

# **LIVING DOCUMENT**

**INDIGENOUS**

**CULTURAL-LINGUISTIC**

**FRAMEWORK**

**Anish gaie tolamang waiwnit tci  
zhiikonang**

**Mi waa izhichigeyeg weweni  
Kesé kon fè dbon**

**(What we are doing in a *Good Way*  
In Algonquin, Ojibwa and Michif languages)**

**Deborah Chansonneuve and Arlene Hache  
December 2013**

## **Dedication**

*This Framework is dedicated with deep love and respect to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Survivors of residential schools and the 60s Scoop in the District of Timiskaming. Their determination to hold the government accountable in an honourable way, and their commitment to healing and strengthening themselves, their families and communities is an inspiration to us all.*

“The value of resistance is the reclaiming of the sacred and significant self”

Lee Maracle

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## Acknowledgements

The *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework* project team is deeply grateful to the Elders, family members and service providers who shared their cultural-linguistic knowledge and the wisdom of their experience toward development of this Framework.

At a February 10, 2014 meeting of the Best Start Indigenous Committee, members made the decision to replace the term “Aboriginal” with the term “Indigenous”. As a result, there may be instances in the Framework where the term was inappropriately replaced. This is a living document so recommendations for changes are welcomed.

Financial assistance for the development of the Framework was generously provided by the Timiskaming Best Start Network; the project was an initiative of the Best Start Indigenous Committee. The project team included:

- Elder Roberta Oshkawbewisens
- Elder Marie Boucher
- Elder Liliane Ethier
- Brenda Batisse
- Claudette Paul
- Laura Flood
- Emily Batisse
- Melissa Cormier
- Tiffany Stow
- Dani Grenier-Ducharme
- Arlene Hache
- Deb Chansonneuve

**Note:** *we use the term ‘Living Document’ to affirm that the actions and timelines recommended within it are aspirational and will likely be adjusted and revised over time as the document is fully brought to life through the process of implementation.*

## PURPOSE OF THE INDIGENOUS CULTURAL-LINGUISTIC FRAMEWORK

This Framework is a resource document to facilitate Indigenous cultural competency among service providers, educators, policy makers, planners and community leaders in the District of Timiskaming. Its purpose is to:

- Provide an overview of relevant history and context related to cultural competency from an Indigenous perspective;
- Promote a shared understanding and vision for Indigenous cultural-linguistic competency in the District of Timiskaming based on local priorities identified by stakeholders;
- Provide a structure for activities aligned with the four key areas of focus identified by the Timiskaming Best Start Network;
- Promote and encourage a culture of collaboration among service providers and educators in the District that is mutually respectful, compassionate, self-reflective and models their shared vision for cultural competency;
- Provide some options for tools that service providers, educators and planning groups may adapt to enhance cultural competency; and
- Help maintain a focus on outcomes that matter most to First Nations and Métis children and families in the District Timiskaming aligned with the Best Start mandate.

## BACKGROUND AND METHOD FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIGENOUS FRAMEWORK

The need for an Indigenous-specific cultural-linguistic framework arose out of the *District of Timiskaming Best Start Network Accountability Framework 2011 – 2014*. One of the first deliverables produced through this planning process was a *Francophone Cultural Linguistic Competency Framework* for the Northeastern Ontario Francophone Best Start Network. This Framework was adopted by the Timiskaming Best Start Network in September 2011. At this time the Best Start Network and Best Start Indigenous Committee identified the need for a similar practical guide for agencies and providers serving Indigenous populations in the District. With funding from the Best Start Network, the Best Start Indigenous Committee initiated a call for proposals in March 2013 and awarded the contract in June of that year. The Indigenous Framework was developed over the summer and fall of 2013.

### ***About the Best Start Indigenous Committee***

The Best Start Indigenous Committee contributes to improving family wellbeing in the District of Timiskaming through planning and service delivery suited to the uniqueness of First Nations and Métis cultural communities and grounded in Northern knowledge and practice (Terms of Reference appended). Committee planning supports local interdisciplinary collaboration in ways that reflect cultural values of mutuality, transparency, sharing, equality and local First Nations and Métis aspirations for self-determination.

### ***Partnership Template for Local Indigenous-Driven Services for Children and Families***

A formal partnership between the Timiskaming Best Start Network and the Best Start Indigenous Committee has generated new ways of thinking about and promoting holistic early childhood wellbeing in the District. For example, through this partnership two out-of-home, Indigenous-operated, *'Keepers of*

*the Circle'* early learning and childcare centres, were established in Kirkland Lake and Temiskaming Shores.

First Nations and Métis Elders in the District continue to practice the language and traditions of their rich and enduring cultures. *Keepers of the Circle* early learning and child care programming embodies local traditional and contemporary cultural values and Indigenous Knowledge while also drawing from mainstream early childhood development theory and practice. *Keepers of the Circle* programming:

- Is bi-cultural and inter-generational;
- Reinforces children's place of belonging within a larger interconnected web of family, community and Nation;
- Integrates the knowledge, perspectives, and experiences of local resource people, Elders and grandparents as Keepers of the Language and cultural teachings; and
- Builds community capacity and strengthens community development through programming delivered by and for the community, with support from the Best Start Indigenous Committee and larger Timiskaming Best Start Network.

This formal partnership also includes overseeing the work of two *Indigenous Service Connectors* whose primary role is to outreach a full range of services and supports to First Nations and Métis families in the District. The work of the Indigenous Connectors is planned and overseen using a matrix management model that sets out the terms for shared responsibility between the Timiskaming Native Women's Support Group, the Best Start Indigenous Committee and the District of Timiskaming Social Services Administration Board (DTSSAB).

This partnership agreement and the effectiveness of the matrix management model have not yet been formally evaluated. Evaluation of these service agreements and matrix management model aligned with the Indigenous cultural competency indicators and principles of the Indigenous Framework is recommended as a priority first step in implementation of the Framework.

### ***Methodology for Developing the Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework***

Two major steps were undertaken to develop the Indigenous Framework: a stakeholder survey and a literature review. The purpose of the stakeholder survey was to identify local priorities and First Nations-Métis cultural strengths and promising practices in the District from which to move forward on a plan for cultural-linguistic competency. The literature review complemented the findings of the survey and provided a larger perspective on cultural competency in the context of services and supports for First Nations and Métis families with children 0-12 years old in the District of Timiskaming.

### ***Direction and Feedback from Local Elders, Service Providers and Families***

Seventy-three people participated in the stakeholder survey through seven focus groups and ten key informant interviews. Focus groups used a listening circle approach and began with a traditional opening and welcome from a local Elder or traditional helper. Participants were provided with an explanation of the reason for the survey and commitment to a strength-based process. Parents, caregivers, grandparents and Elders largely focused their discussions on: 1) needs arising from historical factors contributing to poorer outcomes for children and families today; and 2) their experiences as recipients of services, whether within the school or service delivery systems and how these experiences have affected them personally, and their families. They were also asked to share and prioritize their

ideas for how the Framework could best address the needs they had identified by building on local strengths and resources.

Appendix A of the Framework lists helpful resources identified through the literature review some of which are also cited in the appropriate places throughout the text. Also appended are tools for organizations, planning groups and service providers that were identified as priority needs through the stakeholder survey. Recommendations for development of other tools to promote the vision for the Indigenous Framework are included throughout the document.

### *Strengths and Limitations of the Method*

One of the strengths of the method is the use of multiple methods to develop the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*. The stakeholder survey was comprehensive in its reach and generated a high level of interest and participation. The key informant interviews were designed to provide a ‘big-picture,’ more in-depth response to the focus group findings. The literature review strongly corroborated the findings and recommendations from the stakeholder survey. Throughout the process of development, conscious effort was made to model the vision for the Indigenous Framework and its goals for respectful intercultural communication, inclusion, and Indigenous self-determination. The outcomes of the stakeholder survey, literature review and development process are a clear validation of the method and approach used by the project team and Best Start Indigenous Committee to develop *the Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*.

What could be considered a limitation of the method in a western community research context might be the fluidity in composition of the project team over the course of the work. The first Elder on our team was offered employment in her home community so she left the project early and her role was fulfilled by other respected local Elders. To reflect an Indigenous intergenerational approach and equal value for the voices of children a 10-year old joined the team after the first focus group. Although this fluidity may look disorganized or chaotic to those outside the culture, the research team’s emphasis on relationship-building, flexibility, adaptability and inclusion reflects core cultural values that have enabled resilience, survival and cultural continuity. Responsiveness to team needs and dynamics while staying consistent with the project’s purpose can strengthen relationships; in the context of a qualitative, community-based research study, these changes only enriched the process.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF INDIGENOUS CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND CULTURAL SAFETY

### *A Unique History*

For millennia the lands now known as Canada were home to many Nations of Indigenous peoples with distinct languages, cultures, and worldviews. Population estimates prior to sustained European contact in 1500 range from 500,000 to over two million. While all other ‘diversity’ groups in Canada share a history of themselves or their ancestors immigrating, settling and adapting to life in a new country and climate Indigenous people’s history stretches back many thousands of years before European arrival. Indigenous history tells of this time, when forms of governance were based on gender equality and consensus decision-making; when remote communities and Nations were connected to each other through trading routes and trap lines; and when hunting, agricultural and medicinal skills were well-developed through an intimate knowledge of, respect for, and kinship with the land (RCAP, 1996; Chansonneuve, 2013).

It is this fact, above all others, which make Indigenous Peoples completely unique from all other population groups in Canada and it is this distinctiveness which maintains their unique legal and constitutional status: Indigenous rights and title arise from longstanding use and occupancy of these lands (Wilson and McDermott, 2011).

Another aspect of difference is that no other population group in Canada's history has endured such a massive, prolonged and strategic assault on their human rights as Indigenous Peoples. Colonial strategies of ethnocide and genocide included theft of lands and of basic human rights to language, self-governance, decision-making, religion and parenting among many others. Residential schooling and the 60s Scoop in particular deprived multiple generations of Indigenous children of their right to be raised in their own families and communities speaking their own languages and learning their cultural traditions (RCAP, 1996; TRC, 2012; Chansonneuve, 2005, 2007, 2013).

Residential schooling was Canada's primary strategy for eradicating Indigenous cultures and languages from 'civilized' Canadian society. The first residential school in Canada opened in 1831, the last closed in 1998. Through a partnership between the Government of Canada and the churches, the purpose of 'Indian' schools was to 'civilize and christianize' children by forcibly removing them from the 'savage' influence of their parents and families: to 'kill the Indian in the child' (RCAP, 1996; Chansonneuve, 2005; TRC 2012). At these schools children were punished for speaking their own languages and forced to speak either English or French and to practice English or French religious beliefs. The widespread loss of languages, spiritual traditions and knowledge of healthy traditional parenting as a result of this history is still acutely felt.

#### *Persistence of Racism and Social Exclusion Today*

Although intercultural understanding is increasing, both the literature search and the stakeholder survey conducted for development of this Framework shows First Nations and Métis people continue to experience racism and prejudice throughout the District on a daily basis in schools, hospitals, workplaces and neighbourhoods regardless of age, level of education or income. The *Debwewin Three-City Anti-Racism Initiative* in Northeastern Ontario final reports from Timmins and North Bay revealed widespread racism and concluded race relations must be improved in institutional culture and social practices (Curry, 2004, 2007; Chansonneuve, 2013).

#### *Role of the Media in Promoting Negative Stereotypes of Indigenous Peoples*

Feedback from the stakeholder survey about the connection between prejudicial social attitudes and negative media coverage is supported by a recent report on media coverage of Indigenous issues in Ontario from 2010-2013. This report reveals persistent patterns of under-coverage, and negative reporting, for example, although Indigenous peoples represent approximately 2% of the populations of Ontario, Indigenous issues occupy less than 0.5% of online and print media. Stories that do cover Indigenous issues tend to be more negative, for example prison statistics stories tend to depict Indigenous people largely as criminals. Although the *Idle No More* movement increased coverage of Indigenous issues somewhat, the level of reporting that negatively portrays Indigenous people increased by 11 percent. The report concludes, "The result is news stories that are couched in familiar and marketable stereotypes such as the Aboriginal Warrior or the Violence Prone Protestor" (Pierro, 2013). Negative social attitudes perpetuated by the media through either exclusion or stereotypical depictions of Indigenous culture create a social and culturally unsafe environment for First Nations and Métis children.

### *Impacts on Children and Families Today*

Today there are approximately three times more Indigenous children in the care of Canada's child protection system than at the height of the residential school system in the 1940's. While Indigenous children represent only five percent of the children in Canada, they constitute about 40 per cent of the children in care. This overrepresentation of Indigenous children and families in the child protection system is symptomatic of a larger crisis for Indigenous people that can be traced to Canada's legacy of colonization, marginalization and oppression. (Engelking, 2009; Gillespie and Whitford, 2009, Blackstock, 2005).

### *Apology*

In 2009 the Government of Canada finally issued a formal apology to Indigenous people that included recognition of and responsibility for the harm done to children and families.

We now recognize that, in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that far too often, these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were inadequately controlled, and we apologize for failing to protect you. Not only did you suffer abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect your own children from suffering the same experiences, and for this we are sorry. The burden of this experience has been on your shoulders for far too long. The burden is properly ours as a government, and as a country. There is no place for the attitudes that inspired the Indian residential schools system to ever again prevail. You have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time and in a very real sense, we are now joining you on this journey..."

Prime Minister Harper, Statement of Apology (2009)

### *What it all Means for Cultural Competency and Cultural Safety in an Indigenous Context*

First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Canada share experiences of patriarchal colonialism with Indigenous peoples globally; the concept of cultural safety was first introduced in the context of colonialism by a Maori nurse in New Zealand in the 1980s. Recently Indigenous specialists have identified the need to move beyond limiting concepts of cultural sensitivity (knowledge) and cultural competence (skills) to an understanding of capacity in the delivery of culturally safe services (outcomes). This concept of cultural competence as a continuum recognizes that power imbalances in society are expressed as structural barriers that serve to perpetuate marginalization and exclusion of Indigenous Peoples. The vision for cultural competency and cultural safety in an Indigenous context is to correct this historical imbalance through self-determination and de-colonization. The literature review revealed the following interrelated and interdependent elements in a continuum of learning and change (SOCG, 2013; Anishnawbe Health, 2012; ECDIP, 2008; NAHO, 2009).

- *Cultural awareness* is the acknowledgement of difference.
- *Cultural sensitivity* is the recognition of the importance of respecting differences.

- *Cultural competence* is a set of congruent behaviors, skills, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.
- *Cultural safety* analyzes and corrects for power imbalances, institutional discrimination, colonization, and colonial relationships as they apply to planning, delivery and evaluation of services in each sector.
- *Self-reflection* leads to empathy, the capability to share another being's emotions and feelings, which in turn improves relationships with clients and their communities, on their own terms, leading to better outcomes.
- *Empathy* could also lead to advocacy and social justice work on behalf of clients and their communities.

One of the clearest messages from stakeholders who participated in the survey is that cultural competency in an Indigenous context needs to go beyond cultural 'sensitivity' to create culturally safe environments and services for First Nation and Métis children and families. Cultural sensitivity is described as being aware and respectful of the differences between cultural groups, while cultural competency is having the skills, knowledge and attitudes to meet the needs of a specific cultural group. Cultural safety in an Indigenous context recognizes historical and contemporary power imbalances, political commitments to reconciliation and self-determination, and de-colonization efforts. Cultural competence requires an understanding that the lives of Indigenous people accessing services today are deeply affected by their sociopolitical past. Structural change, self-reflective practice and community capacity are keys to improving access and quality of services, leading to improved outcomes for Indigenous children 0-12 years of age.

Findings of the literature review and stakeholder survey shows Indigenous people are reclaiming their rights: to self-determination, to self-identify, to restore the role of extended family and Elders and to restore and transmit their cultures, languages, spirituality and history to their children and grandchildren. From an Indigenous perspective, self-determination is the pathway to collective wellbeing within families, communities and Nations.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework* is a conceptual framework for inclusive culturally safe education and service environments for First Nations and Métis children and families. Its approach is strength-based and asset-focused; reclaiming and strengthening First Nations and Métis culture and language is foundational to its approach.

The structure for the Indigenous Framework aligns with the *Best Start Accountability Framework 2011-2014* strategic priorities and four areas of focus developed for the *Francophone Cultural-Linguistic Framework*. The strategic priorities are: 1) Quality; 2) Accessibility; 3) Integration and Collaboration; and 4) Accountability and Integrity. Areas of focus for both the Francophone and Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Frameworks are: 1) Governance and Management; 2) Promotion and Awareness; 3) Access and Quality of Programs and Services; and 4) Accountability.

The stakeholder survey identified that issues of jurisdiction (on-off reserve), access, representation and funding constrain the capacity of local under-resourced Indigenous and Métis organizations to deliver culturally appropriate services, build community capacity and adequately address their priorities. Failure to enhance Indigenous self-determination perpetuates the marginalization experienced by many First Nations and Métis people in the District. Cultural competency requires that First Nations and Métis families and organizations are no longer seen as deficient, or add-on's but understood in terms of inherent rights, cultural strengths and cultural capacity.

The Indigenous stakeholder survey resulted in concrete recommendations for action across ten priority areas to address themes of common concern impacting First Nations and Métis families with children 0-12 years of age. The overarching themes identified through the survey include: availability of local cultural competency resources and readiness for change; widespread racism and systemic discrimination; lack of adequate cultural training and resources; lack of adequate First Nations and Métis representation in policy, planning and service delivery; lack of accountability in implementing inclusion and cultural competency policy; and lack of adequate funding.

Using these overarching themes as a starting point, strategies to address them were grouped into ten areas of priority *the Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework* must address. Recommendations for concrete actions in each of these ten areas were then aligned with promising local practices drawing upon local Indigenous resources, ingenuity and community initiative. These ten areas of priority align well with the strategic priorities and four areas of focus for the *Timiskaming Best Start Network Accountability Framework*.

Grounding the Indigenous Framework in priorities identified through the stakeholder survey helps ensure it is an Indigenous-driven family-community focused tool that promotes culturally responsive policy and equitable access to culturally appropriate supports. (For more detailed descriptions of these ten priorities refer to the Stakeholder Survey report.)

1. **Cultural Education and Training:** mandatory for all service providers and educators who work with Indigenous families and a coordinated, modular cultural competency training plan.
2. **Access to Resources/Tools:** especially culturally appropriate assessment and referral tools, procedures to involve extended family/Elders in child assessments, and protocols for accessing local First Nations and Métis cultural-linguistic resources and resource people.

3. **Communications, Outreach and Support to Families:** more emphasis on health promotion and harm prevention-reduction especially FASD and post-partum depression, more support for special needs children and non-Indigenous foster parents; more innovative promotion of existing services, support and role models for young fathers.
4. **Partnerships with Schools and Support Services:** Indigenous Elder and community involvement in schools and services to provide cultural-linguistic content and cultural interpretation.
5. An **Urban Community Centre:** a physically inclusive space where First Nations and Métis families from the District gather together in community and the public and service providers can immerse in local culture.
6. **Capacity of Indigenous Service Providers:** is under-resourced for leadership and collaboration; partnership models that promote Indigenous capacity are needed.
7. **Indigenous Representation in Governance and Employment:** through designated seats in governance and planning bodies, recruitment and retention strategies for First Nations and Métis employment, and valuing Indigenous people in planning and service delivery environments.
8. **Accountability for Cultural Competency:** to address the gap between cultural competency policy and implementation.
9. **Public Education/Engagement:** through tools and strategies to reduce racism by promoting intercultural understanding and appreciation.
10. **Adequate Financial Resources:** a financial plan to implement the Indigenous Framework so the burden does not fall on under-resourced Indigenous-Métis organizations or community volunteers.

#### Ten Areas of Priority Aligned with Four Areas of Focus

Areas of Best Start Focus for Cultural Competency	Areas of Priority Identified Through Survey
<b>Governance and Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Capacity of Indigenous Service Providers:</b> is under-resourced for leadership and collaboration; partnership models that enhance Indigenous capacity are needed.</li> <li>• <b>Indigenous Representation in Governance and Employment:</b> through designated seats in governance and planning bodies, recruitment and retention strategies for First Nations and Métis employment, and valuing Indigenous people in planning and service delivery environments.</li> </ul>
<b>Promotion and Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communications, Outreach and Support to Families:</b> more emphasis on health promotion and harm prevention-reduction especially FASD and post-partum depression, more support for special needs children and non-Indigenous foster parents; more innovative promotion of existing services; support and role models for young fathers.</li> <li>• <b>Public Education/Engagement:</b> through tools and strategies to reduce racism by promoting intercultural understanding and appreciation.</li> </ul>
<b>Access and Quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cultural Education and Training:</b> mandatory for all service providers</li> </ul>

<p><b>of Programs and Services</b></p>	<p>and educators who work with Indigenous families and a coordinated, modular cultural competency training plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Access to Resources/Tools:</b> especially culturally appropriate assessment and referral tools, procedures to involve extended family/Elders in child assessments, and protocols for accessing local First Nations and Métis cultural-linguistic resources and resource people.</li> <li>• <b>Partnerships with Schools and Support Services:</b> Indigenous Elder and community involvement in schools and services to provide cultural-linguistic content and cultural interpretation.</li> <li>• An <b>Urban Community Centre:</b> a physically inclusive space where First Nations and Métis families from the District gather together in community and the public and service providers can immerse in local culture.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Accountability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Accountability for Cultural Competency:</b> mechanisms to address the gap between cultural competency policy and implementation.</li> <li>• <b>Adequate Financial Resources:</b> a financial plan to implement the Indigenous Framework so the burden does not fall on under-resourced Indigenous-Métis organizations or community volunteers.</li> <li>• <b>Monitoring and Evaluation Plan based on the criteria developed for this Framework.</b></li> </ul>

**DEFINITIONS**

*Cultural competency in an Indigenous context* means a) that service providers and educators understand the specific historical, contextual and cultural issues of a particular community and b) are therefore able to establish rapport and a trusting relationship with people from that community. This requires 1) knowledge of the historical factors contributing to the vulnerability of Indigenous cultures, languages and Peoples; and 2) the capacity to understand and integrate local First Nations and Métis cultural values, approaches, practices and languages in education and service environments.

*Areas of Focus:* as described in the Francophone Framework this refers to three key areas of activity that enable organizations to plan and assess their actions along a continuum of change. The continuum includes three stages of development that can be monitored to assess an organization’s level of cultural competence. They are: basic level (openness and awareness); intermediate level (application); and advanced level (community leadership model).

*Evidence of Indigenous Cultural Competency* is: a) increased representation of First Nations and Métis in employment, governance and decision-making roles; b) enhanced capacity of local Indigenous and Métis service providers to serve families and participate in larger planning and networking activities; and c) First Nations and Métis children and families in the District have equal access to a full range of quality, culturally and linguistically relevant supports aligned with the Best Start mandate.

*Enhanced Relations* among Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members is evidenced by greater understanding of and respect for First Nations and Métis cultures, languages, traditions, and

knowledge. Enhanced relations are a foundational element of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*. No matter how strong and resilient Indigenous families may be, Indigenous children living off-reserve or accessing urban schools and services continue to be vulnerable if their cultures, languages, traditions, beliefs and identities are not respected and valued within the broader community. Creating opportunities for ongoing social interaction, knowledge-sharing and relationship-building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the District is a priority of the Indigenous Framework.

*Aboriginal*<sup>1</sup> as described in *Section 35* of Canada’s Constitution refers to three groups, Inuit, Métis and First Nations. This term is broadly criticized in Canada and internationally as yet another colonial construct that promotes both divisiveness and ‘Pan-Indianism.’ ‘Aboriginal’ is the term now used to reflect commonality in the global collective experience of colonization. Throughout this report the terms ‘Aboriginal’ ‘Indigenous,’ ‘Native’ and ‘First Nations’ are used interchangeably as is the phrase “First Nation and Métis” to acknowledge the distinctiveness of Nations in the District of Timiskaming: First Nations here refers specifically to Algonquin, Ojibwe (or Anishnaabe) and Cree. Use of the term Aboriginal-Métis acknowledges organizations operated by and for all Indigenous groups as well as the Métis-led Temiskaming Community Métis Council. Flexibility in terminology within the Indigenous Framework is shown out of respect for the diversity of terms used in the local population and to acknowledge the transition period now underway as wider dialogue continues toward an inclusive decolonizing terminology.

*Self-Determining* means activities are seen to be grounded in First Nations and Métis cultures and traditions and led by local First Nations and Métis people in accordance with their cultural values and ways of knowing, being and doing, including involvement of Elders. The principle of self-determination in practice means ‘nothing about us, without us.’”

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE INDIGENOUS CULTURAL-LINGUISTIC FRAMEWORK
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Seven principles to guide the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework* were identified from the findings of the stakeholder survey.

1. Respect: for traditional beliefs and practices about holistic child development and extended family roles in child rearing; respect for Indigenous models of leadership and governance.
2. First Nations and Métis community-driven: local solutions for local concerns are an essential aspect of reclaiming culture and language.
3. Equitable: equal access to cultural and linguistic services for First Nations and Métis children and families aligned with the Best Start vision.
4. Strength-Based: the emphasis is on building from strengths versus compensating for deficiencies.
5. Involved/Engaged Families in the life of their communities and schools.
6. Roles for Elders at all levels of the Framework.
7. Local Expertise to guide planning and implementation.

These principles resonate strongly with those of *Ontario’s New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs* (2005), principles of the *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT Framework 2007)* and principles of the *Timiskaming Best Start Accountability Framework*.

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<sup>1</sup> For more detailed definition of terms related to Indigenous identity see Appendix C

## FOUR KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

From an Indigenous perspective activities implemented within the four areas of focus identified by the Best Start Network for the Francophone and Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Frameworks are interconnected and interdependent. Following is a description of the four areas of focus from an Indigenous perspective with priorities for each area identified through the stakeholder survey. These areas of focus, priorities and implementation tools are detailed in the *Implementation Guide* and *Tool Kit*.

### FOUR AREAS OF FOCUS FOR INDIGENOUS CULTURAL-LINGUISTIC FRAMEWORK



## **1. Governance and Management in an Indigenous Context**

Governance in an Indigenous context refers to Indigenous Knowledge and languages being embedded within the institutions, services and planning processes dedicated to meeting and representing the needs and interests of the off-reserve (status, non-status and Métis) Indigenous population. Research on best practices in Indigenous governance shows the importance of Indigenous principles of relationship-building based on mutual respect, equity and fairness; familial feelings among members; a circle protocol for meetings, accountability and transparency, central role of Elders; Board members and management who model cultural values; a high degree of continuity; and inclusion of clients in the work (IOG, 2009).

### *Governance and Management Priorities for the Indigenous Framework*

Although Indigenous and Métis organizations are asserting their inherent right to self-determination they are faced with severe constraints that negatively affect their capacities. Some of the major challenges relate to funding arrangements, financial sustainability, capacity-building, priority-setting, access, representation, infrastructure, and coordination. In the absence of core funding, many Aboriginal-Métis organizations rely on project-based funding which is not secure and requires expending already scarce resources on accountability and reporting requirements, while also continuing their attempts to secure stable funding. As evident by findings of the stakeholder survey, this can lead to frustration and burn-out.

A collaborative approach that fosters multi-sector, non-hierarchical collaboration between key stakeholders (Elders, service providers, community leaders, families) requires commitment to a common vision and values, a willingness to pool and coordinate financial and human resources, and the capacity for Aboriginal-Métis organizations to lead planning and implementation activities expected to benefit First Nations and Métis children and families. The emphasis is on developing, implementing and evaluating inclusion policies to remove structural barriers for First Nations and Métis representation in employment and decision-making.

### *Indigenous Framework Priorities for Culturally Competent Governance and Management:*

- Mechanisms to strengthen capacity of First Nations and Métis leadership in local planning and decision-making.
- Indigenous governance models, protocols and consensus decision-making processes embedded in all partnership agreements and terms of reference.
- Designated seats for First Nations and Métis representation and budgets allocating adequate financial resources for representation and participation in planning.
- First Nations and Métis employment, recruitment, retention and leadership mentoring plans for partner organizations.
- Performance expectations for partnerships reflect and are balanced with each partner's capacity to deliver.
- Evaluation of existing partnerships aligns with the vision and principles of the Indigenous Framework.

## **2. Promotion and Awareness**

Promotion and awareness furthers culturally competent early learning education and service environments through both targeted community outreach and public education activities. Culturally appropriate (i.e. visibly First Nations and Métis); non-judgmental promotion, prevention, and early intervention are key elements in engaging and enhancing supports for First Nations and Métis children and families.

Outcomes of effective promotion and awareness in a First Nations-Métis context include: strengthened First Nations and Métis cultural identities, enhanced relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members, decreased prejudicial and adversarial media messaging, earlier access to supportive programs and services, and improved Indigenous-non-Indigenous social relations.

*Indigenous Framework Priorities for Culturally Competent Promotion and Awareness:*

- A comprehensive *First Nations-Métis Family Outreach and Engagement Plan* for the Service Connectors that employs innovative strategies for a) prevention and promotion utilizing local cultural resources for healthy birth outcomes, prevention of post-partum depression, role of fathers, foster families, and children with special needs; and b) promotes networking among on and off-reserve services including schools.
- Promotion of local First Nations and Métis history, cultural events and services throughout the network, the education system and the general public by developing a *First Nations and Métis Welcome Guide to the District of Timiskaming*.
- Identifying new opportunities for ongoing immersion in First Nations and Métis cultures for board and staff of partnering organizations.

### **3. Access and Quality of Programs and Services**

Ensuring First Nations and Métis children and families have the appropriate supports for optimal success, early intervention requires equitable access. In an Indigenous context earlier access and quality of programs and services refers to those services and environments that promote culture in the context of positive self-identity as the basis for healthy growth and development. This requires that service providers understand and respect: a) the holistic needs of children and families, that is, their mental, emotional, physical and spiritual needs; and b) the central role of grandparents and Elders in an intergenerational approach to children's healthy development and early learning. Culturally enriched early learning and care environments integrate opportunities for experiential learning about local First Nations and Métis cultures and languages from local Elders and grandparents that children know, trust and love.

*Indigenous Framework Priorities for Earlier Access and Quality of Programs and Services:*

- Mandatory cultural training for all educators and service providers aligned with a phased-in, modular, cultural competency continuous learning plan that prioritizes use of culture-based screening and assessment tools;
- Protect, promote and integrate First Nations and Métis language, knowledge, values, practices and holistic model of healthy development into all programs and services for children ages 0-12 years and their families;
- Coordinated strategies for delivering meaningful, culture-based services to First Nations and Métis children and families aligned with stakeholder survey recommendations;

- List of local cultural-linguistic specialists as training resources for training designed and delivered by local First Nations and Métis people; and
- “Interagency Best Practice Teams” or 1-hour “Sharing Our Learning” sessions integrated into District planning and coordination meetings or through Lunch’ n Learns.

#### 4. Accountability for Cultural Competence

Key informants for the stakeholder survey emphasized the importance of accountability mechanisms to ensure implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*. All activities and projects of the Indigenous Framework should be carried as efficiently and effectively as possible in alignment with the: a) principles established through the stakeholder survey and literature review; and b) the Best Start mandate. Regular implementation updates should be integrated into all Best Start Network and Best Start Indigenous Committee meeting agendas. Written reports on progress, promising practices and lessons learned through the implementation process should be produced annually through this partnership.

##### *Indigenous Framework Priorities for Accountability*

- *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework Accord* signed by all partner agencies and organizations.
- Phased-in Indigenous Framework implementation plan with budget attached.
- Data collection and reporting processes aligned with cultural competence performance indicators and outcomes of the Indigenous Framework.
- Annual implementation evaluation and knowledge sharing plan to bring results to the attention of policy makers and managers.

<b>CONTINUUM OF ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES: AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE</b>
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Findings from the stakeholder survey affirm and support the continuum of essential competencies identified and adopted by the Timiskaming Best Start Network.

#### 1. OPENNESS AND AWARENESS

In the context of historic injustices examined by Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission currently underway, openness and awareness in an Indigenous context requires sensitivity, compassion and a shift away from thinking, behaviours and structures that perpetuate exclusion and marginalization toward commitment to the common vision for this Indigenous Framework. Effective intercultural collaboration is sensitive to this history and aware of the level of frustration and mistrust resulting from it. Openness is also the belief that miracles are possible when people decide to trust each other and work together in a Good Way. Every attempt should be made at the earliest possible point to resolve misunderstandings and miscommunications inherent in intercultural collaboration in a way that honours the *Seven Sacred Teachings* of humility, courage, wisdom, honesty, respect, love and truth (Seven Sacred Teachings Tool appended).

#### 2. APPLICATION

The vision for the Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework is to enable a significant shift in the cultural environment and employment profile of the District and to continuously improve access to high quality culturally competent and safe services for First Nations and Métis children and families. Application refers to the capacity to translate Indigenous Knowledge and the vision for cultural competence into practice whether on the front line of service delivery, in the schools or at governance and management levels. Application of cultural competency means putting inclusion policy into practice resulting in removal of structural barriers and is evidenced by:

- First Nations and Métis children and families feel welcomed and respected in their contact with schools and service providers and supported meet their full developmental potential.
- Indigenous cultural training is integral to professional development in every organization serving First Nations and Métis children and families.
- First Nations and Métis people are employed in every sector including in senior positions.
- Local First Nations and Métis cultures and languages are reflected in communications tools and strategies for families with children ages 0-12 years of age.

### 3. COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Many First Nations Elders tell the story of geese in flight to illustrate a traditional collective leadership model that speaks to Indigenous core values of caring, sharing, and collaboration. When geese fly together in V- formations it increases their range of flight by over 70% more than when one goose flies alone. Because the goose at the front of the V bears the full brunt of the wind those flying behind honk loudly in encouragement and support. When the lead geese tires, it falls back to the end of a line and another goose moves into the lead position. If a goose becomes unable to fly due to exhaustion or illness, two others land with her and keep her company until she is either able to fly once again or dies. None are left behind.

Achieving cultural competence in an Indigenous context requires fusing commitment with action from the top down and bottom up of organizations. Leaders in this process are Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders working together as equally respected partners and allies toward a shared vision for change. Criteria for leadership in an Indigenous context includes: a) humility; b) a willingness to undertake ongoing cultural competency training specific to intercultural collaboration; c) ability to foster, promote and learn from First Nations and Métis community leaders; and d) capacity to sustain commitment over the long-term and through frustrations inherent in intercultural work. Responsibility to ensure outcomes are achieved rests with the leadership; the first step in this process is role modeling respectful, inclusive leadership behaviours consistent with the principles of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*.

PROPOSED PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING  
THE INDIGENOUS CULTURAL-LINGUISTIC FRAMEWORK

A phased in process for implementation of the Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework should include the following steps based on recommendations from the stakeholder survey.

1. Host a special, facilitated retreat for the Best Start Indigenous Committee and Best Start Network to: a) strengthen intercultural relationships and build trust; b) prioritize the activities below and establish timelines; c) estimate costs for priority activities, develop a budget, and identify sources of funding for implementation of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*.
2. Evaluate the partnership-service agreements between the Best Start Network, the Best Start Indigenous Committee, the TNWSG and the DTSSAB and the matrix management model aligned with the Indigenous cultural competency indicators and principles of the Indigenous Framework.
3. Based on lessons learned and promising practices identified through the partnership evaluation develop a template<sup>2</sup> for formal intercultural partnership agreements that sets out the terms for collaboration based on Indigenous values of shared, collective responsibility, clearly defined roles, traditional consensus decision-making processes, and a plan to cover costs of the partnership (administrative costs, Elder honouraria, staff replacement time, travel –food costs).
4. Integrate the Framework activities as appropriate into the existing Best Start Network workplan, Best Start Indigenous Committee workplan and existing organization workplans identifying: a) performance indicators for each set of activities; b) monitoring and evaluation tools, processes and timelines; and c) plans to share findings and results among the stakeholders.
5. Develop tools and resources to guide implementation of the Framework with priorities identified in the stakeholder survey: a) an *Inventory of Local First Nations and Métis Cultural-Linguistic Specialists* to provide training and language translation; and b) an *Inventory of Services for Indigenous Families with Children 0-12* as a tool to facilitate interagency and school referrals and increase access to a continuum of holistic supports (mental, emotional, physical, spiritual).
6. Develop a phased-in, modular, cultural competency continuous learning plan with topics prioritized by the stakeholder survey including: a) contemporary impacts of residential schooling and the 60s Scoop, especially related to levels of distrust and adversarial attitudes toward education, social services and ‘professionals’; b) loss of parenting skills and need for parenting supports for families who are often the first in many generations to be raising their own children; c) cultural differences in parenting styles; d) differences in communications that impact on early assessment; and e) listening skills in an Indigenous context.
7. Develop a template for a cultural competency skills development plan for employees and managers including measurable learning objectives, practice guidelines, performance indicators, and processes for ensuring new policies and practices for First Nations and Métis inclusion are developed, and existing policies are implemented, monitored and working effectively (this requires data collection and reporting processes aligned with cultural competence performance indicators and outcomes and should include opportunities for feedback from First Nations and Métis clients, service providers and employees).
8. Establish “Interagency Best Practice Teams” or plan for 1-hour “Sharing Our Learning” sessions integrated into District planning and coordination meetings or through Lunch’ n Learns’.
9. Identify culturally appropriate and safe diagnostic procedures and tools for early assessment (such as the *Nipissing District Developmental Screen*); develop policy and parental consent forms

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<sup>2</sup> A sample template for an Accord and Partnership Agreement is in the Appendix.

to include grandparents-Elders in child assessments (using the *Talking Together* Family Group Conferencing model as a guide).

10. Develop a comprehensive *Family Outreach and Engagement Plan* for the Service Connectors including: a) new strength-based, culturally relevant tools (such as the new *Parent Card*) and a marketing plan for welcoming/engaging First Nations and Métis families; b) prioritizes post-natal depression, peer support for breast-feeding, FASD prevention and support; new fathers and foster parents/children in care, and special needs children; c) a poster campaign targeting boys' and men's roles in healthy family relationships; d) use of social media; and e) performance indicators, outcomes and evaluation processes. This plan should include strategies for showcasing services for families with children ages 0-12 years at local Pow wows, Indigenous Day events, and the Métis Harvest gathering through information booths or innovative ways of sharing information.
11. Develop a plan and mechanism for information sharing and networking between on-and-off-reserve child and family service providers with input from the Service Connectors.
12. Host a planning session through the Indigenous Best Start Committee and Best Start Network with local educators, service providers, Elders and family members to discuss findings and recommendations of the stakeholder survey and develop a plan to implement them.
13. Identify a local employer to pilot planning, implementation and evaluation of an Aboriginal-Métis Employment Strategy.
14. Identify a local organization or agency to pilot implementation of an Aboriginal-Métis inclusion policy including designated seats and mechanisms for integrating Indigenous Knowledge and culture into its governance model.
15. Invite the local MPs and MPP to a planning meeting to share findings of the stakeholder survey and *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework* and request their support in furthering the recommendation for an urban Indigenous community centre.
16. Invite representatives from the Temiskaming Shores Community Planning group and its equivalent in Kirkland Lake to a meeting of the Best Start Indigenous Committee to share findings from the stakeholder survey and invite their feedback and ideas for a public education plan aligned with recommendations.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE INDIGENOUS CULTURAL-LINGUISTIC FRAMEWORK

The following criteria should be used to: a) identify and prioritize outcomes for each area of focus; and, b) develop monitoring and assessment tools and processes using Indigenous criteria for success within the Best Start mandate. (An organization self-assessment tool is appended.)

1. The Framework's effectiveness in enhancing system capacity to respond to the needs of First Nations and Métis children and families identified through the stakeholder survey.
2. The Framework's effectiveness in promoting collaboration in planning and service delivery that responds to the needs of First Nations and Métis children and families identified through the stakeholder survey.
3. Resources and strategies that contributed most to positive outcomes in a range of activities from professional development to partnerships, communications and services.
4. Challenges and barriers encountered implementing the Framework including structural and systemic barriers.
5. The Framework's effectiveness in promoting service provider and educator cultural competency and confidence in serving local First Nations and Métis children and families.
6. The Framework's effectiveness in applying the principles set out through: Ontario's New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs (2005); the Ontario Early Learning Framework (2007); the Timiskaming Best Start Accountability Framework (2011); and the Indigenous Stakeholder Survey (2013).
7. The effectiveness of a process for documenting and sharing promising practices, lessons learned and case studies arising from implementation of the Framework within and outside of the District.
8. The degree to which activities enhance engagement of First Nations and Métis parents and extended family members in family support programming and education environment.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES FOR AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

The following questions may be useful to guide the Framework implementation, evaluation and information-gathering process.

1. How has participation in Framework activities and events impacted on Indigenous children ages 0-12 years and their families?
2. What is the evidence of attitudinal and practice shifts for service providers and educators that increased levels of cultural competency?
3. What is the evidence of system changes that furthered Indigenous cultural competency and inclusion?
4. How many new planning or service delivery partnerships were established with Aboriginal-Métis organizations and service providers; and how had existing partnerships improved?
5. Have those partnerships resulted in enhanced outcomes for Indigenous children and families?
6. Do Aboriginal-Métis service providers, families and Elders report increased experiences of inclusion and respect and reduced experiences of marginalization and prejudice?
7. Has the Framework been successful in integrating First Nations and Métis content and community cultural-linguistic resource people into programs, services and classrooms?
8. What collaborative professional development initiatives were provided and what were the outcomes for professionals and for the services they provide?

9. What new collaborative service delivery initiatives (from planning to outreach and marketing to evaluation) were implemented and what were the results?
10. How have the results of collaboration shaped new understandings and improved levels of cultural competency?
11. Do parents report increased comfort and engagement with programs and schools?
12. Which activities worked best to increase parent engagement?
13. Did increased engagement of families result in better outcomes for children ages 0-12 years?
14. What are members of the Timiskaming Best Start Network learning from the development and implementation of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*?
15. In what ways will this learning be useful in and applied to their ongoing work?
16. Considering the variety of activities undertaken for implementation of the Framework which activities were most successful, and what contributed to their success; and which were most challenging and what contributed to those challenges?

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**APPENDIX A**  
**LIST OF USEFUL RESOURCES FOR ABORIGINAL CULTURAL-LINGUISTIC COMPETENCY**

**RESOURCES FOR INDIGENOUS PARENTS, CAREGIVERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS**

**Resource on Self-Regulation in Children: Video, Dr. Jean Clinton, under ‘Principle 1 What Do the Experts Say’ (2:16 min)**

Source: Government of Ontario, Early Learning Framework

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/oelf/principles/principle1/index.html>

**Range of Resources on Healthy Pregnancy, Parenting and Child Development including handouts, posters and promotional flyers**

Source: Best Start Resource Centre

[http://beststart.org/resources/Aboriginal\\_health.html](http://beststart.org/resources/Aboriginal_health.html)

- Breastfeeding for the Health and Future of Our Nation, 2013
- Pimotisiwin: A Good Path for Pregnant and Parenting Aboriginal Teens, 2013
- Open Hearts, Open Minds: Services that are Inclusive of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Families, 2013
- Mixing Alcohol and Breastfeeding - printer-ready handouts, 2013
- Be Safe: Have an Alcohol-free Pregnancy - printer-ready handouts, 2012
- Prescription Drug Misuse in Pregnancy and Parenting, 2013
- Beginning Journey: First Nations Pregnancy Resource, 2013
- Why am I Poor: First Nations Child Poverty in Ontario, 2012
- The Sacred Journey from Preconception to Parenting for First Nations Families in Ontario, 2012
- Sacred Tobacco, Sacred Children – DVD, 2012
- Sacred Tobacco, Sacred Children - Facilitator Guide, 2012
- Sacred Tobacco, Sacred Children – Promotional Flyer, 2012
- Sacred Tobacco, Sacred Children – Parent Handout, 2012
- A Sense of Belonging : Supporting Healthy Child Development in Aboriginal Families, 2011
- Founded in Culture: Strategies to promote early learning among First Nations children in Ontario, 2011
- A Child Becomes Strong: Journeying through each stage of the life cycle, 2011
- Creating Healthier Communities A series of 7 posters, 2010
- Child Holistic Support Medicine Wheel Tool, 2007

**Resources on Indigenous Fathering: ‘With Dad: Strengthening the Circle of Care’ 26 min video**

Source: National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health

<http://vimeo.com/27039204>

**Resources on Indigenous Partnerships, Cultural Safety including PowerPoint Presentations, Publications, Media Resources**

1. Source: Early Childhood Development Intercultural Partnerships Website  
<http://www.ecdip.org/reports/>
2. Source: NAHO (National Aboriginal Health Organization)

**Fact Sheet: *Cultural competency and safety in First Nations, Inuit and Métis health care***

(2009)

<http://www.naho.ca/documents/naho/english/factSheets/culturalCompetency.pdf>

**The Legacy of the Residential School System in Canada: A Selective Bibliography** (August 2009)

Source: Library and Archives Canada

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/Pages/residential-schools-bibliography-2009.aspx>

**RESOURCES FOR MANAGEMENT: EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING**

**Staff Training Resource: Indigenous Cultural Safety (ICS) Training**

Source: BC Provincial Health Services Authority

<http://www.culturalcompetency.ca/training>

**Management Resource: Finding and Keeping Aboriginal Employees: A Handbook for Small and Medium Sized Businesses, 2009**

Source: Government of Alberta, Aboriginal Business Development Services

<https://www.icme.ca/download.php?id=42>

**Recruitment and Hiring Resource: Tips for Hiring Aboriginal Employees**

Source: Aboriginal Human Resource Council

<https://aboriginalhr.ca/en/resources/inclusion-tips/hiring-aboriginal-employees>

**Aboriginal Workplace Inclusion Diagnostic Tool, 2012**

Source: Aboriginal Human Resource Council

[http://www.Aboriginalhr.ca/en/products/Assessment\\_Tool](http://www.Aboriginalhr.ca/en/products/Assessment_Tool)

**Publications Available for Purchase: Handbook on Aboriginal Retention \$29.95**

Source: Aboriginal Human Resource Council

<http://www.Aboriginalhr.ca/en/products/publications>

**RESOURCES FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

**Sample Aboriginal Inclusion Accord, Policies and Guides**

Source: Indigenous Relations Office, City of Edmonton

[http://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/city\\_organization/indigenous-relations-office.aspx](http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/city_organization/indigenous-relations-office.aspx)

- Urban Aboriginal Accord (2013)
- Aboriginal Welcome Guide (2012)
- Aboriginal Organizations and Services Guide (2013)
- Racism-Free Edmonton (2012)

**NAHO Guide on Aboriginal Terminology**

Source: National Aboriginal Health Organization

<http://www.naho.ca/publications/topics/terminology/>

**Elders Handbook**

Source: Northern Ontario School of Medicine

[http://www.nosm.ca/uploadedFiles/Communities/Aboriginal\\_Affairs\\_Unit/Publications/Elders\\_Handbook\\_-\\_for\\_web.pdf](http://www.nosm.ca/uploadedFiles/Communities/Aboriginal_Affairs_Unit/Publications/Elders_Handbook_-_for_web.pdf)

**APPENDIX B: The Seven Sacred Teachings Applied to Intercultural Collaboration**

The teachings are interdependent: courage must be accompanied by humility; love is inseparable from respect; the movement is inward toward the self, then outward to others.

<b>The 7 Sacred Teachings</b>	<b>The Loss of Each Teaching</b>
<p><b>Love:</b> Wanting the best for yourself and others; coming to know others in order to understand and appreciate how each others’ gifts will strengthen the work.</p> <p><b>Respect:</b> Believing in your own and others knowledge and capacity to do well; to problem-solve how issues came about and what is needed to move forward in the best way; sharing resources fairly.</p> <p><b>Humility:</b> Treating yourself and others as equals, not above or below anyone; accepting differences: we don’t have to agree with each other in order to accept each other. Knowing mistakes are part of being human and the key to learning; there is always more to learn; seeing humour as medicine.</p> <p><b>Wisdom:</b> Looking inside for the knowledge and skills to solve a problem; trusting what you know while also knowing when to ask for guidance; knowing when to walk away or take time out, not in anger but in compassion for yourself and others.</p> <p><b>Courage:</b> Behaving in a way that is patient, fair and just even when afraid or angry or it’s unpopular; resisting being oppressed and oppressing others.</p> <p><b>Honesty:</b> Facing the situation; speaking simply, forthrightly, and respectfully about what you think and feel; taking ownership of mistakes and apologizing.</p> <p><b>Truth:</b> Behaviour that models your values, beliefs and best hopes for outcomes of the collaboration. Becoming the change you want to see in the group.</p>	<p><b>Its Loss Is:</b> Not considering your own needs or the needs of others; only seeing your own or other’s flaws; refusing to move forward or let others move forward and grow.</p> <p><b>Its Loss Is:</b> Blaming, shaming, labeling, shunning; making yourself or others feel badly about who they are and not caring that they feel badly or have less.</p> <p><b>Its Loss Is:</b> Feeling inferior to others or making them feel inferior to you; (mis)judging other’s beliefs or behaviours. Seeing mistakes as faults to be punished instead of opportunities for deeper learning. Unable to laugh at oneself.</p> <p><b>Its Loss Is:</b> Acting on impulse; feeding negative emotions so they escalate from frustration and anger into rage; not taking the time out to calm down or let go in order to resolve an issue.</p> <p><b>Its Loss Is:</b> Not facing up to your own feelings or needs or those of others to avoid dealing with an issue; or using bullying tactics or authority to push things through.</p> <p><b>Its Loss Is:</b> Denying there’s a problem or denying your part in it by blaming someone else; persuading others to take ‘your side’ and denying honesty to others.</p> <p><b>Its Loss Is:</b> Saying one thing but behaving differently; expecting from others what you do not practice yourself.</p>

Also available at: <http://www.naho.ca/publications/topics/terminology/>

## Terminology

The National Aboriginal Health Organization Terminology Guidelines is a glossary of terms describing or relating to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. Readers should keep in mind that there is no single term to describe Aboriginal Peoples. In Canada, Aboriginal Peoples is often used. In the United States, American Indian and Native American are commonly used. United Nations documents and organizations (and some Aboriginal scholars and advocates) use the term Aboriginal People. This guide gives the recommended usage. Regardless of the term you choose to follow, try to use it correctly and consistently.

The authors of this guide have tried to use current names and definitions that have been selected and defined by Indigenous Peoples themselves. However, some of the terms listed here have strict legal definitions. They may seem outdated, but they are still necessary in certain contexts.

This guide does not list the names of individual Indigenous nations. Rather, it provides inclusive terms that describe them collectively. Whenever possible, try to characterize Indigenous people through their specific identities (e.g., a Haida painter, a Mohawk school, a Blackfoot publication). These types of identifications more accurately capture the unique aspects of people or things.

If you are unsure about names and terms, contact the Indigenous person or organization you are writing about to learn which terms they prefer. Also note that many Indigenous Peoples are using.

English transliterations of terms from their own languages to identify themselves (e.g., the Mohawk Nation is also called Kanien Kaha:ka; the Blackfoot, Sisika; the Chippewas, Anishinabeg; and the Swampy Cree, Mushkegowuk).

Words like Aboriginal Peoples, First Nations Peoples, Indian, Inuit, Métis, and Native should be capitalized as they are proper names of nations of people.

Avoid phrases such as “Canada’s First Nations”, but rather use “First Nations in Canada” to avoid the possessive nature of the first phrase.

### ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

“Aboriginal Peoples” is a collective name for all of the original peoples of Canada and their descendants. Section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982 specifies that the Aboriginal Peoples in Canada consist of three groups – Indian (First Nations), Inuit and Métis. It should not be used to describe only one or two of the groups.

**Aboriginal people** – When referring to Aboriginal people with a lower case people, you are simply referring to more than one Aboriginal person rather than the collective group of Aboriginal Peoples.

**Non-Aboriginal people** (not peoples) – This term refers to anyone who is not an Aboriginal person. Note that the noun stays lowercase.

Aboriginal nations – The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) used this term in its final report. RCAP defines Aboriginal nations as “a sizeable body of Aboriginal people with a shared sense of national identity that constitutes the predominant population in a certain territory or collection of territories.” The term has gained acceptance among some Aboriginal groups.

Despite the wide use of Aboriginal as a proper noun by many Canadian and Aboriginal media, only use the term as a modifier.

- X The government's new strategy will support increased business with Aboriginals.  
√ The government's new strategy will support increased business with Aboriginal Peoples.

## AMERICAN INDIAN

American Indian is a commonly-used term in the United States to describe the descendants of the original peoples of North America (see also Native Americans). Some people are dissatisfied with this term because it retains the misnomer Indian in its name and covers peoples who consider themselves distinct from Indian Peoples, namely the Inuit, Yupik and Aleut Peoples in Alaska. The term is not popular in Canada.

## BAND

A band is a community of Indians for whom lands have been set apart and for whom the Crown holds money. It is a body of Indians declared by the Governor-in-Council to be a band for the purposes of the Indian Act. Many bands today prefer to be called First Nations and have changed their names to incorporate First Nation (e.g., the Batchewana Band is now called the Batchewana First Nation).

## BAND COUNCIL

This is the governing body for a band. It usually consists of a chief and councillors who are elected for two or three-year terms (under the Indian Act or band custom) to carry out band business, which may include education, health, water and sewer, fire services, community buildings, schools, roads, and other community businesses and services. Unless you are naming a specific band (e.g., the Bonaparte Indian Band), the word band should remain lowercase.

## ESKIMO

Eskimo is the term once given to Inuit by European explorers and is now rarely used in Canada. It is derived from an Algonquin term meaning —raw meat eaters, and many people find the term offensive. The term still is frequently used in the United States in reference to Inuit in Alaska.

## FIRST NATION(S)

The term First Nations came into common usage in the early 1980s to replace band or Indian, which some people found offensive (see Indian). Despite its widespread use, there is no legal definition for this term in Canada.

**First Nations People** – Many people prefer to be called First Nations or First Nations People instead of Indians. The term should not be used as a synonym for Aboriginal Peoples because it doesn't include Inuit or Métis. Because the term First Nations People generally applies to both Status and Non-Status Indians, writers should take care in using this term. If they are describing a program that is only for Status Indian youth, for example, they should avoid using First Nations youth as it could cause confusion.

**First Nation** – Some communities have adopted First Nation to replace the term band. Many bands started to replace the word band in their name with First Nation in the 1980s. It is a matter of preference and writers should follow the choice expressed by individual First Nations/bands.

The term First Nation is acceptable as both a noun and a modifier. When using the term as a modifier, the question becomes whether to use First Nation or First Nations. Note the different uses in the following examples.

- (*plural modifier, plural noun*) The number of First Nations students enrolled at Canadian universities and colleges has soared over the past 20 years.

- (*singular modifier, plural noun*) The association assists female First Nation entrepreneurs interested in starting home businesses.
- (*plural modifier, singular noun*) Containing recipes from across the country, the First Nations cookbook became an instant hit at church bazaars.
- (*singular modifier, singular noun*) Many people have said that *North of 60* and *The Rez* were the only shows on television that depicted life in a First Nation community with any realism.

There is no clear right or wrong in this area, provided that writers are consistent about the way they choose to use modifiers.

## FIRST PEOPLES

First Peoples is another collective term used to describe the original peoples of Canada and their descendants. It is used less frequently than terms like Aboriginal Peoples and Native Peoples. Some use lowercase peoples, but both words upcased appear to be the dominant spelling.

## INDIAN

The term Indian collectively describes all the Aboriginal People in Canada who are not Inuit or Métis. Indian Peoples are one of three peoples recognized as Aboriginal in the Constitution Act of 1982 along with Inuit and Métis. In addition, three categories apply to Indians in Canada: Status Indians, Non-Status Indians and Treaty Indians.

**Status Indians** – Status Indians are people who are entitled to have their names included on the Indian Register, an official list maintained by the federal government. Certain criteria determine who can be registered as a Status Indian. Only Status Indians are recognized as Indians under the *Indian Act* and are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law.

**Non-Status Indians** – Non-Status Indians are people who consider themselves Indians or members of a First Nation but whom the Government of Canada does not recognize as Indians under the *Indian Act*, either because they are unable to prove their Indian status or have lost their status rights. Non-Status Indians are not entitled to the same rights and benefits available to Status Indians.

**Treaty Indians** – Treaty Indians are descendants of Indians who signed treaties with Canada and who have a contemporary connection with a treaty band.

The term Indian is considered outdated by many people, and there is much debate over whether to continue using this term. Use First Nation instead of Indian, except in the following cases:

- in direct quotations
- when citing titles of books, works of art, etc.
- in discussions of history where necessary for clarity and accuracy
- in discussions of some legal/constitutional matters requiring precision in terminology
- in discussions of rights and benefits provided on the basis of Indian status or
- in statistical information collected using these categories (e.g., the census)

The term is acceptable as both a noun and a modifier.

## ABORIGINAL

Aboriginal means “native to the area.” In this sense, Aboriginal Peoples are indeed Aboriginal to North America. Its meaning is similar to Aboriginal Peoples, Native Peoples or First Peoples.

The term is rarely used, but when it is, it usually refers to Aboriginal people internationally. The term is gaining acceptance, particularly among some Aboriginal scholars to recognize the place of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada's late-colonial era and implies land tenure. The term is also used by the United Nations in its working groups and in its Decade of the World's Aboriginal People.

**Aboriginal/Aboriginal** – As a proper name for a people, the term is capitalized; otherwise, it is lower case.

## **INNU**

Innu are the Naskapi and Montagnais First Nations Peoples who live in Quebec and Labrador. They are not to be confused with Inuit or Inuk.

## **INUIT**

Inuit are a circumpolar people, inhabiting regions in Russia, Alaska, Canada and Greenland, united by a common culture and language. There are approximately 55,000 Inuit living in Canada. Inuit live primarily in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and northern parts of Quebec and coastal Labrador. They have traditionally lived for the most part north of the treeline in the area bordered by the Mackenzie Delta in the west, the Labrador coast in the east, the southern point of Hudson Bay in the south, and the High Arctic islands in the north.

The Indian Act does not cover Inuit. However, in 1939, the Supreme Court of Canada interpreted the federal government's power to make laws affecting —Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians as extending to Inuit.

**Inuk** – Inuk is the singular form of Inuit. Use Inuk when referring to one person. When referring to two people, the correct term is Inuk. For three or more people, it is Inuit.

**Inuktitut** – Inuit have a strong cultural identity, including usage of traditional languages. For example, 70 per cent of Inuit can carry on a conversation in Inuktitut—the Inuit language. In the eastern Arctic and Nunavik, Inuktitut is the language people read, speak and use on a daily basis.

Languages spoken by Inuit comprise a number of dialects, some of which are not easily comprehensible by Inuit in other regions.

Written Inuktitut utilizes either a system of syllabics (called Qaniuyaapiat) or, in the western Arctic, the Kitikmeot region and Nunatsiavut, Roman Orthography (called Qaliuyaapait). The dialect of Inuktitut in the Inuvialuit region is called Inuvialuktun. In the Kitikmeot region, Inuinaqtun is spoken.

The word Inuit means “the people” in Inuktitut and is the term by which Inuit refer to themselves. Avoid using the term ‘Inuit people’ as it is redundant. The term Eskimo is considered derogatory and should not be used. In Alaska, Inuit are referred to as Alaska Natives.

Inuit is acceptable as both a noun and modifier. According to the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the preferred use of Inuit as a noun is simply Inuit, not the Inuit.

**X** As hunters, the Inuit people led a seasonal existence, living according to nature's schedule.  
**√** As hunters, Inuit led a seasonal existence, living according to nature's schedule.

**Communities and Settlements** – Inuit live in communities and settlements. Inuit never lived on reserves, therefore the terms on-reserve and off-reserve do not apply to Inuit, only to First Nations. Wording that is supposed to cover all Aboriginal communities—for example, a reference to people living on a reserve, off a reserve or in urban areas—must add in Inuit communities in order to be inclusive of Inuit living in the North.

There are four Inuit comprehensive land claims regions covering more than one-third of Canada: the Inuvialuit Settlement Region in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik in northern Quebec, and Nunatsiavut in

Labrador. Nunavut has three subregions—Kitikmeot, Kivalliq and Qikiqtani—which are called regions. These are not referred to as Inuit Regions nor Inuit Territories.

## **MÉTIS**

The word Métis is French for “mixed blood.” Section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982 recognizes Métis as one of the three Aboriginal Peoples. Historically, the term Métis applied to the children of French fur traders and Cree women in the Prairies, of English and Scottish traders and Dene women in the North, and Inuit and British in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The name Métis, in Canada, is constitutionally applied to descendants of communities in what is now southern Manitoba along the Red River Valley and Winnipeg. The name has also been constitutionally applied to the descendants of similar communities in what are now Quebec and Labrador, although these groups’ histories are different from that of the western Métis, as well as a community of Métis in Northeastern British Columbia on a settlement called Kelly Lake. There are also Métis Settlements recognized by the Alberta Government in the early 1900s through the Métis Settlement Act and are independent of any other representatives of Métis People in Canada.

Today, the term is used broadly to describe people with mixed First Nations and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis. Note that Métis organizations in Canada have differing criteria about who qualifies as a Métis person.

**Accent or no accent?** – Many people and groups, particularly in the west and the North, have dropped the accent in Métis. In keeping with the Métis National Council, NAHO will use the accent. Nevertheless, it is best to check the names of individual Métis organizations before you publish them<sup>3</sup>.

**Métis Settlements** – In 1938, the Alberta government set aside 1.25 million acres of land for eight Métis settlements, however, Métis never lived on reserves. Therefore the terms on-reserve and off-reserve do not apply to them, only to First Nations. Wording that is supposed to cover all Indigenous communities—for example, a reference to people living on a reserve, off a reserve, or in urban areas—must add Métis settlements to be inclusive.

## **NATIVE**

Native is a word similar in meaning to Indigenous. Native Peoples is a collective term to describe the descendants of the original peoples of North America. The term is increasingly seen as outdated (particularly when used as a noun) and is starting to lose acceptance.

## **NATIVE AMERICAN**

This commonly used term in the United States describes the descendants of the original peoples of North America. The term has not gained acceptance in Canada because of the apparent reference to U.S. citizenship. However, some Indigenous Peoples in Canada have argued that because they are descendants of the original peoples of the Americas, the term Native American should apply to them regardless of their citizenship. Native North American has been used to identify the original peoples of Canada and the United States.

## **RESERVATION**

A reservation is land set aside by the U.S. government for the use and occupation of a group of Native Americans. The term does not apply in Canada.

## **RESERVE**

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<sup>3</sup> The accent is sometimes dropped to indicate not all mixing was French/Indigenous; it was also Scot/British.

A reserve is the land that is set aside by the Crown for the use and benefit of a band in Canada. Many First Nations now prefer the term First Nation community and no longer use reserve.

Only capitalize reserve when used as part of a name, otherwise it should remain lowercase.

**on-reserve/off-reserve:** These terms are modifiers to qualify people or things that are or are not part of a reserve. Avoid moving the on-reserve/off-reserve modifier after the noun and removing the hyphen.

- **X** The government has announced a new approach to housing on reserve.  
**X** Businesses on reserve are eligible for the new training program.

Readers may have trouble interpreting these sentences. They are either grammatically incorrect or suggest that businesses and housing have been set aside for future use (i.e., they are in reserve).

- ✓ The government has announced a new approach to on-reserve housing.  
✓ On-reserve businesses are eligible for the new training program.  
✓ Businesses located on reserves are eligible for the new training program.
- Another common usage is people who live on reserve and people who live off reserve.
- **X** Students who live on reserve are eligible for the summer employment program.  
**X** It can be a welcome place for First Nations people who live off reserve.  
✓ Students living on a reserve are eligible for the summer employment program.  
✓ It can be a welcome place for First Nations people living off reserve.

Do not write “off-reserve Indigenous People” as neither the Métis nor Inuit live on reserves.

## TRIBAL COUNCIL

A tribal council is a group made up of several bands and represents the interests of those bands. A tribal council may administer funds or deliver common services to those bands. Membership in a tribal council tends to be organized around geographic, political, treaty, cultural, and/or linguistic lines.

## TRIBE

A tribe is a group of Native Americans sharing a common language and culture. The term is used frequently in the United States, but only in a few areas of Canada (e.g., the Blood Tribe in Alberta).