INDIGENOUS CULTURAL-LINGUISTIC FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION TOOL KIT

The tools in this kit have been developed as a result of recommendations from the Stakeholder Survey and under the guidance of local Elders, Indigenous community leaders and non-Indigenous service and research partners. Some were created specifically for use of members of the District of Timisakaming Best Start Network. Those using the Implementation Guide and Took Kit are invited to select only those tools that are a good fit with their purpose and available resources.

Effective Date

- To be determined

Purpose

- The Best Start Network has developed this policy in response to recommendations from the Stakeholder Survey Report and Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework (2013).
- The policy lays the foundation for all members of the Best Start Network to collectively agree to ensure Indigenous cultural competency training is provided to their staff and equitable access to quality, culturally competent services are provided for First Nations and Métis children and families in respect of their inherent rights.

Application

- Management and staff shall refer to this policy when assessing service requests and/or planning and delivering programs and services for First Nations and Métis children ages 0-12 years and their families.
- In addition to programs and services this policy includes but is not limited to: governance and management policy and practice, facilities and program environments, handling of cultural artifacts and traditional medicines, staff training, and development, and dissemination of culture-based outreach and information tools and/or learning resources.

Context

- Indigenous First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities in Canada are reclaiming inherent rights to their cultures, languages, heritage and lands. These communities and Nations are diverse, with their own cultural-linguistic protocols, practices and beliefs.
- The Best Start Network is a planning and coordination body for services to children and families in the District of Timiskaming that is committed to equal access and quality of services for First Nations and Métis children and families.
- Local community-based First Nations-Métis organizations and Elders are leaders and key partners in the planning and delivery of quality, culturally competent services.
- In collaboration with First Nation-Métis partners and Elders the Best Start Network provides cultural competency training to its members and develops tools and learning resources to address the early learning and development needs of local First Nations and Métis children and families.

Policy Requirements

When assessing service requests and/or providing services and programs to First Nations and Métis families in the District management and staff should:

1. Ensure a plan is in place that reflects the organization's commitment to a Board of Directors and staff that is representative of the northern Métis and First Nations community it serves.
2. Clarify the cultural competency goals and objectives of all programs and services.
3. Ensure a plan is in place for programs and services that align with local First Nations and Métis cultural values and traditions and with the priorities of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*.
4. Engage and work cooperatively and collaboratively with First Nations-Métis service providers in support of First Nations and Métis children and families.
5. Ensure the cultural beliefs and traditions of the community are respected by seeking out any necessary information (e.g. protocols and historical, cultural, linguistic and current issues as they relate to healthy early child development).
6. Establish a relationship with Elders and other cultural-linguistic resource persons who are acceptable to the family and/or community and/or service partners (as appropriate).
7. Maintain awareness of all applicable federal and provincial policies and procedures related to Indigenous Peoples in Canada.
8. Ensure Indigenous cultural competency training and practice is integral to staff professional development and performance appraisals.

TOOL KIT: INDIGENOUS CULTURAL-LINGUISTIC FRAMEWORK SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Note: These questions are addressed to District Planning Bodies, Service Providers and School Boards

Leadership and Governance: Partnership, Participation and Engagement

1. Does the governance structure embody Indigenous Knowledge and embed local First Nations and Métis traditions and practices?
2. Does the governance structure support and promote improved outcomes for Indigenous-Métis people and organizations (i.e. enhanced capacity)?
3. Are First Nations and Métis people in positions of leadership in the organization? If not is there a succession/mentorship program to move Indigenous members into leadership positions?
4. Are members of the leadership knowledgeable and aware of local Indigenous cultures and history in the District of Timiskaming?
5. Do members of the leadership group regularly participate and directly engage with Indigenous people and communities outside of their own organization?
6. What structures and mechanisms are in place to support First Nations and Métis involvement in relevant high level decision making? Is there a systemic feedback loop for those involved from planning through to evaluation?
7. How are Indigenous people engaged across *all* priority planning areas, not just Indigenous specific areas?
8. Do the mission statement and corporate plans explicitly commit to First Nations and Métis engagement?
9. Do performance expectations for the partnership reflect and are balanced with each partner's capacity to deliver?

Leadership and Governance: Cultural Safety and Respect

1. How does the leadership group welcome and promote local First Nations and Métis culture including local languages?
2. Does the leadership group actively model expected attitudes (sensitivity) and behaviours (cultural competency)?
3. Does the leadership group include people who champion the rights of First Nations and Métis people in the District of Timiskaming?
4. Are 'Welcome to the Ancestral Territory of Algonquin/Ojibwa/Cree/Metes' and 'Acknowledgment of the Ancestral Territory of Algonquin/Ojibwa/Cree/Metes'' embedded in communications policy and guidelines for events?
5. Are there protocols for ensuring correct phonetic pronunciation of local First Nations and Métis language and place names?
6. Have members of the leadership group attended training on the development of culturally appropriate policies and procedures?

Leadership and Governance: Accessibility and Quality of Services

1. Does the leadership set a consistent benchmark for the delivery of quality services provided for First Nations and Métis people and non-Indigenous people?
2. Does the leadership group have clear policies that embed and monitor legislation and standards?

Leadership and Governance: Evaluation and Monitoring

1. Is there an agency/organization evaluation plan that is endorsed by the leadership group?
2. Does the evaluation plan include evaluation of First Nations and Métis access, participation and outcomes?
3. Are evaluation processes embedded into agency/District planning processes?
4. Are Indigenous people involved in the design and implementation of evaluation processes?
5. Has the organization/agency ever undertaken an external review of their own approach to Indigenous inclusion and issues?

Leadership and Governance: Accountability and Reporting

1. Does the agency have appropriate and transparent internal and external performance reporting processes?
2. How do reports back to First Nations and Métis stakeholders occur?
3. Do annual reports reflect processes and outcomes for First Nations and Métis service users?
4. Does the agency have targets for Indigenous representation and a plan to meet and report on them for 2014?
5. Does the agency understand and report on its commitments under provincial targets for Indigenous inclusion goals and take a proactive role in meeting its commitments?
6. How does the agency report on milestones in First Nations and Métis inclusion?

Leadership and Governance: Alignment with Provincial Commitments and Interagency Collaboration

1. Does the leadership group have a plan to ensure that high level cross government frameworks underpin planning and decision making? i.e. Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs (MAA) Results-Based Plan 2013-14; Early Learning Framework 2007 (Guidelines for Practice p. 76)
2. Is the interface with other agencies managed to ensure coordinated and inclusive leadership and governance?
3. Are outcomes publicly reported?

Policy Development: Partnership, Participation and Engagement

1. Is a diverse representation of local First Nations and Métis people (age, gender, location) engaged at the initialization, development, finalization, and evaluation stages of policy development?
2. Do you actively seek to engage Indigenous-Métis people/organizations in policy development through existing networks and forums to avoid over consultation?
3. Are there formal ongoing partnerships with Indigenous-Métis people/organizations documented and published on the agency website?
4. Do policy development processes ensure there is sufficient time for genuine engagement and relationship building with Indigenous-Métis organizations and are resources made available to support First Nations and Métis participation?
5. Is policy evidence based?
6. Has engagement and consultation extended to seeking the views of First Nations and Métis people affected by the policy or programs proposed?

Policy Development: Cultural Safety and Respect

1. How is the effect of policy on local First Nations and Métis citizens and communities assessed?
2. Has the impact been tested?

3. Are there unintended consequences of policy?
4. What strategies are adopted to identify and remedy unintended policy consequences?
5. Are the linguistic, spiritual and cultural rights of local First Nations and Métis people given equal consideration?
6. Is policy aligned with cultural safety?

Policy Development: Accessibility and Quality of Services

1. Is the human rights impact of policy given explicit and appropriately detailed consideration?
2. How is policy development informed by Indigenous equity of access principles?
3. Does policy positively impact on accessibility and is this outcome made clear to staff who are responsible for implementing the policy?
4. Are policy documents written in plain language that is inclusive i.e. minimizing jargon, represents terms local First Nations and Métis people use to describe themselves, i.e. Anishnaabe, Ojibwe, Cree, Algonquin, and Métis?
5. Is due diligence given to planning both the output (the policy) and implementation process (service) of that policy?

Policy Development: Evaluation and Monitoring

1. Do evaluation mechanisms assess the impact of policy on local First Nations and Métis people and communities?
3. Is local research used as a basis for policy and planning?
4. Does evaluation build knowledge to improve practice and policy?
5. Do evaluation methodologies recognize First Nations and Métis traditions and values, e.g. oral traditions?
6. Is there a statement of ethics in data collection that is respectful of First Nations and Métis people and cultures?
7. Are a range of Indigenous-Métis stakeholders including service users, Elders, service providers, partners and policy makers involved in review and monitoring of policy?
8. How does this review challenge future policy, service and planning?
9. When policies are evaluated, is consideration also given to gaps that may exist?

Policy Development: Accountability and Reporting

1. Are policies available and accessible to Indigenous-Métis stakeholders and communities?
2. Do evaluations actively seek input from First Nations and Métis people as required?
3. Are evaluations available to First Nations and Métis people and stakeholders?

Policy Development: Alignment with Provincial Commitments and Interagency Collaboration

1. Does Ontario Government policy and program development support better outcomes at the local level in the District of Timiskaming?
2. Are there local protocols for endorsement of Ontario Government policy?

Programs and Services: Partnership, Participation and Engagement

1. How do program supervisors in both Indigenous specific and mainstream programs engage with local First Nations and Métis community members and leaders in the delivery of services?
2. Are there local / regional program partnerships that actively seek Indigenous-Métis participation and input into program priorities and delivery modes?
3. Do First Nations and Métis people and organizations equally access and benefit from community grants?

Programs and Services: Cultural Safety and Respect

1. Has your agency formally adopted the guiding principles for services to local First Nations and Métis communities outlined in the Indigenous-Cultural-Linguistic Framework?
2. How do service providers work with local First Nations and Métis people to encourage self-identification when using services?
3. Are cultural strengths used to support service delivery, i.e. the use of appropriate local language in the naming of programs & services, involvement of extended family and Elders, Elder protocol?
4. Is the service proactive in ensuring that the environment is culturally safe and inviting for First Nations and Métis people including those who might be most likely to self exclude?
5. Is the impact of culture taken into account when designing service responses to individual First Nations and Métis clients i.e. are there a cultural impact self-assessment checklist available as a template?
6. Do programs and services support strengthening the capacity of local First Nations and Métis communities and cultural identities?
7. Are there processes to ensure that concerns about cultural safety, presence and recognition are heard?
8. What strategies are in place to specifically make the service more welcoming to First Nations and Métis people who might be most likely to self exclude?

Programs and Services: Accessibility and Quality of Services

1. Do service providers ask why First Nations and Métis people aren't accessing services?
2. Are services delivered within a rights-based framework that actively considers local First Nations and Métis cultural, language and other rights?
3. Do organizations providing services to First Nations and Métis families have a policy that they should receive support in their own language, where possible and do they ensure they recruit, screen, hire and retain interpreters on their staff.
4. Are services culturally appropriate and safe, i.e. culturally appropriate intake, assessment and diagnostic tools and procedures; culturally appropriate case management tools and procedures, i.e. parental consent to involve extended family.
5. How do service providers link clients to other services to create coordinated service systems?
6. Are processes in place to ensure that mainstream services are not used as a referral destination when the client's needs could be better met through Indigenous-specific services?
7. Is the agency aware of what appropriate levels of engagement would be in terms of population levels?
8. Are service user rates by Indigenous people at expected levels?

Programs and Services: Evaluation and Monitoring

1. Is cultural competency aligned with measureable learning objectives, practice guidelines and performance indicators?
2. Do service providers regularly seek feedback from a broad range of First Nations and Métis clients (parents/grandparents), Elders and stakeholders?
3. Do program evaluation processes include feedback from First Nations and Métis clients and Elders to assess the level of cultural competency of the staff and agency?
4. Are there user-friendly, non-punitive mechanisms for service user feedback and complaints?
5. Are Indigenous people informed about their rights to equitable services?
6. Are Indigenous-Métis organizations resourced to sustain a) delivery of quality services, and b) partnerships and collaboration with other providers and planners?
7. Do service providers work co-operatively to enable holistic service delivery rather than isolated solutions for isolated problems?
8. Do programs contribute to meeting targets set by the Ontario government?
9. Is the program/service resourced adequately to ensure the outcomes are met and program quality is sustained?
10. Are there systemic ways to receive feedback and evaluation from Indigenous-Métis organizations, Elders and clients about service delivery?
11. Can data be disaggregated on the basis of Indigenous identity (service data, outcomes, and data)?

Programs and Services: Accountability and Reporting

1. Are processes being implemented to improve accuracy in recording the status of First Nations and Métis clients?
2. Are Indigenous stakeholders informed about services and programs and can they equally expect the standards of service delivery experienced by the general community?
3. Are there realistic and measurable targets for service providers?
4. If audits or reports from funded agencies raise concerns is there a systemic and equal response to address these concerns with Indigenous controlled and mainstream agencies?
5. Are there a range of services available and accessible to First Nations and Métis people including prevention and intervention? Are these all reported on and monitored?

Programs and Services: Alignment with Provincial Commitments and Interagency Collaboration

1. Are the agency's policies and practices aligned with provincial strategies to achieve improvements in Indigenous early learning outcomes?
2. Is interagency collaboration managed to ensure a coordinated and inclusive response to service delivery?
3. Are there formal networks, joint initiatives between Indigenous-Métis controlled and mainstream agencies to improve practice, communication and service delivery?

Indigenous Employment: Partnership, Participation and Engagement

1. Does the agency have an Indigenous Employment Plan to attract, recruit and develop First Nations and Métis staff?
2. Has the Plan been developed in consultation with local First Nations and Métis people?

3. What guidelines and training does the agency offer employees in relation to outreaching and engaging with First Nations and Métis people as stakeholders/clients?
4. What pathways are in place for Indigenous employees to aspire and to attain to positions across all levels and fields of expertise i.e. succession programs and leadership?
5. Does the organization actively foster relationships between local First Nations and Métis and non-Indigenous people i.e. mentoring, celebrating cultural events?

Indigenous Employment: Cultural Safety and Respect

1. Does the agency reflect the diversity of local First Nations and Métis language groups and cultures in the District of Timiskaming through policies, the environment, values and behaviours?
2. How are First Nations and Métis employees supported including through mentoring, networks and training opportunities?
3. Does the agency actively encourage staff to identify as First Nations or Métis during recruitment processes?
4. What training is provided to non-Indigenous staff to increase cultural awareness, cultural inclusiveness and challenge racism?
5. Is the non-Indigenous staff encouraged to participate in First Nations and Métis community events for experiential learning?
6. Does the agency provide Orientation for all new employees about a) the First Nations and Métis communities in the District, and b) cultural safety for Indigenous service users and employees?
7. Does the Employment Plan outline the agencies' commitment to improving outcomes for Indigenous people and meeting employment equity targets?

Indigenous Employment: Accessibility and Quality of Services

1. Does the workplace understand its duty for equitable, accessible and ethical services for First Nations and Métis people?
2. What professional development opportunities are there for staff to meet this duty?
3. Does the organization review policies and procedures to ensure employees are clear about their obligations?

Indigenous Employment: Evaluation and Monitoring

1. How is the effectiveness of culturally competent service delivery by employees measured?
2. Is there a process and mechanism to assess whether professional development translates into attitudinal and practice shifts
3. Does the agency seek staff feedback through discussion, meetings or confidential surveys?
4. Are the views of First Nations and Métis employees collected and used to change practice through employee satisfaction surveys?
5. How does an agency know if it has become an employer of choice for First Nations and Métis people?
6. Does the agency conduct exit interviews to inform Indigenous retention policies?

Indigenous Employment: Accountability and Reporting

1. Does the agency have a plan to meet and report on Ontario provincial Indigenous employment targets?
2. Does the agency accurately collect and report Indigenous employment data?
3. Are individual performance plans aligned with the provincial Indigenous inclusion policy and framework?
4. What strategies are in place to embed First Nations and Métis inclusiveness and cultural safety throughout the organization?
5. Are effective internal accountabilities in place?
6. Are there strategies that reward and recognize excellence of First Nations and Métis staff or service provision to Indigenous people?

Indigenous Employment: Alignment with Provincial Commitments and Interagency Collaboration

1. Are your agency's policies and practices aligned with provincial strategies to achieve improved Indigenous employment outcomes?
2. Is it monitored? If so how?
3. Is it integrated into governance structures? If so how?
4. Do employee participation targets form part of leadership performance plans?

Communications: Partnership, Participation and Engagement

1. Are communications frameworks and guidelines inclusive and accessible of local First Nations and Métis cultures, languages and symbols?
2. Do communications acknowledge traditional ownership and intellectual property rights, minimize bureaucratic language and acronyms, use local First Nations and Métis artwork/design, and use First Nations and Métis case studies or testimonials?
3. How is information provided to First Nations and Métis people so that they can equitably access services and participate in wider community and public life i.e. print media/radio/digital stories/word of mouth/computer based, ongoing Indigenous community events, community meetings, Indigenous-Métis organizations, annual First Nations and Métis events (Pow wow's, National Indigenous Day, Métis Harvest gathering, etc)?
4. Are different kinds of media sources used, including Indigenous media sources, Facebook and Twitter to promote services and provide information?

Communications: Cultural Safety and Respect

1. Do communication methods and modes ensure the voices of First Nations and Métis people, not just the dominant culture is heard?
2. How are local First Nations and Métis languages, cultures, symbols and people presented in communications campaigns?
3. Do 'communications' promote the diversity of local First Nations and Métis people, languages and cultures (from a strengths base) as part of community life in the District of Timiskaming?
4. Is accurate information provided that challenges inaccurate/racist/prejudicial stereotypes and beliefs?
5. Are colonial/exclusionary/racist social practices challenged through communications and social marketing campaigns?

Communications: Accessibility and Quality of Services

1. How are internal communications used to reinforce equitable service standards?
2. Is the distribution of material, information and symbolic resources equitable?
3. Is information available to and used by First Nations and Métis people to increase their awareness and understanding of programs, services, and their rights as service users?
4. Is information available to service providers to support tailored and client-centred responses that draw together program support across agencies?

Communications: Evaluation and Monitoring

1. Are communication strategies evaluated?
2. Is baseline data collected?
3. Are First Nations and Métis people included in the development and input/review of evaluations?

Communications: Accountability and Reporting

1. Are communications strategies and materials reviewed to ensure that they are inclusive, empower First Nations and Métis service users and promote a shift to positive, strength-based social attitudes and norms?
2. Are local First Nations and Métis people involved in developing or monitoring the communication plan/guidelines?

Communications: Alignment with Provincial Commitments and Interagency Collaboration

1. Does your organization refer to provincial strategies and interagency collaboration in its communications?
2. What communications are in place to demonstrate your role within the wider Indigenous-Cultural Linguistic Framework?

TOOL KIT: IMPLEMENTATION ACTION AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT TABLE

Best Start Area of Focus: Governance and Management

Indigenous Framework Priority	Implementation Actions	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Results
1. Capacity for local First Nations-Métis Service Providers to take Leadership Roles	• Indigenous Best Start Committee TOR/budget aligned with Framework including principles and procedures for resolving conflict • Best Start Network review/develop policy/procedure & budget to enhance financial incentives for Indigenous reps (staff replacement costs, travel, etc) • IBSC and BSN develop partnership agreement for integrating appropriate activities for the Indigenous Framework in workplans				
2. First Nations-Métis Representation in Governance and Employment	• Promote role of Elders Council for the District of Timiskaming among local service providers/DTSSAB/BSN members. • BSN/DTSSAB recommend *Indigenous inclusion Policy* to their BODs, • BSN/IBSC promote *Indigenous Framework* priorities to TS Cultural Roundtable, hospital/health centre/NEOFACS, etc. (cross-ref to financial incentive policy) • BSN/DTSSAB develop/recommend Indigenous Employee Recruitment & Retention Strategy for member BODs				

Monitoring/Evaluating Results Achieved

Indigenous Framework Priority	Performance Measures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Results
1. Capacity for Aboriginal Service Providers to take Leadership Roles	• IBSC stabilizes meetings/quorum according to TOR • Level of financial resources directly invested by BSN/DTSSAB for Indigenous inclusion. • Number of implementation partnerships directly supported by BSC/DTSSAB				
2. First Nations-Métis Representation in Governance and Employment	• Number of new Indigenous designated seats on local BODs, networks and planning committees. • Number of incidents of EC consultation/partnership requests. • Number of Indigenous employees hired/retained/promoted and staff exchanges/placements at DTSSAB/BSN members.				

Best Start Area of Focus: Access and Quality of Programs and Services

Indigenous Framework Priority	Implementation Actions	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Results
1. Cultural Education and Training	• Mandatory for all service providers and educators who work with First Nations-Métis families. • Coordinated, modular cultural competency training plan/tools including intercultural conflict resolution for service providers developed and approved by BSN/EC/IBSC. • Culture/language workshops provided by Elders/local resource people to children and families in environments that are culturally comfortable and safe. • Invest in employee development to promote shifts in practice				
2. Access to Resources/Tools	• BSN/DTSSAB/IBSC obtain/promote/use culturally appropriate, holistic assessment and referral tools. • BSN/IBSC/EC develop/promote inclusion protocol for involving extended family/Elders throughout the child learning/behavioural assessment process, before, during and after. • EC/IBSC develop protocols for accessing local First Nations and Métis cultural-linguistic training resources and resource people. • Out-of-District organizations that receive funding to deliver programs and services in the District must be located in the District.				
3. Partnerships with Schools and Support Services:	• Culture-language programming delivered by local Elders/resource people integrated into BSN partners' services and local schools. • EC develop partnership agreements with local schools for accessing cultural resources/tools for child learning/behavioural assessments (with parental consent).				
4. Urban Community Centre	• EC/IBSC identify/recommend appropriate venue and seek political support for funding.				

Monitoring/Evaluating Results Achieved

Indigenous Framework Priority	Performance Measures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Results
1. Cultural Education and Training:	• Number of BST partners agreed to mandatory training for staff. • Number of training modules/tools accessed by # of agencies. • Number of culture-language workshop hours provided; # of children, family members who participate.				

	Implementation Actions	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Results
	• Pre/post self assessments show increase in knowledge and awareness of training participants across learning objectives. • Stories of Most Significant Change (MSC) demonstrate positive shifts in awareness, attitude and behaviours • Amount invested in employee development				
2. Access to Resources/Tools	• Number of culturally appropriate, holistic learning/behavioural assessment tools identified, promoted and used. • Number of schools and service providers with family/Elder inclusion assessment protocols in place. • Number of holistic assessments involving parents, Elders/resource people before, during and after, • Qualitative: parents, Elders, resource people feel: a) respected and listened to in the process of engagement; b) informed about screening/assessment, what it is, why it's needed, what it will achieve, i.e. to consider child development in the context of family, community and cultural influences . • Stories of Most Significant Change (MSC) demonstrate positive shifts in awareness, attitude and behaviours. • Out-of-District organizations provide evidence of access to quality services in the District including # of clients served; # of hours of service and outcomes.				
3. Partnerships with Schools and Support Services:	• Number of school partnerships; # of cultural programming hours. • Number of local Elders/resource people delivering content in schools, BSN members and other local services.				
4. Urban Community Centre	• Recommendation of venue, number of meetings with local MPP, MPs. • Financial plan for access to suitable venue.				

Best Start Area of Focus: Promotion and Awareness

Indigenous Framework Priority	Implementation Actions	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Results
1. Communications, Outreach and Support to Families	• BSN/IBSC partnership agreement to implement Indigenous health promotion/outreach plan/budget for FASD, post-partum depression, new fathers, non-Indigenous foster parents and children with individualized needs. • IBSC/EC recommend innovations in outreach for existing services to Indigenous children and families.				
2. Public	• IBSC/EC/BSN/DTSSAB recommend tools and strategies to TS				

Education/Engagement	Cultural Roundtable.				
	• Continue KC/TNWSC partnership with annual Christmas Village/Harvest Festival				
	• BSC/DTSSAB presence at annual local Pow wows				
	• IBSC develop Fact Sheet on First Nations-Métis cultures and history in the District of Timiskaming/post on municipal and BSN/DTSSAB websites				
	• IBSC/EC develop media strategy to promote FN/M cultures in local newspapers, radio, TV				

Monitoring/Evaluating Results Achieved

Indigenous Framework Priority	Performance Measures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Results
1. Communications, Outreach and Support to Families	• Number of new partnerships; # of events; # of new promotional materials produced; # of new clients reached. • # of innovations identified/implemented; # of community members/potential clients reached. • Stories of Most Significant Change (MSC) demonstrate positive shifts in awareness, attitude and behaviours				
2. Public Education/Engagement	• Number of Indigenous TS Cultural Roundtable member • Number of promotional materials and events featuring local Indigenous arts, cultures, and history (examples: # of Christmas/Harvest Festival tables/events/flyers; # of websites posting Fact Sheet on local First Nations-Métis culture and history). • Number of BSN/DTSSAB members at local annual Pow wows • Number of positive media stories featuring local First Nation-Métis cultures, peoples and events. • Stories of Most Significant Change (MSC) demonstrate positive shifts in awareness, attitude and behaviours				

Best Start Area of Focus: Accountability

Indigenous Framework Priority	Implementation Actions	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Results
1. Accountability for Cultural Competency	• Each member of the BSN/IBSC/DTSSAB identify person(s) responsible at their agency and its own mechanisms for implementing priorities of the Indigenous Framework. • Cross reference to mandatory training.				

2.	Adequate Financial Resources	• Each member of the BSN/DTSSAB identifies financial and human resources contributed toward a Financial Plan to implement priorities of the Indigenous Framework aligned with their own strategic and service plans.			
3.	Monitoring and Evaluation	• The BSN/DTSSAB and IBSC include progress reports for the Implementation Plan on their regular meeting agendas. • The BSN/IBSC/DTSSAB produce annual written progress reports on implementation of the Indigenous Framework and an oral report to the Elder's Council. • Members of the BSN/DTSSAB and IBSC report to their BODs annual general meetings re progress implementing the Indigenous Framework.			

Monitoring/Evaluating Results Achieved

Indigenous Framework Priority	Performance Measures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Results
1. Accountability for Cultural Competency	• Number of agencies who complete baseline organization assessments. • Number of people/positions/agencies/mechanisms listed who are accountable for implementation. • Number of agencies/staff and # of hours of cultural competence training. • Stories of Most Significant Change (MSC) demonstrate positive shifts in awareness, attitude and practice.				
2. Adequate Financial Resources	• Number of agencies who commit human/financial resources and financial/in-kind value of the contributions. • Amount of financial and in-kind contributions.				
3. Monitoring and Evaluation	• Number of oral progress reports made; # of written reports available; # of activities carried out successfully; written evidence of Stories of Most Significant Change (MSC), best practices/lessons learned shared with other Networks.				

TOOL KIT: EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES, STRATEGIES AND TOOLS ALIGNED WITH BEST START NETWORK FOUR AREAS OF FOCUS		
GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT		
STAGES OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	ESSENTIAL COMPONENT INDIGENOUS FRAMEWORK	EXAMPLES OF TOOLS AND STRATEGIES
OPENNESS AND AWARENESS	**Policies, guidelines and procedures** • Indigenous inclusion policy • Statement of Recognition of First Nations Ancestral Territory and origins-history of the Métis • Statement of commitment to equity of access principles and equal consideration of the linguistic, spiritual and cultural rights of Indigenous people in Canada	1. Sample Policy for Serving Children and Families 2. Guiding principles from Stakeholder Survey Report 3. Sample statement of recognition, i.e. Welcome to the Ancestral Territory including words of Welcome in local Ojibwe, Cree, Algonquin and Métis dialects 4. NAHO *Definition of Terms*
APPLICATION	**Governance Tools** • Designated Indigenous seat(s) on Board of Directors • Indigenous subcommittee, council, liaison group or other formal mechanism to a) address First Nations-Métis cultural-linguistic services, b) support First Nations-Métis involvement in high level decision-making, and c) promote linkages with Indigenous-Métis service leaders • Formal designation of the organization as a culturally appropriate service for First Nations and Métis children and families Management Tools • Management guide on the provision of First Nations-Métis cultural-linguistic services • Manager designated as responsible for provision of Indigenous	Example of inclusion policy with designated seats

	• culturally competent service delivery • Designated person for Indigenous liaison within the organization • Plan in place to develop Indigenous cultural-linguistic competencies of the staff		
COMMUNITY LEADERSHP	**Building Relationships with the Indigenous Community** • Active participation of Board members, senior managers and the organization in Indigenous-Métis planning networks in ways that enhance Indigenous capacity • Active participation of Board members, staff and the organization at First Nations and Métis community events and celebrations (AGMs, annual Indigenous Day celebrations, Pow wows, Annual Métis Harvest Gathering etc.)	Sample Implementation Action and Performance Measurement Table	

PROMOTION AND AWARENESS

STAGE	ESSENTIAL COMPONENT INDIGENOUS FRAMEWORK	EXAMPLES OF TOOLS AND STRATEGIES
OPENNESS AND AWARENESS	**Policies, guidelines and administrative procedures** • External and internal communication policy (includes protocol for ensuring correct phonetic pronunciation of First Nation and Métis language and place names; terms reflect how local Indigenous people describe themselves; formal, respects Indigenous oral tradition, ongoing partnerships with Indigenous-Métis organizations published on the website) • Cultural awareness and competency skills training for all Board members • Cultural awareness and competency skills training for all staff • Orientation plan for new employees working with First Nations and Métis children and families	1. Example of internal/external communications policy 2. Example of Board-staff cultural competency training module 3. Example of Orientation plan-handout for new employees (that includes development of a local First Nations-Métis Guide to the District of Timiskaming)
APPLICATION	**Active Offer of Services** • External and internal First Nations and Métis cultural-linguistic	1. Inventory of Local Cultural-Linguistic Specialists (First Nations and Métis) for

	signage strategies • Ongoing modular training plan for Board and staff • First Nations-Métis outreach plan and promotional strategies	language translation and cultural knowledge. 2. Example of modular training plan 3. Examples of First Nations and Métis-specific promotional tools
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP	**Community Outreach to promote and enhance Indigenous cultural-linguistic services** • Communication and promotion strategies using a differential approach for the Indigenous population • Visible and active participation of the organization, Board and staff in local and/or regional First Nations and Métis events, projects or causes	Example of communication and promotion strategy
ACCESSIBILITY AND QUALITY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES		
STAGE	ESSENTIAL COMPONENT INDIGENOUS FRAMEWORK	EXAMPLES OF TOOLS AND STRATEGIES
OPENNESS AND AWARENESS	**Policies, guidelines and administrative procedures** • Policy on equal access for Indigenous people • Policy on quality of service for Indigenous people • First Nations and Métis recruitment, hiring, selection and internal promotion policy	1. Sample policy on Indigenous equality of access 2. Sample policy on quality of service to Indigenous people 3. Sample recruitment, hiring and selection policy for Indigenous employees

| APPLICATION | **Client-Centred Approach**
• Strategies for ensuring the environment and staff are welcoming and supportive of First Nations and Métis clients
• Quality standards and performance indicators for accessing and providing services comparable to the majority and aligned with priorities identified in Indigenous stakeholder survey
Strategic Planning
• Establishing goals and strategic objectives specific to local First Nations and Métis needs
• Differential approach for Indigenous people
• Local Indigenous-driven research is the basis for planning
Human Resources Planning and Management
• Formal recruitment, hiring, selection and mentoring strategies for qualified First Nations and Métis staff
• Formal procedures to recruit, screen, hire and retain language and cultural interpreters from the local First Nations and Métis communities
• Succession planning that includes Indigenous cultural-linguistic competency component
Resources Planning and Management
• Documents and resources available in Indigenous languages aligned with majority Indigenous language needs
• Forms and documents available in plain language
• Translation, interpretation and adaptation of resources are available | 1. Examples of greeting and support protocols for Indigenous people
2. Elder protocol
3. Examples of Indigenous cultural quality standards comparable to those of majority

4. List of local Indigenous language and cultural interpretation specialists/Elders |
| COMMUNITY LEADERSHP | **Alignment with Community Goals and Objectives**
• Partnerships and networks to influence funding bodies and post-secondary institutions to increase First Nations and Métis professionals
• Partnerships and networks with Indigenous-Métis organizations and service providers to access/hire and retain First Nations and Métis community resource people/Elders for cultural-linguistic services
• Active participation in collaborative community projects for | 1. Indigenous Framework Stakeholder survey report and recommendations
2. Link to UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples |

	Indigenous community • Alignment of organization's goals and objectives with regional and local First Nations goals, objectives and priorities • Alignment of organization's goals and objectives with provincial and federal vision for Indigenous population • Alignment of organization's goals and objectives with United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	
ACCOUNTABILITY		
STAGE	ESSENTIAL COMPONENT INDIGENOUS FRAMEWORK	EXAMPLES OF TOOLS AND STRATEGIES
OPENNESS AND AWARENESS	**Policies, guidelines and administrative procedures** • First Nation-Métis client satisfaction policy and procedures • Complaint policy and procedures • Exit interview policy and procedures for First Nations-Métis clients and staff • Resources are allocated to support First Nations-Métis participation	Example of complaint policy and procedure
APPLICATION	**Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle** • Mechanism to evaluate communications policy and procedures with feedback from First Nations-Métis communities and partners • Formal strategies to manage and address internal and external complaints • Formal mechanisms to collect quantitative and qualitative data on the Indigenous population approved with input from First Nations and Métis people • Process to monitor and assess Indigenous client's level of satisfaction and report on changes over time • Formal mechanism to monitor and assess staff's level of Indigenous cultural competency • Formal strategies to assess how selected components of the	1. Questions to guide evaluation plan: Self-Assessment Tool 2. Sample data collection and evaluation tools

	Indigenous Framework and the Indigenous Stakeholder Survey report (as prioritized by management) are integrated and operationalized within the organization • Formal mechanisms to assess the organization's capacity to meet First Nations and Métis language needs • Annual reporting mechanism to share the organization's results/successes toward Indigenous cultural competency	
COMMUNITY LEADERSHP	**Indigenous Community Alignment** • An integrated and collaborative community approach to collecting relevant quantitative and qualitative data on the Indigenous community using performance indicators identified and prioritized by Indigenous-Métis partners.	Example of community-based data collection plan

TOOLKIT: CHECK LIST FOR PARTNERSHIP PROTOCOLS[1]	
Area for Collaboration	**Protocols Required**
Operation	- Roles and responsibilities of partnering managers - Roles of staff members in partnering organizations - Roles of volunteers in partnering organizations - Time commitment - Collaboration: leadership, continuity and accountability - Collaboration: meeting procedures, decision-making and working groups - Collaboration: contacts from each lead agency - Collaboration: use of logo, letterhead, and graphics (where relevant) - Administrative requirements - Managing differences in services, programs, organizational policies and procedures - Recording decision making
Communication	- Relationship building - Process for regular formal communication between managers of partnering organizations - Process for communication between staff in partnering organizations (Templates) - Process for distribution of Partnership Meeting Minutes - Process for Public and Media Statements - Use of the names of partner members in annual reports, advertising or promotions
Partnership Protocols Development and Review	- Process for amendment of partnership protocols - Time frame and process for regular protocol review and evaluation - Process for review of policy revision/development required for partnership
Financial Management	- Role/responsibilities of lead agencies - Responsibilities of partner agencies to supply invoices within a set time frame - Responsibilities of partner agencies to keep the lead agencies updated with comprehensive and relevant information - Time frame for lead agencies to collate information from other members and supply to funding bodies in mutually agreed upon format - Insurance coverage of partners

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[1] Adapted from 'Protocol Checklist for Non-legally Binding Collaborations, Community Door

Workforce/Staff	• Role/responsibility of staff to work to high standard of cultural competency as defined by Indigenous Framework • Mutually respectful intercultural relationships between personnel; privileging of Indigenous Knowledge (ways of being, doing, knowing)
Funding	• Agreement to share/pool/contribute resources • Agreement to comply with conditions of funding agreements • Timeframe for lead agencies to provide other members with copy of any funding submission • Contractual arrangement
Program/Service Provision	• Process for referral and bridging • Planning of the case managed program or service • Roles/responsibilities/process for case management • Culturally relevant process for intake/screening • Culturally relevant process for assessment in accordance with Indigenous Framework priorities • Process for interagency coordination of case managed service • Monitoring and review of the case managed service • Exit process and follow up • Evaluation and monitoring • Sustainability plan
Referral/Case Management	• Plan and process for outreach, engagement and intake aligned with Indigenous Framework priorities • Assessment • Planning • Implementation (direct service, referral, advocacy) • Monitoring and Review • Exit planning and closure • Evaluation
Co-Location	• Protocol for shared space, reception, equipment as appropriate • Protocol for respecting Indigenous cultural and/or sacred spaces
Resource Allocation	• Insurance of resources • Maintenance • End point accountability
Complaint and Disputes	• Complaints Procedure for frontline workers with timeline for prompt action by designated internal complaint managers/supervisor at each partnering agency • Conflict Resolution Process

TOOLKIT: CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSING SERVICE ENVIRONMENTS

Service Environment	Evidence of Welcoming and Cultural Safety
Reception Area	• Welcome signs in Anishnaabe, Cree and Métis. • Pictures/posters positively depicting images of contemporary lives of Elders and First Nations- Métis children and extended families. • First Nations- Métis cultural symbols: Métis sash, Medicine Wheel, Poster of 7 Sacred Teachings.
Playrooms/Children's Programming Rooms	• First Nations-Métis dolls and puppets. • First Nations-Métis games. • First Nations-Métis books, colouring books. • Audio-tapes of Pow wow songs and Métis jigs. • Pictures/posters positively depicting images of contemporary lives of Elders and First Nations- Métis children and extended families.
Programming Content	• Culture-based outreach, intake, assessment and referral tools. • Programming activities, handouts and materials reflect local Indigenous cultures. • Language is included in programming; name of the program/service is translated into local languages; communications materials include Indigenous languages. • Parents, extended family and Elders are involved in programming planning, delivery and evaluation.
Programming and/or Counselling Rooms for Parents/Grandparents/ Extended Family	• Opportunities for culture and linguistic training. • Pictures and posters positively depicting contemporary Elders and First Nations- Métis children and extended families. • Comfortable and low lighting. • Seating arranged in circle. • Soft music playing • Food and tea.
Board Room	• Contemporary art of local First Nations-Métis on the walls or sculptures, carvings on shelves. • Seven Sacred Teachings and Medicine Wheel poster on the wall.
Governance and Employment	• First Nations and Métis representation on Board of Directors. • First Nations and Métis employees in management positions. • First Nations and Métis employed in frontline services. • Number of Indigenous cultural competency training hours training annually. • Performance appraisals reflect Indigenous cultural competency skills.

	• Supervisors have the Indigenous cultural competency skill levels needed for the work (for supervising Indigenous employees and culturally competent program development and service models).
Other evidence of culturally safe service environments (what is seen, heard, felt, smelled)	• The sounds of people talking and laughing. • The scent of medicines: sage, cedar, sweetgrass, bannock. • The feel of animal hides and fur.
Website	• Pictures and graphics positively depicting contemporary Elders and First Nations- Métis children and extended families. • Links to Indigenous resources and sites. • Information about local First Nations and Métis cultural celebrations and National Aboriginal Day. • Shout-outs to local Indigenous children and youth for academic success/graduations, etc.

Note: visual representations should reflect positive, strength-based contemporary depictions of northern Indigenous people and cultures (i.e. not 19th century Plains Indians, or posters for addictions, suicide, child protection, HIV/AIDS etc. that stigmatize Indigenous populations).

TOOL KIT: PRACTICE TIPS TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATIONS IN A NORTHERN FIRST NATIONS-MÉTIS CONTEXT ALIGNED WITH INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING, BEING AND DOING

The *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework* is a planning tool to promote intercultural partnerships and accessible, quality, culturally relevant programs and services to First Nations and Métis children and families in the District of Timiskaming. These practice tips were generated in response to feedback from Elders and local Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners who 'piloted' the Framework in small projects over the spring, summer and fall of 2014.

1. **Learning from Elders**

   - Traditional teaching and learning is *experiential* and *relationally based.* Knowledge gained through books or lectures is considered theoretical and not as valuable or relevant as experiential knowledge. Elders teach primarily through instructive parables or storytelling. Because the most valued knowledge is experiential, the stories they tell are about themselves and their personal experiences of life. Elders rarely use another person's experience to teach; that is considered each person's own role and responsibility.

   - *Practice Tip*: When Elders share their stories, listen for how their lived experience applies to you and might be a guide for thinking about what it means to take responsibility, build resilience, and sustain relationships.

2. **Learning from the Medicine Wheel**

   - Relationships are central to Indigenous worldviews. The Medicine Wheel teaches that all beings are interconnected and interdependent not only with each other but with animals, plants, minerals, the Earth and its waters, the sky, stars, Spirits and the Ancestors. These are not theoretical or religious relationships: they are lived, felt and experienced physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. The values guiding these relationships are Respect, Humility and Thankfulness which in turn creates a sense of the world as Giving, Welcoming and Appreciative. The role of individuals, families, communities and Nations is to fulfill their responsibilities of love, sharing, protection and survival equally to themselves, other beings and all of Creation.

   - *Practice Tip:* Include enough time to build relationships informally – the foundation of any partnership is trust and respect. Once this is built, activities are carried out without so much need for micro-management through overly detailed workplans, monitoring, rules and regulations. Avoid the practice of 'parachuting in' on short notice, with predetermined agendas, expectations, timelines and externally imposed standards. Working in a respectful, intercultural way means privileging Indigenous perspectives and practices – and this takes a lot more time.

3. **Terminology**

   - To many Indigenous people Western culture appears highly competitive, critical, judgmental and intrusive; this is especially reflected in its languages. Many English and French terms are not translatable nor do they fit well with Indigenous worldviews. For example, Indigenous

languages are verb-based while Western languages are noun based: there are multiple adjectives in English and French for criticism, praise or giving direction which are all considered interference in Indigenous cultures. Some terms also reflect an oppressive history for example the term "consultation" is still used to give the false impression that Indigenous Peoples are included in decision-making while the term "research" has been used for starvation studies or to gather evidence that Indigenous Peoples are prone to addictions, violence, criminal behaviours, learning problems, poor lifestyle choices, and so on. Other terms such as "sophisticated" or "civilized" were used to underscore 'inherent deficits' of Indigenous cultures. Terms and concepts such as "wild" or "savage" have no equivalent in Indigenous languages – everything on earth is simply what it is.

- *Practice Tip:* Reflect on the words you use and as often as possible use practical, concrete terms that directly describe an activity or attribute without judging it. For example instead of 'consultation' which is very theoretical just say 'listening', 'discussion', or 'talking circle'. Check and re-check to see if any terms are offensive, not well understood or not culturally translatable and use an acceptable alternative.

4. **Silence as a Communications Tool**

- Most Indigenous cultures put a high value on personal restraint, meaning not every thought, feeling and opinion needs to be articulated or expressed. Words have immense power so they must be used with care. People who talk too much are generally not trusted. Non-Indigenous people often feel discomfort with silence and sometimes try to 'make conversation' in order to dispel these feelings and regain a sense of normality or control. Indigenous Peoples generally find silence soothing and collective silence is very healing and empowering.

- *Practice Tip:* Try to improve non-verbal communications skills and become comfortable with silence as an important tool in building relationships of respect and humility.

5. **Pause Times**

- Indigenous Peoples have some of the longest pause times of any other population group which can be as long as 7 seconds between a question or comment and the response. This is due to a number of differences in communications styles and values including: a) a communications style that favours information sharing through storytelling and it takes time to formulate the story; b) it is a sign of respect to wait before responding as evidence that the question is being seriously considered; and c) a discomfort with direct or personal questions which are considered rude. (Note: pause time is not the same as silence.)

- *Practice Tip:* Instead of interpreting long pauses as a lack of understanding or knowledge and reformulating the question or using prompts, just wait patiently and respectfully for the response (i.e. do not shuffle papers, sigh, look at the time, etc.).

6. **Individual vs. Collective Learning, Healing and Knowledge-Sharing**

- Collectivity is highly valued in Indigenous cultures while individualism is considered evidence of immaturity. Individual success is valued less than one's place within family and/or community. Doing things in groups is preferred and 'successful' activities are those that benefit the community, not just individuals. Children, youth and Elders are highly valued community members and their voices and presence is important. As well, activities generally involve some type of traditional food, not as a dietary preference, but because of their life-sustaining connection to the land and to the foods that nourished the Ancestors.

- *Practice Tips:* Ensure programming activities (including planning and evaluation) are family and community focused, group-based, intergenerational and involve food (if the activities are not age-appropriate for children then arrange for on-site child care so they are still present). Try to avoid activities that focus on individuals or fragment families and communities by age, gender, or ability.

7. **A Different Understanding of and Approach to' Problem' Behaviours**

- Indigenous people often experience Western culture as judgmental, adversarial and punitive, labeling people as good or bad, focusing on deficits rather than strengths and disrupting relationships as punishment for bad behaviour. Examples: Preschoolers forced to take 'time-out', youth or adults are imprisoned or put in solitary, the abusive person is removed from the home or the child is removed from the family. However in an Indigenous context the problem is viewed relationally as evidence of how much a person has lost respect for themselves or others and as evidence they have lost a vital sense of connection to themselves and others. This requires healing through activities that *restore* connections to others and to Creation. Regardless of what someone has done, a person is still a human being with the right to human dignity. It is *connections* that heal; behaviour that is out of balance or harmful to self or others requires healing.

- *Practice Tips:* For many Indigenous communities today, 'culture is healing'. Intercultural partnerships to improve access to and quality of programs and services should ensure practitioners and educators are sufficiently engaged with Indigenous service providers to bridge First Nations and Métis children, youth and families to cultural supports for healing. On its own, talk therapy has proven unhelpful in restoring holistic well-being to Indigenous families and communities. Programming that provides on-the-land, group healing experiences and strengthens connections to community, culture and language has proven far more effective.

8. **Consensus Decision-Making**

- Thoughtful speaking, careful listening and the ethic of respect for others are all highly valued in Indigenous cultures. Directly expressing a point of view or proposing a solution for someone else goes against the ethic of non-interference. Consensus is generally reached through a process of subtle emphasis and repetition – as more people repeat the same statement or observation, the conclusion becomes clear and obvious without having to

state it. Consensus is less about everyone agreeing at the end and more about a communal process of 'arriving to' a decision without anyone feeling put-down, ignored or 'railroaded'.

- *Practice Tips:* Learn to listen for repetitive statements and how to observe body language as evidence the group is coming to a shared understanding of a situation and a conclusion.

9. **Opening/Closing Ceremonies**

- Opening and closing ceremonies usually include drumming and smudging by Elders and/or traditional people. These ceremonies affirm we are sacred beings in relationship with each other with responsibilities to speak and listen to each other respectfully with Good Minds and Hearts, and to honour our working relationships, Giving Thanks for each other and what we bring to our work individually and collectively.

- *Practice Tip:* Make sure to include time on agendas, space at the venue, and permission to smudge in the building so Elders and/or traditional people may conduct openings and closings. Learn about local protocols for such practices and do not participate in them unless you feel authentically able to do so; token participation in ceremony is not conducive to trust-building.

For Further Information

Gray, Lynda (2011). First Nations 101: tons of stuff you need to know about First Nations people. Adaawx Publishing: Vancouver, BC.

Ross, Rupert (2014). Indigenous Healing: Exploring Traditional Paths. Penquin Canada Books: Toronto, ON.

Anishnawbe Health: Traditional Teachings at: http://www.aht.ca/circle-of-life/teachings and Cultural Safety at: http://www.aht.ca/aboriginal-culture-safety/cultural-safety

Métis Nation of Ontario: http://www.metisnation.org/culture--heritage/who-are-the-metis and http://www.metisnation.org/culture--heritage/symbols-and-traditions

Films for Action: Origins of the Seven Sacred Teachings http://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/elder-explains-the-origins-of-the-first-nation-seven-teachings/

TOOL KIT: CONFLICT RESOLUTION TIP SHEET

The vision of the Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework and Implementation Plan is to strengthen services for Indigenous children and families through effective partnerships. The success of collaborative intercultural partnerships depends on the willingness and ability of the partners to resolve differences through respectful, simple and practical dispute resolution.

Indigenous Peoples from local to global contexts are leading a dynamic process of change by *resisting* colonization and *revitalizing* Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. This is a time of unprecedented opportunity to generate new understandings, new ways of relating and new ways of working together.

> "There are bumps along the way in everything and all you must remember is that everything can be straightened."
>
> Local Elder Mario Batisse

Preventing Conflict in Intercultural Partnerships through Negotiated Agreements

When undertaking implementation plans, it is wise to put thought, time and effort right at the start into negotiating and developing partnership agreements. Preparation and planning is time well spent as it is one of the single most important elements in successful collaboration.

There are Many Causes of Conflict

- Differences in values and beliefs
- Differences in relationship interaction and communication styles
- Differences in management styles
- Workplace change and/or differences in interpreting policy/procedures/rules
- Power imbalances, historic oppression and persistent inequities
- Personality differences: behaviour perceived as abrasive, domineering, or disrespectful
- Differences in time/task orientation

Benefits of Effective Conflict Resolution

- Experiential learning and personal growth based on intercultural understanding
- Increased awareness of and skills for resolving conflict
- Better, more supportive and happier relationships within and between organizations
- Conflict resolving organizations promote a culture of collaboration
- Achievement of mutual goals and common vision

Costs of Conflict: Conflict that is not handled effectively can result in

- Stress-induced illnesses, employee absenteeism, high turnover and poisoned work environments
- Destabilized organizations, failed partnerships and lower quality services
- Loss of hope for positive change and a better future

- Loss of reputation of and trust in the organization

Conflict Resolving Attitudes and Behaviours

- Expect differences, persevere and prepare to be flexible and responsive
- Treat people with respect whether in agreement or disagreement
- Be non-judgmental – don't label people who are different from you
- Be self-reflective and check for your own biases and misplaced perceptions
- Listen fully before wanting to be heard; double check you understood what was said
- Engage in dialogue to explore possibilities rather than discussions that assert a position
- Skills of emotional detachment instead of emotional escalation
- Disagreement does not make someone your enemy: replace a 'you against me' attitude with a 'you and me against the problem' approach
- Take personal responsibility for your *own* behaviour; be your best self and apologize without expecting an apology in return.

"Be aware of the frame of mind you're in, not having negative thoughts: the smudge and the drum are there at the start for a reason, to calm us down."

Local Elder Marilyn Chevrier-Wills

Process Steps for Resolving Conflict

- Make a plan to address the conflict *In A Good Way*: at a mutually agreeable time, in a neutral location, comfortable environment, when energy is stable, i.e. people are not already tired, hungry and stressed.
- Set ground rules for the discussion; no shame and blame, no personalizing, etc.
- Look for common interests and common values first.
- Stay focused on implementing the Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework.
- Focus on interest not position: WHY you want; not WHAT you want.
- Negotiate and resolve one issue at a time, start small and build on successes.
- Monitor and evaluate the outcomes of your efforts; share success tips with others.

Indigenous Teachings that Promote Conflict Resolution

- *Mano* means 'let it go' first by letting it rest: don't make the problem bigger or smaller than it is; don't hold it heavy on your heart or shoulders; let go of the negative emotions so you can solve the problem in *A Good Way*.
- *Teaching: w*e have two ears and only one mouth so that we listen twice as much as we speak.
- *Seven Sacred Grandfather Teachings:* humility, courage, respect, honesty, love, wisdom, truth are all inter-related and interdependent, i.e. courage without humility, love and wisdom can be arrogance; all of these must be evident for truth to be realized.
- Circle process helps 'level the field' where there are power imbalances.
- Smudging helps to calm and cleanse the people and the environment; it reminds us that we are all sacred beings and we are all related.
- Talking Stick or Feather protocols promote respectful speaking and listening.
- Elders with conflict resolution skills and experience are helpful guides.

TOOLKIT: HOW TO BE AN ALLY OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

1. Educate yourself about post-colonial theory which situates contemporary human rights violations and inequities against the Indigenous population as an intentional outcome of colonization. Post-colonial practice means honouring the Treaties, restoring the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples to land, and revitalizing Indigenous Knowledge and languages.

2. Educate yourself about the history of First Nations and Métis in the District of Timiskaming and seek opportunities to learn experientially about contemporary cultures by attending local events such as Pow wows, annual general meetings, National Aboriginal Day celebrations and annual Métis Harvest Gatherings. Do not make First Nations and Métis colleagues responsible for your cultural education especially if serving Indigenous communities is part of your paid work.

3. Just as with Francophone issues, understand that leadership on Indigenous issues needs to come from local First Nations and Métis people and affirm that these leaders are capable. Refrain from asserting yourself at the forefront or speaking for Indigenous Peoples. This implies there is no Indigenous person qualified to do so.

4. Seek out opportunities to listen to and learn from local First Nations and Métis Elders and community leaders about their experiences living in the District of Timiskaming including health and social services, education and employment.

5. If invited to participate in ceremony such as smudging, only do so if you are open to an authentic experience; you will not be judged harshly if you decide to pass. Ceremonies are sacred and token participation in order to be accepted or as a way of having research/projects approved is not a good way to build to trust.

6. Never appropriate Indigenous symbols or teachings in your own work without permission. Many of these are sacred and carry complex meanings that you may not be aware of and you may unintentionally use them inappropriately.

7. Psycho-educational learning can offer a glimpse into the complex histories, cultures and experiences of Indigenous Peoples. However Indigenous worldviews and ways of doing things differ greatly from other worldviews and it's a process of continuous, lifelong learning.

8. Use your skills and the relative privilege of your position to encourage others to end prejudice, stereotypes and inequality; lead by example.

9. When asked to perform professional, paid tasks related to Indigenous issues, refer the work instead to Indigenous organizations and resource people and ensure they are paid, not expected to take on extra work as volunteers or in addition to their other duties.

10. Understand there are times when First Nations and Métis leaders and community members need separate, safe space to explore issues without having to explain, justify, or be concerned with the impact of their perspectives/feelings on non-Indigenous people.

11. Don't talk down to, or over, those who criticize Indigenous decolonization and self-determination efforts; just listen. People become sensitive to the issues at their own pace and may become allies themselves when they are ready.

12. Non-Indigenous people do not self-determine if they are allies; Indigenous People recognize, acknowledge and invite non-Indigenous people who have gained their trust to hold that place.

13. Hold onto a Spirit of Hope through the ups and downs; share good news stories of better outcomes for Indigenous children and families from the front-line.

Miigwech/Marsee to the Elders Council and partners in the summer pilot projects for guidance on this hand out.

TOOLKIT: GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCHERS[2]

Indigenous Values	Actions that Reflect Values
Indigenous Control	Indigenous people approve research and research methods.
Respect for Individuals *and* Communities	Researchers know and appreciate the uniqueness of communities, their diversities within and between each other, and the gifts and contributions that individual community members bring to their communities.
Reciprocity and Responsibility	Researchers openly share and present their research ideas and experiences with the intent of supporting the community (with the nature of that support being determined by the community).
Respect and Safety	Addressing confidentiality, openness, anonymity, recognition, and co-authorship in a manner defined by the research participants.
Non-intrusiveness	Researchers are unobtrusive yet observant participating only when invited.
Deep Listening and Hearing with 'More than the Ears'	Researchers listen carefully and holistically, attending to body language as well as the heart and spirit of a discussion.
Reflective Non-Judgment	Researchers consider what is being seen and heard without imposing a personal sense of right or wrong, and considering what is said in the context of the speaker and worldview of Indigenous peoples.
Honouring What is Shared	Researchers act on the responsibility to behave with integrity, building trust in the relationship through what has been heard, observed, and learned. If invited to share in ceremony they are truthful by either authentically engaging in the experience or respectfully declining in order to avoid tokenism.
Awareness and Connection between the Mind and Heart	Both emotional and cognitive-logical experiences and expressions are incorporated into actions of the researchers.
Holistic Self-Awareness	Researchers listen to and observe themselves emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually, as well as in relationship with others throughout the entire research process.
Subjectivity	Researchers acknowledge that they bring their subjective self to the research process and openly and truthfully incorporate their subjective self in all aspects of the research.

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[2] Adapted from Sinclair et al (2009:158). Wicihitowin: Aboriginal Social Work in Canada. Fernwood Publishing and from conversations of the author and research participants in the District of Timiskaming.

	TOOLKIT: FEATURES OF ABORIGINAL MANAGEMENT AND NORTH AMERICAN MANAGEMENT SCHEMES[3]

Aboriginal

Group Orientation	The interests and functioning of the group as a collective are more important than those of the individual.
Consensual Decision-Making	The organization has a flattened hierarchy, with the views of employees given equal consideration in decision-making.
Group Duties	Roles are not defined by specializations, but by the community members. The organization relies on peer support, teamwork and task delegation.
Holistic Employee Development	The organization is concerned with the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of an employee's life, both inside and outside the organization.
Elder Involvement	Elders are included formally and informally in the organization as advisors and teachers; as Wisdom Keepers their expertise is highly respected.
Leadership	Leadership is flexible and shared; the leader is the servant of the people of the organization and the community.

North American Mainstream

Individual Orientation	The interests of the individual are paramount over the group.
Majority Rules	Decisions are generally made by voting, with the majority gaining the right to choose a course of action for the group.
Specialized Duties	Each person is expected to have a well-defined job description with a set of well-defined duties.
Organization and Employee Development	The organization is concerned only with those aspects of the employee that have a direct bearing on their ability to do their job and fulfill assigned tasks.
No Elder Involvement	Employees retire at age 65 and expertise and knowledge is lost to the organization (and generally considered 'outdated').
Leadership	Leadership is invested in positions of authority; the employees are servants of the leader.

[3] Adapted from Chapman, I., Newhouse, D, and McCaskill, D. (2000). Management in Contemporary Aboriginal Organizations, Canadian Journal of Native Studies, Peterborough: ON

TOOK KIT: SAMPLE INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT POLICY

NOTE: this is a sample only for consideration/adaptation by the Network

CONTENTS
1. INTRODUCTION
2. DEFINITIONS
3. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICY CONTEXT
4. POLICY PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES
5. POLICY STATEMENTS
6. MONITORING AND REVIEW
7. ACTION PLAN

1. Introduction

Partners of the Best Start Network are strongly committed to increasing the number of Indigenous people employed by their organizations in accordance with the vision for the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework.* The Best Start Network recognizes the richness of local First Nations and Métis culture, language and history and the unique skills and knowledge that Indigenous staff bring to programs and services in the District of Timiskaming.

Through this Policy, the Best Start Network demonstrates its commitment to continuous improvement of social and economic opportunities for Indigenous people through employment and development opportunities.

The importance of increasing the number of Indigenous employees at organization members of the Best Start Network cannot be underestimated. This goal is foundational to implementing the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework,* ensuring the provision of quality, culturally competent services to First Nations and Métis children and families, and to increasing opportunities for economic and social equity. Employing Indigenous people at organization members of the Best Start Network is an important contribution to achieving the Network's policy development, service delivery, and employment and equity outcomes.

2. Definitions

See NAHO Definitions in the Appendix to the Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework

3. Policy Context

In adopting this policy, it is recognized that there are specific legislative requirements to be met as well as Best Start mandate and goals. This policy recognizes that no other population group in Canada's history has endured such a prolonged, strategic and comprehensive assault on human rights as First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Significant disadvantages in the past and continued structural and social barriers in the present need to be addressed in order to enable Indigenous people to work towards achieving the same outcomes as people or groups not so disadvantaged.

4. Policy Principles and Objectives

This Policy and Action Plan is guided by the following principles of the Best Start Network member organizations which:

- Seek to develop an inclusive and diverse workforce,
- Value the diverse knowledge, skills, traditions and cultures of local First Nations and Métis people.
- Seek to maximize employment opportunities for local First Nations and Métis people.

The aim of this Policy is to address the under representation of Indigenous people within the workplaces of partner organizations in the Best Start Network by providing a range of appropriate recruitment, career development, retention and cultural competency initiatives.

It is anticipated that implementation of this Policy and Action Plan will contribute to:

1. An increase in both the number of Indigenous people employed within the partners of the Best Start Network as well as within the District of Timiskaming.
2. Ensuring a coordinated and sustainable approach to the development of Indigenous employment opportunities within the Best Start Network including traineeships, apprenticeships, mentoring opportunities, work experience, scholarships, student placements and linkages with other employment and training programs.
3. Identifying an additional pool of skilled workers to fill vacancies.
4. Increased options for permanent employment opportunities.
5. Better direction and structure for the development of ongoing cultural competency and culturally safe services.
6. Embedded cultural competency practices into Best Start Network partners' policies and processes.
7. Proven strategies that assist in the recruitment and retention of Indigenous employees in the Best Start Network partner organizations and in the District.

5. Policy Statements

1. Partner organizations will establish and maintain a comprehensive range of employment development programs targeted specifically for Indigenous people.
2. Partner organizations will refine their recruitment strategies to better attract Indigenous people to positions at all levels.
3. Partner organizations will develop strategies to improve the retention of Indigenous employees.
4. Partner organizations will work towards achieving greater levels of Indigenous employment.
5. Partner organizations will implement strategies to promote themselves as an employer of choice for Indigenous people.
6. Partner organizations will implement strategies to promote understanding and awareness of the diversity of First Nations and Métis cultures and languages in the District of Timiskaming.

6. Monitoring and Review

Partners of the Best Start Network will report biannually to the Network on their implementation of this Policy and Action Plan. These reports will be integrated with the Best Start Network's Annual Report and

will include information on Indigenous employment within the Network across a range of indicators including total numbers employed, recruitment and rates of retention.

The Indigenous Employment Policy and Action Plan will be reviewed every 2 years by the Best Start Network

Indigenous Employment Policy Action Plan

Introduction

This Action Plan has been developed to address key matters and structural barriers that impact the employment of Indigenous people in partner organizations of the Best Start Network including:

- The absence of strategic pathways into and through employment that match the skills and life values of Indigenous people.
- Structural and social barriers that make navigation through the employment system difficult and discouraging.
- Under-developed culturally inclusive recruitment processes specific to Indigenous needs.
- Under-developed employee support mechanisms.
- Insufficient ongoing employment and promotion opportunities.
- Northern barriers in gaining access to professional and career development programs;
- institutional and covert racism.
- Negative and misinformed perceptions, attitudes and stereotypes.
- Under-developed workforce cultural competence and culturally inclusive workplaces.
- Historic and structural barriers to educational attainment.
- Family-work-life-balance challenges.
- Insufficient use of exit strategies and succession planning.

The Action Plan has five key areas of focus:

1. Recruitment
2. Retention
3. The Best Start partner organization promoting itself as an employer of choice for Indigenous people
4. Cultural competency and cultural safety
5. Monitoring and Review

Note: Timelines and accountability mechanisms for the actions below should be developed by each partner organization in accordance with resources and capacity.

Policy Statement #1: Partner organizations will establish and maintain a comprehensive range of employment development programs targeted specifically at Indigenous people including:

- Traineeship programs
- Structured Training and Employment Program (STEP)
- Mentorships
- Establishing work experience programs targeting Indigenous youth.

Key Performance Indicators

- An increase within five years in the number of Indigenous people employed in partner organizations.
- A wider range of entry-level programs utilized to attract Indigenous employees.

Actions

Partner organizations will establish ongoing liaison and partnerships with organizations and institutions that host existing programs and mechanisms for the employment of Indigenous people for the purposes of:

- filling temporary vacancies;
- accessing mentoring and training programs available to trainees;
- seeking additional funds for the employment of Indigenous trainees;
- seeking other support towards the implementation of related elements of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*;
- accessing services of organizations involved in the training and recruitment of Indigenous people.

The Best Start Network will in the normal course of its operations promote recruitment of Indigenous staff across all partner organizations and within in the District of Timiskaming.

Local youth employment programs will be utilized to enhance the increased employment of Indigenous youth.

Policy Statement #2: Partner organizations will refine their recruitment strategies to better attract Indigenous people to positions at all levels.

Key Performance Indicators

- An increase in the number of Indigenous people recruited across Best Start Network partner organizations.

Actions

- Recognize the skills and contributions of Indigenous staff (by for example reviewing job descriptions to ensure they reflect local First Nations-Métis community and cultural-linguistic knowledge).
- Review and revise recruitment processes to ensure they are culturally inclusive and support and encourage Indigenous employment**.**
- Outreach and advertise potential jobs to Aboriginal communities and networks including through the Best Start Indigenous partner organizations, Windspeaker, Nation Talk (http://www.nationtalk.ca/ and the Inclusion Network http://www.inclusionnetwork.ca/Aboriginal-jobs/index.htm

- Provide structured opportunities for Indigenous people to experience your workplace prior to applying for a position.
- Use selection panels that are aware of cultural issues, differences and strengths and include local First Nations and Mets members as resource people.
- Encourage managers and team leaders to access Indigenous-specific recruitment services such as the Symbiotic Group http://www.symbioticgroup.com/Indigenous_recruitment.htm.
- Enable potential Indigenous applicants to apply for "Internal Only" vacancies within partner organizations.
- Provide employment information and recruitment booths at local Pow wows, Métis Harvest gathering and Indigenous Day events in collaboration with Indigenous Best Start partners.

Policy Statement #3: Partner organizations will develop strategies to improve the retention of Indigenous employees.

Key Performance Indicator

- A sustained improvement from current levels in the retention rates of Indigenous staff over the next four years.

Actions

- Develop culturally sensitive welcoming, orientation and induction processes.
- Provide appropriate career counseling to Indigenous employees.
- Establish mentorship programs including the provision of culturally appropriate mentoring and the careful selection/matching of mentors and coaches to work with Indigenous staff.
- Establish an Indigenous Employees Network that meets regularly for development and networking purposes.
- Ensure team leaders and managers are provided the training and resources required to support and develop Indigenous people in the workplace.
- Provide trainees with opportunities for ongoing employment on completion of their traineeship.
- Develop a staff exchange program with Indigenous Best Start partners to provide short-term placements and cross cultural work environment experience.
- Develop and conduct culturally appropriate exit surveys.

Policy Statement #4: Partner organizations will work towards achieving greater levels of Indigenous employment.

Key Performance Indicator

- A substantial increase in the number of First Nations and Métis people employed throughout the Best Start Network of services.

Actions

- Share best practices in Indigenous recruitment and retention on a regular basis among Best Start Network partners.
- Continue to build and maintain close working relations with Best Start Indigenous partners.

- Showcase Indigenous employment success stories on the organization's website.
- In partnership with the Best Start Network, pilot an annual employment recruitment and development program specifically tailored for Indigenous people in the District of Timiskaming funded either through external grants or Best Start partner pooled funds.

Policy Statement #5: Partner organizations will implement strategies to promote themselves as an employer of choice for Indigenous people.

Key Performance Indicator

- An increase in awareness among Indigenous-Métis networks of the potential employment opportunities in the Best Start Network.

Actions

- Develop effective working relationships with Indigenous media, education institutions and community organizations to promote employment opportunities.
- Develop protocols around the advertising of all positions.
- Provide support and advice to managers and team leaders with the recruitment process and improved marketing of career opportunities for Indigenous people.
- Continuously work to develop a workforce inclusive of Indigenous people and cultures.
- Demonstrate commitment to the employment of Indigenous people by mandating management to take responsibility for progress against this Policy and Action Plan as part of each performance agreement.

Policy Statement #6: Partner organizations will implement strategies to promote understanding and awareness of the diversity of First Nations and Métis cultures and languages in the District of Timiskaming.

Key Performance Indicators

- 100% of staff will have completed at least 50 percent of an *Indigenous Cultural Competency program* within 3 years.
- Ongoing cultural awareness and cultural competence development opportunities including experiential learning through immersion in local cultural events are made available to all staff and managers.

Actions

- Implement Indigenous cultural competency programs, focusing on a cultural safe work environment and working in culturally sensitively with colleagues of Indigenous descent. This program will be integrated into the orientation and induction for all new employees and will be made available on an ongoing basis to all existing employees.
- Implement an Indigenous and Cultural Diversity Management program for all senior management.
- Ensure that providers of employee assistance programs to staff are equipped to provide culturally appropriate support.

- Increase the organization's participation in and promotion of events that raise awareness of Indigenous issues, achievements and celebrations – for example, National Indigenous Awareness Day-Week and local events such as Pow wows and the Métis Harvest gathering.
- Implement a program for Indigenous employees to enable them understand the workplace and service environment more fully.

Key Focus Area Five: Monitoring and Review

The organization will report on a biannual basis to the Best Start Network on the implementation of this Policy and Action Plan. The Best Start Network's Annual Report will include information on Indigenous employment within the Network across a range of indicators including total numbers employed, recruitment and rates of retention.

The Indigenous Employment Policy and Action Plan will be reviewed every 2 years by each partner organization and the results shared with the Best Start Network.

TOOL KIT: PARTNERSHIP NEGOTIATION TIPS

- Be able to clearly articulate a rationale for engaging in partnership discussions and outcomes you hope to reach through the negotiations.

- Clearly identify areas of common ground: i.e. shared principles, philosophy, commitment to the Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework.

- Identify areas of mutual benefit: i.e. improved outcomes for Indigenous children and families, pooled resources and shared costs for infrastructure.

- List key areas that need to be negotiated and prioritize them. Decide whether to deal with the most important and/or sensitive issues first, or last? (Avoid sensitive issues when everyone is tired.)

- Be clear "why" you want something, rather than just "what" you want. Sometimes the outcome you want may be achievable through a number of different pathways.

- Are there any questions you must ask to clarify the perspective of other partners? Write them down.

- Are you and the other partners agreed on the key issues for negotiation?

- Are there some points on which you are not prepared to negotiate? If so, declare these matters openly at the start of the meeting.

- Are there things you are prepared to trade off?

- How do you think the other party will proceed?

- What are the other party's priorities likely to be?

- How will you evaluate your progress as you proceed with the negotiations?

- Recognize that if you take a very strong or aggressive position, other parties are likely to respond equally as strongly. Keep things calm.

- Know when to walk away. Where there are major differences in values, principles and philosophy, or where an agreement can't be reached, take a break in the negotiation with those parties and seek other ways to reach your required outcome.

TOOL KIT: BUILDING A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING-QUESTIONS TO START THE DIALOGUE[4]

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) is a jointly negotiated and signed statement of agreement to proceed toward a goal that will be realized through some type of alliance or partnership. Examples:

- Interagency meetings for planning, coordination and evaluation
- Co-located programs or services
- Resource pooling
- Co-delivery of services from outreach and engagement to intake and assessment and case management (especially for providers located outside the District of Timiskaming who provide services in the District)
- Co-delivery of staff development and training
- Co-delivery of cultural and community events
- Co-delivery of communications and media plans.

Fifteen Questions to Consider Developing and Negotiating an MOU

1. Who are the partners involved?
2. What is the arrangement? (i.e. sub-contracting, joint venture through shared financial and/or human resources, value of in-kind contributions, other)
3. What is the project/program and its purpose?
4. How long will the agreement be in effect? (i.e., six months, one year?)
5. Who will manage the day-to-day business of carrying out/maintaining the MOU?
6. A clear process for how partners can exit from the agreement if things are not working for everyone's benefit or expectations.
7. Clear definition of each party's risks and responsibilities and whether one partner is taking on more risk (i.e., funding agreements with government) and how will that be identified?
8. A clear commitment to respect Indigenous Intellectual Property rights and voice.
9. Staff cultural competency qualifications required to carry out roles/responsibilities.
10. What will the decision making process be, and who will be included in decision-making; decisions be by consensus?
11. If payments are going to be made for the venture, what is the schedule and details?
12. Where will the project/program be located and which partner will be housing the staff?
13. Identify a clear plan for promoting the project/program including use of logos, web-sites, etc. Ensure any project funders are identified in all publicity.
14. What is the process of bringing new partners into the project?
15. What process will be used to make changes to the agreement?
16. How will arising complaints and conflicts be dealt with?

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[4] Adapted from Building Prosperous Partnerships, Aboriginal Human Resource Council

NOTE: See also:

1. TOOLKIT: Partnership Negotiation Tips
2. TOOLKIT: Checklist for Partnership Protocols
3. TOOLKIT: Partnership Agreement Template

TOOK KIT: SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR PARTNERSHIP ACCORD AND AGREEMENT

Parties to this Agreement:

1. The Timiskaming Best Start Network
2. Indigenous Planning Council (to be established)

<div align="center">

Anish gaie tolamang waiwnit tci zhiikonang

Mi waa izhichigeyeg weweni

Kesé kon fè dbon

What We Are Doing 'In A Good Way'

</div>

We are here because of the ancestors that came before us; we are here to work on behalf of children of the next Seven Generations. We draw upon the long-held and unique First Nation and Métis cultures, languages, ceremonies, customs, and teachings of this District for strength, wisdom, and guidance. We uphold traditional and holistic approaches to strengthening the web of child- family-community wellbeing and strive to achieve a balance in our own mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical wellness, individually and collectively in our work.

Quality and Integrity

We are honoured to work in partnership on behalf of the next Seven Generations of First Nations and Métis children; in that work we share an ethical personal and professional responsibility to strive for the highest quality services and supports. Commitment to quality means that the outcomes for First Nations and Métis children and families are sustainable, that our processes are ethical and transparent, and our learning is ongoing through capacity development opportunities, and by sharing our knowledge and best practices with each other.

Equity and Fairness

The purpose of our work is to improve the holistic wellbeing of all First Nations and Métis children in the District of Timiskaming. Therefore our decision‑making reflects their best interests and contributes directly and indirectly to just and equitable access to a range of high quality services and supports. We are committed to make room for everyone, to make everyone feel welcome, and to cultural-linguistic inclusivity in our communications, information sharing, and discussions.

Reciprocal Accountabilities

Consistent with the roles and mandates of the Parties to this Agreement the Parties commit to conducting the following activities and upholding the following accountabilities in support of their shared vision. These set the framework for any additional activities and accountabilities agreed-upon by the Parties in any other relationship documents or Memoranda of Understanding.

All Board and management must be familiar with this Partnership Agreement and the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework* it references so they are able to carry out its intentions to the best of

their abilities and in good faith. This requires each Party to implement an appropriate orientation and training process and resources.

Planning and Advice

The Parties to the Agreement acknowledge the interdependency of their activities, and the respective strengths and expertise each contributes to the process.

- The role of the Indigenous Committee is to: a) advocate for and support First Nations and Métis children and families through collaborative planning processes; and, b) to engage with partners in the Best Start Network in utilizing and implementing the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework* by identifying strategic priorities and providing strategic-level guidance to implement the priorities aligned with the Best Start mandate.
- The role of the Best Start Network is to develop and implement a multi-year strategic plan for the effective allocation and deployment of financial and human resources, programs, and services to implement the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework.*
- The role of the Indigenous Best Start Committee (or larger Indigenous Planning Council) is to provide cultural guidance and direction for professional development in support of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*.
- The Parties have agreed upon the following processes for planning and advice to assist them in exercising these respective roles and strengths in pursuit of their shared vision.

Planning

The Parties to the Agreement agree not to plan in isolation. Planning activities of the Parties will be informed by the priorities and outcomes identified in the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*. Each year, the outcomes achieved toward implementation of the Framework will be reviewed and summarized to inform an annual Best Start Network planning session. This planning session will be for the members of the Network and the Indigenous Committee and any other stakeholders to discuss their respective annual plans and priorities, and how they will work together to and share expertise toward continuing implementation of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*. The Best Start Network will further develop and implement a strategic plan focused on its mandate of professional development for members.

Engagement

In the spirit of mutually respectful collaboration and with the aim of ensuring efficiency in engagement and spending, the Parties to the Agreement will work together to make appropriate space for these agenda items during their regular meetings or will make plans to add an extra meeting day specifically for purpose of monitoring and assessing implementation of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*.

Each year, the Best Start Network will develop and implement a '*Community Engagement-Public Education Plan'* that reflects community engagement priorities consistent with the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*. The Best Start Network and Indigenous Planning Committee will meet to discuss one another's annual priorities to ensure coordination of activities and sharing of financial resources.

Information-Sharing

The Parties are committed to regular and ongoing formal and informal information and knowledge sharing. This includes sharing correspondence, briefings, information, and issues as relevant to one another's mandates and activities under the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*.

The Parties to this Agreement will also invite one another to their respective meetings as appropriate to provide progress and activity updates and to share results. The connection amongst the Parties is through their respective Executive members who will bring issues and activity reports forward formally or informally as appropriate.

Communications

The Parties to this Agreement are committed to clear language, and consistent, and productive communications by: ensuring that the right message is delivered by the right organization or individual in a cultural and linguistically respectful manner; supporting shared messaging and shared communications materials; and, utilizing culturally appropriate communications channels. To support these responsibilities, the Parties will develop and implement a collaborative *'Communications Plan'* with feedback from external partners, and with staff.

The Parties will uphold the following communications roles externally: the Best Start Network is the sole spokesperson of the Parties on any matters within its mandate; the larger Indigenous Planning Committee speaks on any matters within its mandate; and both speak together with respect to the implementation of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*.

Operations and Support

Each Party is responsible for implementing this Partnership Agreement through its organizational processes and capacity.

Team-Building

The Parties to this Agreement will identify opportunities and implement strategies to build relationships and sustain a team environment-culture of collaboration reflecting shared values and First Nations and Métis cultural practices.

Evaluation

The Parties will identify measures to evaluate and report on their activities, progress, successes and lessons learned in achieving the vision for the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*.

The Parties are committed to ensuring coordinated, consistent, and unified messaging and approaches at meetings and will achieve this through ongoing discussions and preparatory and debriefing sessions among representatives of the Parties.

Consensus Leadership

The Parties are committed to providing consensus leadership and a unified approach. In exercising consensus leadership, the Parties recognize that each has important contributions to make to ensure their decisions and behaviours reflect: a) their shared values; b) the priorities identified through the Indigenous stakeholder survey; and c), their respective roles and mandates.

Should a dispute arise among the Parties with respect to their shared agenda, the issue will be referred to the Chairs for open discussion and attempts to reach resolution utilizing the values, roles, and other content described in this Agreement as a guide. The Parties may also employ cultural and traditional practices to assist in resolving the matter, such as sharing a meal together as a group, or calling upon an Elder for assistance.

Commitments

This Agreement describes a continuing journey. The Partners are travelling together on a shared path, heading towards a common goal, enabled by shared learning, and guided by a shared vision.

This Agreement builds on the intercultural collaboration that resulted in development of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*. The purpose of this Partnership Agreement is to implement the new Indigenous Framework in accordance with the priorities identified through the Stakeholder Survey report and aligned with the mandate of the Best Start Network.

The *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework* will:

- open new doors for District-wide, multi-sector cooperation for planning, and innovations in services to children ages 0-12 years and their families;
- increase shared decision-making, support reciprocal accountability; and
- result in further development of a more integrated, culturally competent system for strengthening Indigenous families that better meets the needs and reflects the First Nations and Métis peoples of the District.

The Partners commit to continual improvements in coordination of service planning, design, management and delivery of services for First Nations and Métis children and families. We agree to work collaboratively to prevent duplication of efforts and eliminate service gaps so that all residents have equitable access to quality services. Through collaboration, common sense approaches and the principle of Indigenous self-determination we will strive to bring an end to the separation and isolation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous services. The result will be a more coordinated and integrated system with stronger linkages among all of those involved.

The Partners agree to approach this work from a holistic wellness perspective, believing that in order to address the wellbeing of Indigenous children and families, it is important to work towards addressing the related and underlying contributors that build healthy, resilient communities.

The Partners to this Agreement firmly believe this new way of working together will improve the quality, accessibility, delivery, effectiveness, efficiency, and cultural competency of a continuum of programs and services for children and families. The Partners believe that this will be a better system because it will reflect the cultures and perspectives of First Nations and Métis in the District of Timiskaming; it will

reflect their models of child development and family wellbeing; and it will more efficiently utilize and draw upon the contributions and services of the Partners.

Over time, Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the Best Start Network have become more accountable, accommodating, and responsive to one another for the successful implementation of their shared commitments. Each has already done significant preparatory work to be a better participant in this partnership and there has already been significant growth and development on all sides, which has contributed fundamentally to successes to date.

Enduring and Broadening Partnership

The Partners realize that achieving the vision of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework* and taking action together on shared commitments is enabled by a strong, cohesive and enduring relationship that continues to broaden and evolve over time.

This is a continuing journey. Over time, the Partners have worked to develop the relationships and processes necessary to support genuine cooperation. Significant investments have been made by all Partners, and momentum has steadily increased. The Partners recognize that their ongoing success depends upon their willingness to continue to cooperate, and to mobilize their respective contributions, authorities, assets, and innovations in support of their shared commitment to implement the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*.

Together the Partners have overcome difficulties through forthright, honest, and respectful dialogue and remain committed to doing so in order to address future challenges that may put their shared goals and commitments in jeopardy.

A defining characteristic of this partnership is reciprocal accountability. This means partners will work together at all levels in a collaborative manner to achieve our shared goals, living up to our individual and collective commitments. It means that each Partner is accountable to the others for its actions, and for the effective implementation and operation of their responsibilities and systems, recognizing that our work as Partners is inherently interdependent and interconnected. It means that we strive not only to live up to one another's expectations, but strive to exceed them.

The Partners acknowledge that, in spite of our best efforts, we will make mistakes. We agree that we will continue to learn from mistakes of the past and in the present, in order to move forward together. We commit to resolve challenges as they arise in a timely and culturally appropriate manner that models the vision of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework.*

Principled Partnership

An effective partnership is based on reciprocal accountability, deep and abiding respect, trust and supported by honest, open communications. These and other principles support the ongoing strengthening of our working relationship, and help guide us when the work becomes difficult.

1. Lead with culture: understand your Partners and where they come from.
2. Honour the leaders: pay respect to, and acknowledge the wisdom and hard work of those who brought us to where we are today.

3. Maintain cohesion and balance: work for the common good of all; do not criticize one another; recognize that everyone has a role to play.
4. Create strong relationships: be tough on the issues and easy on the people; seek opportunities to create understanding and support one another's human dignity.
5. Engage at the appropriate level: Partners must have the capacity (authority, skills, knowledge, time and financial resources) to fully contribute.
6. Respect each other's process: seek to understand, acknowledge and respect the validity of First Nations and Métis ways of working and decision-making processes; support one another in navigating these new understandings.
7. Resolve conflict in a good way: the Partners will not abandon our journey together, even when we encounter obstacles on the path.

Ongoing Review and Renewal Process

On this shared journey, guided by a shared vision, we need to check in regularly to make sure we are still on track. We need to ask ourselves a series of questions, be honest about the answers, and adjust our steps accordingly. The Partners need to ask ourselves:
- Are we on track to achieving our shared vision?
- Has our vision changed in any way?
- What have we learned from working together?
- What is the status of our commitments and what is on our shared agenda?
- What could we do differently?
- What is each of us doing to contribute to the partnership?
- What can each of us do to support the others to implement our respective and shared commitments?
- How is our work enabling and modeling the vision and guiding principles of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework?*

To answer these questions, the Partners commit to a process of ongoing review and continuous renewal. We agree to review our respective roles and expectations of one another. We agree that we will establish clear timeframes for our work and clear expectations of one another as we do this. We will undertake a broad and integrated approach to this process of review and renewal, ensuring that the review of our partnership is linked with the vision for the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*.

To support this process, the Partners agree to continue to engage in regular dialogue. We agree to make regular opportunities to review the shared goals and priorities, taking into account anything we have learned and any changing circumstances. Through these mechanisms for renewal, the Partners demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that our vision remains clear, our path remains true, and our relationship remains strong.

Conclusion

The Partners believe this new journey will lead to a brighter future for First Nations and Métis children, and provide teachings and innovations for all. We are committed to achieving our shared vision through implementation of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*. We are committed to taking the time to learn from one another, to nurture our enduring partnership, and to accommodate and support one another. We are committed to reciprocal accountability and a process of continual renewal and

reflection. We are committed to our success. Partnership building blocks that still need to be put in place to achieve our commitments include:

- Defining reciprocal accountabilities – who makes what decisions, where, and when, and the way in which we will be treated, and treat one another.
- Developing a transparent and logical planning, evaluation and reporting cycle for activities of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework* – how all of us contribute to priority‑setting and ongoing implementation.
- Strategizing on data collection and management and supporting partner organizations to have timely access to quality data and information that informs decision‑making, planning, and investment toward ongoing implementation.
- Brainstorming innovative possibilities for sustainability and revenue generation.

Signatories

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Name **of organization/s** – *list the names of all organizations to be included in the Memorandum of Understanding.*

Purpose of this Document

This Memorandum of Understanding affirms the intention of (insert name of organizations) to work collaboratively toward:

1. Implementation of the Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework.
2. Culturally and linguistically appropriate, quality services for First Nations and Métis children and families in the District of Timiskaming.

Point of Contact

Point of contact for information about this agreement is: *list names, positions, organizations and contact information here.*

1. *First Contact Name, Position, Agency and Coordinates*
2. *Second Contact Name, Position, Agency and Coordinates*

Values and Principles Guiding the Collaboration

- Mutual recognition of First Nation and Métis as original Peoples of these territories.
- Mutual recognition and support of Indigenous Knowledge and respect for local First Nations and Métis community protocols.
- An understanding of the impacts of colonial history on Indigenous Peoples and commitment to post-colonial theory and practice.
- Commitment to strengthening interagency relationships and engaging in partnerships that improve outcomes for Indigenous children and families.
- Commitment to enhancing capacity and supporting self-determination of local Indigenous organizations.
- Respect, recognition, collaboration and cooperation between organizations.

Anticipated Benefits of the Collaboration

Partnering organizations have identified the following benefits as outcomes of the project:

- Agreed upon procedures for the ways in which our organizations relate to each other in undertaking our separate services in a collaborative, culturally appropriate way.

- Agreement to share resources and skills that build capacity in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous service systems, improve efficiency, enhance existing services, avoid duplication and address gaps.
- Commitment to support a continuous-learning strengths-based, post-colonial approach to governance, service delivery and human resource management within the Best Start Network and its member organizations.
- Strengthened multi-tiered relationships between the partnering organizations that benefit Indigenous children and their families, staff and management.
- Collaborative organizational referral systems and more seamless and efficient pathways to a range of holistic 'whole-family' supports.
- Agreement to cooperate on key local activities and events that showcase the beauty and wisdom of local First Nations and Métis cultures.
- Improved organizational cultural knowledge and capacity.
- A strong and united voice within the District of Timiskaming that will enhance the capacity of the Best Start Network, the Indigenous Best Start Committee and the Elders Council to advocate on behalf of Indigenous children and families.

Policy Objective of the Collaboration

The overarching policy of this agreement is that within the context of each organization maintaining its independence, the partners commit to a policy of collaboration whenever collaborative approaches can offer:

- Improved access to and delivery of culturally and linguistically relevant services for Indigenous children and families; and/or
- Improved service outcomes...

Partners Agree to the Following Objectives

- To establish a collaborative approach to services for First Nations and Métis children and families within the District.

- To develop and implement a number of co-ordinated, holistic child and family support activities.

- To share knowledge, skills and resources toward increasing local options for culturally and linguistically relevant quality family supports.
- To monitor, review and evaluate partnership and activity outcomes.

Partners Agree to the Following Activities

Upon signing of this agreement a Steering or Managers Group comprised of representatives from each of the partnering organizations will be formed to provide leadership and oversee the activities of this MOU. Within 30 days the Steering Group agrees to:

- Develop mutually agreed upon and clearly defined reporting and accountability mechanisms for each agency to monitor progress and results.

- Identify priority areas for collaboration aligned with the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework* and relevant elements of the *Implementation Action and Performance Measurement Table* and *Implementation Planning Guide.*
- Produce a joint workplan and budget aligned with the identified priority areas for collaboration.
- Develop a plan to gather, share, reflect on and discuss information related to impacts and outcomes of the activities.

Roles and Responsibilities

Lead Agency (If required)	Steering Group or Collective Managers Group	Individual Partner Organizations	Designated Internal Partnership Manager
• Liaise with funding body • Employ and supervise employees of the collaboration project • Subcontract to partners, distribute funding, manage contracts • Disseminate information to each partner • Clarify funding agreement guidelines • Meet with steering committee or managers annually to provide an update on the collaboration • Negotiate funding agreements with partners • Ensure timely formal evaluation takes place.	• Oversee operational matters • Consider need for new partners • Share best practices • Provide relevant strategic information • Be involved in the renegotiation of funding • Prevent and resolve conflicts in accordance with protocol • Gather and provide feedback for annual evaluation	• Designate and allocate appropriate staff for involvement in steering committee or manager's meetings • Maintain a high quality of service delivery • Work within the boundaries of their own organizational policies and procedures • Recommend policy and procedure changes as needed for implementation • Comply with funding requirements • Complete relevant documentation in set timeframe • Ensure joint services are provided as agreed upon	• Monitor activities via monthly reports • With lead agency, monitor overall collaboration • Liaise with funding and reporting bodies to ensure accuracy of information provided • Submit reports/data required by the service agreement • Develop draft documents including policies and procedures, contracts, reports for Steering committee or managers. *(If there is no manager then policy and procedure development would sit best with the Steering Committee/ Managers)* • Ensure effective communication between all key stakeholders • Handle frontline complaints in accordance with flow chart • Assist in planning, coordination and delivery of annual evaluation.

Period of Agreement

*Example: This Agreement between the (insert names of organization) will operate from the 1*st*of April 2015 to the 30 April 2016.*

This agreement will be reviewed by all parties on an annual basis and may be updated as required to sustain progress in implementing the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework*.

Exit Statement

It is agreed that at any point during the specified time agreement, each organization may negotiate to end the agreement. The period of arrangement will stand until such time as a written statement is received from the organization wishing to exit the agreement.

Condition of Agreement

The parties agree that:

- This is not a legally binding document and its provisions do not create rights, obligations or duties for either party.

- This document is a record of the mutual intentions of the parties to work collaboratively in the spirit of friendship, goodwill and a willingness to pursue joint initiatives.

Signatories on behalf of

Memorandum Of Understanding, APPENDIX A: Operational Protocols

Roles and Responsibilities of Partnering Agency Managers

1. Managers agree to maximize the effectiveness of their individual partnering services as well as the collaboration itself by adhering to the Partnership Protocols, and ensuring that their staff and volunteers are also aware of and follow Partnership Protocols.
2. Managers agree to attend regularly scheduled one and a half hour monthly meetings of the Steering Group or Managers Caucus.
3. Managers agree to participate in an annual event for all partners for purpose of interactive group-learning and information sharing and incorporating informal relationship-building activities into their workplans.
4. *Managers agree to ensure their appropriate staff and volunteers are aware of this partnership agreement, their organization's role within the partnership and their commitment to coordinated, collaborative implementation of* the Indigenous-Cultural-Linguistic Framework.
5. Managers agree to delegate an appropriate staff member to act on their behalf, where they are unable to personally fulfill their obligations under this partnership.
6. Managers agree to ensure that all of their staff assigned roles and responsibilities under this partnership have the knowledge and skills required including cultural competencies required for the work.
7. Managers agree to make themselves aware of local First Nations and Métis cultural protocols and to respect Indigenous intellectual property rights including stories, symbols and practices.
8. Managers agree to identify opportunities where they may work with their staff and the staff of other partner services to promote better outcomes.
9. Managers agree to ensure any program, service or administrative tools for this partnership are developed in collaboration with and/or are mutually approved by other partnering managers.
10. Managers agree to ensure that any interagency visits or activities for evaluation purposes have been previously mutually agreed to by other partners.
11. Managers agree to place the partnership as a standing item for staff and volunteer meeting agendas and bring forward to the partnership meeting table any issues or opportunities that arise.
12. Managers agree to handle frontline worker complaints and conflicts under this agreement in accordance with the Complaint Flow Chart and Conflict Resolution procedures.
13. Managers agree to ensure that new staff and volunteers receive an Orientation to this partnership at the time they receive their induction into their own organization.

Relationships between Staff Members of Partnering Organizations

Staff involved in partnership activities agree to maximize the effectiveness of each of their partnering organization and the partnership itself by adhering to the Partnership Protocols, and ensuring that volunteers are also aware of and follow Partnership Protocols.

1. Staff agree to make themselves aware of the roles and responsibilities of their organization within the terms of this partnership.
2. Where-ever practical, staff agree to attend any annual staff and volunteer inclusive functions.
3. Where-ever practical, staff agree to contribute to activities undertaken through this partnership including any promotional events, National Aboriginal Day Celebrations, Harvest Festival etc.

This contribution may consist of supplying materials, information and/or participating in the event.

4. Staff agree to identify new opportunities for their service to partner with other services toward better outcomes for Indigenous children and families, and agree to bring these ideas to staff meetings or notify their Manager.

5. Staff agree to identify potential opportunities for resource pooling and/or staff development and to raise these at staff meetings or notify their Manager.

6. When participating in collaborative activities, staff agree to complete the required documentation for evaluation of the joint services or the partnership itself.

7. Staff agree to make themselves aware of local First Nations and Métis cultural protocols and will respect Indigenous protocols and intellectual property rights including stories, symbols and practices.

Time Commitment

Partnering organizations agree to commit adequate time to build relationships of trust and to share information necessary for effective intercultural collaboration in accordance with Indigenous ways.

1. Three hours of Manager's time per month to develop organizational reports, attend and present these at monthly meetings and respond to partnering Manager's emails – this time commitment should be monitored and reviewed regularly.

2. An additional two, half days per year of Manager's time to review, reflect on, discuss and evaluate the partnership in collaboration with other Managers and staff.

3. Attendance of Managers, staff and volunteers where practical, at any annual partnership staff retreats or team building/professional development functions.

4. Staff time, as required by joint workplans to enhance service delivery or administrative processes, and/or improve outcomes for Indigenous children and families.

5. Adequate time for staff and Managers involved in the partnership to talk together, share reflections and stories of significant change, and inspire a collective sense of hope, enthusiasm and optimism for the work.

6. Managers, staff and volunteers will keep a record of time spent on collaborative activities.

Leadership, Continuity and Accountability

Partnering organizations agree to privilege and promote Indigenous leadership styles, and to facilitate relationship continuity and sustainability within a framework of accountability.

1. Commitment to post-colonial theory and practice will guide the approach to leadership, continuity and accountability.

2. Managers may mutually agree to bring qualified staff members from their organizations to partnership meetings in order to familiarize others with the partnership process and to demonstrate best practices in intercultural collaboration.

3. Managers may mutually agree to nominate a qualified proxy to attend on their behalf, any event or meeting which would contribute to the effectiveness of the partnership, where they are unable to attend personally.

4. Minute taking and record keeping will provide a clear documentation trail and enable monitoring and evaluation of outcomes and outputs of the partnership.

Partnership Meeting Procedures and Working Groups

Partners agree to strive to ensure fairness and equity in voice, ownership, responsibility and cost sharing.

1. Partnering Managers agree to rotate hosting monthly meetings; a budget and funding source will be identified for providing a minute taker and refreshments (sources can include pooled resources).
2. The Manager of the hosting organization agrees to Chair the meeting.
3. Ad hoc working groups may be established around new collaborative projects as required.
4. These groups will consist of designated managers or staff of the two or more services wishing to undertake the partnership. Unless otherwise mutually agreed, the organization that brought the opportunity to the table shall become the lead agency.
5. The lead agency agrees to host working group meetings.
6. The Lead Agency agrees to ensure that project accountability is open, transparent, undertaken in line with any project funding requirements and according to the values, vision and priorities of the Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework.

Partnership Logo, Letterhead and Intellectual Property

Each partner agrees to endeavour to protect the integrity of other partners and to ensure a truly collaborative partnership that reflects and respects Indigenous Knowledge and cultures.

1. Use of any partner's logo and/or letterhead must be preapproved by consensus of all partners at partnership meeting or through email.
2. Use of Indigenous graphics, art, or symbols must be preapproved by the representative from the Indigenous partnering organization(s) to ensure respect for Indigenous intellectual property and to protect the integrity of cultural symbols by ensuring their proper use.

Administrative Requirements

The partners agree to operate in a fair and equitable manner, ensuring ownership by all partners and avoiding under-resourced partners bearing an inequitable administrative workload.

1. Administrative requirements for meetings such as reception, photocopying or reminder emails will be met by the hosting organization.
2. Administrative requirements for collaborative projects during the development stages will be met by the agreed lead agency.
3. Ongoing project administration costs will be incorporated in the project budget and workplan and unless otherwise agreed, undertaken by lead agency staff.

Services, Organizational Policies and Procedures

The partnership will function as a collaboration, not an integration of service, and partners agree to at all times protect their own organization's integrity and that of their partners.

1. Staff from all partnering services will adhere to the policies and procedures of their own organization, even when working collaboratively with other services.

2. The right to receive services and transmit culture in accordance with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and *the Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework* will be respected; in practice this means Indigenous organizations have the right to privilege and practice their own ways of knowing, being and doing in service delivery, management style and governance.

3. In areas where irreconcilable cultural differences in service practices are identified, a collaborative approach may be deemed unsuitable.

Decision Making

The partners agree to collaborate within a culture of openness, honesty and accountability.

1. An Indigenous process for consensus decision-making shall be followed.
2. A documented 'paper trail' for all decisions made on behalf of the partnership shall be recorded in meeting minutes.

Communication Protocols

1. Relationship building: Given that partners retain their own legal entity and independence, the effectiveness of the collaboration will largely depend on the strength of the relationships between partnering services and their commitment to mutual respect, continuous improvement and improved outcomes for children and families. **It is essential therefore, that partnering Managers create a 'culture of collaboration' that encourages open communication, solution-focused problem-solving and the development of trust, avoiding covert communications and any behaviours that may factionalize the partnership.**

2. Regular and formal communication between Partnering Managers: discussion among the partnering Managers is essential to an effective partnership. Regular communication between Managers shall occur through monthly partnership meetings where organizational reports will be tabled and discussed. Should Managers be unable to attend due to weather or other impediments they agree to notify other Managers by email; and/or participate in the meeting by Skype or speakerphone.

- Managers or their proxies agree to identify program gaps related to implementation of the *Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic* Framework and to scope out potential collaborative projects to fill these needs.
- Managers or their proxies agree to advise the group of any new opportunities for shared training and continuous improvement.
- Managers or their proxies agree to advise other partners of any impediments to collaboration or to sharing resources.
- Managers or their proxies agree to provide updates on their staff carrying out joint activities for the workplan as well as progress updates on evolving shifts in knowledge, attitudes and practice.
- Managers or their proxies agree to provide updates on extra staff travel required for the partnership.
- Minutes of these meetings shall be taken and forwarded to other partnering Managers for endorsement (allowing 5 days for sign off).

- Urgent emerging issues or ideas will be dealt with as they arise through email communication. Where a decision required by email has legal liability or risk implications, it shall also be recorded in partnership meeting minutes, so that everyone in the partnership is made aware of these actions.
- Managers or their proxies agree to participate in an annual review of the partnership, evaluating and recording its effectiveness in accordance with its own procedural guidelines and protocols as well as the guiding principles and priorities of *the Indigenous Cultural-Linguistic Framework.*

3. **Communication Between Staff Of Partnering Organizations**

- Partners agree to demonstrate respect for Indigenous Knowledge and for inclusivity, openness and transparency.
- Partners agree to provide opportunities for frontline staff of their respective organizations to interact with each other and share success stories from the frontline.
- Partners mutually agree to practice uniformity in record keeping in connection with collaborative activities in order to provide relevant, accurate, consistent information to the Indigenous community about improvements in access to and quality of services aligned with priorities of the Indigenous Framework.

4. **Circulation of Partnership Meeting Minutes**

- The host of each meeting agrees to provide a minute taker and distribute minutes to all relevant stakeholders within ten days of the meeting.
- All partnering Managers agree to endorse the Minutes before circulation.
- Partnering Managers agree to report on meetings to the staff and volunteers of their own service as they deem appropriate.

5. **Public and Media Statements**

Partners agree to ensure that public statements and media releases on behalf of the collaboration reflect a strength-based approach to Indigenous issues and protect the organizational integrity of all partner services.

- All media statements and press releases made on behalf of the collaboration must be preapproved by partnering Managers, or their delegates.
- Indigenous partners should be designated as media spokesperson(s) to promote Indigenous empowerment and self-voicing in practice.

Partnership Protocols Development and Review

1. **Process for Amendment of Partnership Protocols**: The partnership is an evolving collaboration where unforeseen situations may arise. In the interest of continuous improvement, and where deemed necessary by any partner, a request may be made for new protocol/s to be incorporated within the partnership agreement.

- The consent of all partners is required and will be noted in the Minutes.

- Circulation of the amended section of the agreement shall be distributed to all relevant stakeholders.

2. **Time Frame for Regular Protocol Review:** Partners agree to ensure that the partnership delivers the required results by regularly reviewing the process.

- Procedural protocols shall be reviewed at the first monthly meeting 12 months after the signing of the Partnership Agreement and MOU.
- Procedural protocols shall be reviewed at a scheduled date prior to the renewal of the Partnership Agreement and MOU.
- Procedural protocols shall be reviewed at a scheduled date prior to the inclusion of any new partner services.
- Procedural protocols shall be reviewed at the withdrawal of any partner from this agreement.
- The processes for amending the partnership agreement will be followed.

3. **Expedient Policy Review**

To protect the integrity of the collaboration, if at any time, a Manager, staff or volunteer of a partnering service, comes to believe that a procedural protocol may have a negative impact on organizational effectiveness, program outcomes, client service, client or staff safety, or present any other form of risk, they will address the matter immediately.

Any person identifying a problem with current protocols will communicate their concerns as soon as possible to their Manager.
Managers made aware of a problem with current protocols will ensure that appropriate risk management is undertaken.
Managers will list the protocol for immediate review at the next partnership meeting.
The processes for amending the partnership agreement will be followed.

Management

1. **Financial Management**

In accordance with the Indigenous Framework one of the goals of implementation is to share and pool resources in a way that enhances the capacity of Indigenous service providers. At signing of this agreement joint workplans and budgets shall be developed detailing financial contributions of all partners.

- Where invoices are required to support any financial transfers they will be provided in accordance with the policy and procedures of the organization making the financial contribution.
- Each of the partnering organizations agrees to ensure they are adequately covered by their own insurance policy and to act at all times in accordance with their own financial policy requirements.

2. **Personnel**

Staff and volunteers of partner services agree to at all times follow the policies and procedures of their own organizations, even when working in collaboration with others.

3. **Managing Resources: Responsibility for resource management will be shared by the partnering Managers.**

- Individual organizations shall each conduct their own internal resource audit and the Managers will present this information at the regularly scheduled partnership meeting. From this a combined list detailing in-kind human, financial and other pooled resources will be collated and circulated to all partners s.
- Each individual organization will be responsible for managing any loans of its resources, including keeping appropriate records.
- Each borrower will be responsible for the item borrowed, including returning it in the agreed time frame and in the condition in which it was borrowed.
- Should an item be accidentally damaged the borrower will be responsible for seeing that the item is repaired or a suitable replacement is found.

Monitoring

The effectiveness of the collaboration shall be continually monitored through the keeping of appropriate records, scheduled reviews, regular ongoing meetings and the observations and reflections of partners.

Complaints and Disputes

1. **Complaints Procedure**: All partners agree to enter into this partnership in the spirit of goodwill and cooperation and will seek to address complaints in a manner that promotes a 'best practice,' continuous improvement approach.
- Should any concerns or complaints arise over staff/volunteer differences, cultural protocols, allocation or use of resources, or access to or quality of services to Indigenous children and families, the person/persons concerned shall raise the issue directly with their own designated internal Manager according to the Complaint Flow Chart.

2. **Conflict Resolution:** partners will resolve disputes according to an agreed process.

- First, parties agree to use their **best personal efforts** and act in good faith to resolve any conflict through open, forthright and respectful discussion at the source of the issue and in private between the parties – if this is the preferred option.
- Second, parties agree to request a mutually agreeable mediator or Elder(s) conduct a facilitated Talking Circle aimed at resolving the conflict in accordance with the Conflict Resolution Protocol.
- Third, if the parties cannot resolve the dispute within 30 days of the commencement of the dialogue, then all partnering Managers agree to have a discussion aimed at resolving the issue; upon mutual agreement, Elder guidance may be sought to facilitate this discussion.

Future Growth: Expanding the Partnership

- By mutual agreement of all partners the collaboration will not invite new Partners for at least 6 months from the signing of the first Partnership Agreement and MOU.

- At the first review of the agreement, members shall reflect on, discuss and make decisions about the size and structure of any ongoing collaboration.
- Should a consensus decision be made to include new partners, the process will be by invitation to organizations that clearly demonstrate similar vision, mission and values to current partners.

TOOL KIT: COMPLAINT DATA SUMMARY

Understanding/Tracking Trends in Complaints

Category of Service	Complaint	Total	%
Accessibility			
Dignity and Respect			
Safety (including cultural safety)			
Language			
Timing of appointment or program			
Communication			
Ability to contact/messages returned			
Information			
Environment			
Involvement of Elder(s)			
Involvement of extended family			
Lack of culturally relevant options for support or programming			
Quality of care			
Other			

Summary

Data	Latest Quarter	Year to Date
Complaints Received (stats)		
Acknowledged within 3 days (stats)		

Complaints resolved (stats)				
Client satisfaction overall (Satisfied/Unsatisfied)				
Frontline worker satisfaction overall (Satisfied/Unsatisfied)				

TOOL KIT: COMPLAINT PROCEDURES – QUALITY AND ACCESS

DAY 0 Complaint received and passed to Internal Complaints	DAY 1 Complaint is lodged by Designated Internal Team
Complaint must be acknowledged to frontline within 3 working days	DAY 1 Complaints Team Lead conducts fact finding with
Fact finding is completed within 5-10 days	DAY 10-15 Complaints Team Lead drafts response
Day 20 Final response returned to Supervisor and frontline	DAY 15-20 Response is signed off by partner(s) CEO or designate
	Team Lead uploads action plan and lesson(s) learned for evaluation data collection
Frontline workers and supervisors have access to annual reports for continuous learning	Partners review data re complaints and quality assurance/corrective actions semi-annually

TOOL KIT: DEVELOPING A MEDIA STRATEGY

TYPES OF INDIGENOUS MEDIA

1. Print: Wind speaker; Ontario Birchbark
2. Radio: CBC Aboriginal; also check which local radio stations are favoured by community members
3. Television: Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN)

TYPES OF ENGAGEMENT WITH MEDIA

- **Media Advisory**: uses 1-page invitation format and is emailed a few days ahead to let media know about an upcoming event you want them to attend. It provides basic details (when, where, who) and just enough information to show your event has 'news value'.
- **News Release:** 1-2 page description of news you would like the media to cover that includes a short, punchy headline summarizing 'WHO is doing WHAT because of WHY, i.e. "**First Nation Elders Bring Culture to School to Stop Racism**". Write it in the 3rd person active voice, emphasize *why* the event is newsworthy, avoid acronyms and jargon; use at least 1 strong quote from a community leader. Fax or email before 9 am to a target list of reporters and/or editors**. Tip**: Listen to the daily news first to ensure there's not a bigger story happening that will compete with your story's attention.

CHECKLIST FOR MEDIA INTERVIEWS

1. Deliver only the *key* message – don't get side-tracked.
2. The key speaker and images should always be First Nations and/or Métis.
3. Speak concisely, providing compelling evidence or a short story that illustrates the point you're making (or statistics or examples).
4. Maintain control of the interview by keeping your language positive and not repeating any negative words of the interviewer; avoid the media tendency to frame every issue as conflict; keeping bringing it back to the positive aspects of the story.
5. Avoid strong negative emotions; avoid jargon; avoid personal opinions.
6. Maintain eye contact; show your commitment and enthusiasm.
7. Sound confident, knowledgeable and use effective body language.

Example 1: First Nation and Métis children in Northern Ontario do not enjoy equal access to education, health and social supports at the same level as non-Indigenous children and families. Many also experience daily racism in their classrooms, playgrounds and neighbourhoods. A community survey conducted through the Indigenous Best Start Network suggests one solution is to bring local Elders into schools and community services to share the beauty and wisdom of their culture and language.

Example 2: Another way to generate interest while also informing the public of your implementation activities is through awards. A headline reading '**Local First Nations Elder Receives Award for Cultural Services to Day Care**" with a story describing who the Elder is, what the Elder does and the impacts on children and f families - this is another effective way of engaging the media in public education.