture. We must unlearn the myths and racist and colonial stereotypes that have been ingrained in our attitudes and beliefs about Indigenous Peoples. And, importantly, respect the fact that many teachings, knowledge, and cultural practices are sacred and not to be shared with settlers. And, through all this, we need to build our cultural skills to work and live in right relations with Indigenous people on the Indigenous lands that we occupy and have settled on.

Finally, we need to lead with open minds and hearts and celebrate the common ground that we stand on. We are all here to learn and grow in awareness to build a more equal, just, and equitable society for everyone that calls Turtle Island "home."

Solution: research your local land-based nations and their practices and protocols. Examine how colonial education has shaped your and your organization's conscious and unconscious bias.

4. Apply a Trauma-Informed Approach to Share Our Lived Experiences

When Indigenous people talk about their experiences with racism, colonialism, land displacement, and genocide in Canada, immigrants, refugees, and newcomers may also have lived experiences in their home countries and in Canada as well. For example, immigrant history is laden with white supremacist underpinnings in British Columbia. In the 20th century in BC, a popular slogan touted was "White Canada Forever." Racism in Canadian society has a legacy for many groups. When engaging immigrants, newcomers, refugees, and Indigenous Peoples about Canada's past and present, we must apply a trauma-informed approach.

Applying a trauma-informed approach as an engagement principle means creating a consenting, confidential, and safe space where people are fully aware of the nature of potential information, experiences and types of dialogue they will be participating in. For everyone to participate, learn, seek understanding, and engage in dialogue, there needs to be pre- and post-debrief and emotional support along the way with experienced counsellors and facilitators who understand and can identify trauma and triggers and beable to support Indigenous, as well as immigrant, refugee, and newcomer communities.

Solution: Hire Indigenous consultants to help your organizations become culturally safe and trauma-informed.

5. Reciprocity to Build Right Relations

Reciprocity can be defined as "the practice of exchanging things." It holds value in mutual benefit, exchange, and an ethical agreement between individuals, groups, or organizations. Reciprocity is not just thinking about what you have to gain but how you can also create a benefit for your neighbour, your community, the local First Nation, and the urban Indigenous organization down the street. It is an intentional, caring, and socially accountable act.

When we sit with the horrific legacies of Canadian white settler colonialism, it is a common understanding that this history was built on ideas of "self-interest" and "extraction" for the benefit of some and the disadvantage of many. The historical roots of Indigenous and settler relations were unethical and the opposite of "reciprocal." They were extractive and exploitative. These relationships were far from ethical and based on values we do not want to uphold.

When we say that a principle of engagement ensures "reciprocity to build right relations," we recognize that we intend to avoid repeating history. Instead, we want to enter into ethical agreements and relations with Indigenous communities based on the value of reciprocity and collective interest. We also want to respect Indigenous rights: self-determination, self-reliance, and self-governance. We want to build a spirit of cooperation, understanding, transparency, and accountability and embracespaces, places, and actions where we can be interdependent and work together.

Solution: Before engaging, ensure your organizations has the funds to adequately compensate Indigenous people and communities for their time.

6. Find Common Ground

Through engagement, if we can learn how to build reciprocal relationships, we can find common ground and walk together for a shared purpose.

Learning Resources

Reports and Research

- **94 Calls to Action found during the Truth & Reconciliation Commission** http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf
- **Missing and Murdered Indigenous People:** The Report https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/
- **National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.** Research and educational resources available. From their site: "The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) is a place of learning and dialogue where the truths of Residential School Survivors, families and communities are honoured and kept safe for future generations."

  https://nctr.ca/research/
- **Resource guide list for settlers & Indigenous allies.** From the site: "Non-Indigenous folk who live in Canada benefit from the colonialism that happened here. That means we are all responsible for our personal role in reconciliation.")

  https://oncanadaproject.ca/settlerstakeaction
- **University of Alberta** (Take a University-level course. From the site: "From an Indigenous perspective, this course explores key issues facing Indigenous peoples today from a historical and critical perspective highlighting national and local Indigenous-settler relations.")

  https://www.ualberta.ca/admissions-programs/online-courses/indigenous-canada/index.html
- **Canadian Geographic Interactive Map** (In participation with Canadian Geographic. Interactive map incorporating residential school histories and facts. From the site: "The residential school system is older than Confederation itself, having lasted from 1831 to 1996, and represents a dark aspect of Canadian history. These government-sponsored, church-run schools aimed to assimilate Indigenous children by taking them away from their families and forcibly eradicating their cultural identity. Residential schools have left a horrible legacy that survivors, communities and families are still struggling to overcome and heal from to this day.")

  https://earth.google.com/web/data=MkEKPwo9CiExTmthTTBBblFVd2J3TjhiSmVtNU9vRXRXQ1hkSUlDQjESFgoUMEY1NjJCNDIwODJCODg5QUVEN0UgAUICCABKCAj2pMa3BxAB\
- **Achieving Meaningful Engagement with Indigenous Communities**

  https://www.indigenousaware.com/indigenous-community-engagement

Movies

- SGaawaay K'uuna – or Edge of the Knife Helen Haig Brown, Gwaii Edenshaw
- "Angry Inuk" (2016) documentary film dir. by Alethea Arnaquq-Baril
- "The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open" (2019) film drama dir. by Elle-MaijaTailfeathers
- "The Grizzlies" (2018) drama/sport film dir. by Miranda de Pencier
- "Guardians of Eternity" (2015) documentary film dir. by France Benoit
- "Indian Horse" (2017) film drama dir. by Stephen Campanelli
- "Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance" (1993) documentary film dir. by Alanis Obomsawin
- "Monkey Beach" (2020) mystery/drama film dir. by Loretta Todd
- "Nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up" (2019) documentary film dir. by Tasha Hubbard
- "There's Something in the Water" (2019) film dir. by Elliot Page & Ian Daniel
- "We Were Children" (2012) film dir. by Tim Wolochatiuk

Television

- "Merchants of the Wild" (2019) series by APTN with two seasons.
- "Moosemeat & Marmalade" (2014) series by APTN with five seasons.
- "North of 60" (1992) series by CBC with five seasons.
- "Red Earth Uncovered" (2018) series by APTN with two seasons.
- "Skindigenous" (2018) series on APTN with two seasons.
- "Trickster" (2020) series by CBC with one season.
- "Wrong Kind of Black" web series created by Boori Monty Pryor with four parts.
- "Reservation Dogs" (2021) series by FX Productions with one season and upcomingsecond season

Resource Guides

- First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomer, City of Vancouver: https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/First-Peoples-A-Guide-for-Newcomers.pdf
- ISS of BC Tools & Resources – Truth & Reconciliation: https://issbc.org/tool-resource-categories/truth-reconciliation/
- Welcome to Our Homelands – Multilingual Videos & Study Guides by ISS of BC: https://issbc.org/tools-resources/issofbc-newcomer-awareness-tools/
- CBC's interactive guide Beyond 94: https://www.cbc.ca/newsinteractives/beyond-94/
- Surrey First Peoples' Guide for Newcomers: https://www.surreylip.ca/project/surrey-first-peoples-guide-for-newcomer-facilitation/
- National Newcomer Navigation Network: Bridging the gap between Indigenous people andnewcomers: https://www.newcomernavigation.ca/en/news/bridging-the-gap-between-indigenous-people-and-newcomers.aspx
- Cultivating Canada: Reconciliation through the Lens of Cultural Diversity Aboriginal Healing Foundation Reports https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/cultivating-canada-pdf.pdf

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