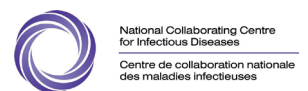


Building Respectful Relationships and Engagement with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Individuals, Communities, and Organizations in Health Research





Introduction

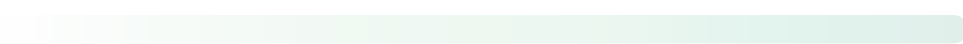
This guide, **Building Respectful Relationships and Engagement with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Individuals, Communities and Organizations in Health Research**, is one in a three-part series to support Research Teams (RTs) who are members of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Knowledge Mobilization Hub. Other guides in this series include:



Introduction to Cultural Safety and Cultural Humility



Knowledge Mobilization Approaches and Strategies for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Communities



Elements of Knowledge Mobilization for First Nation, Inuit and/or Métis Audiences

Many First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and communities have had a conflicted relationship with the research community. Experiences of having their health data extracted and published without their expressed knowledge, permission, consent, or involvement have resulted in mistrust with outside, primarily non-Indigenous researchers. Trust was further eroded when findings were not communicated back to communities, leaving First Nations, Inuit and Métis people without any tangible benefits. At the same time, the careers of researchers, who were now viewed as experts on First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples' health, continued to advance.

Relationship Building and Engagement

Resetting this power imbalance starts with recognizing that First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, communities, and organizations are the experts on identifying and addressing their own health needs, aspirations, and priorities. It is about humbly engaging and committing to **culturally safe**, respectful and meaningful relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, communities and organizations. Using strengths-based and distinctions-based language not only counters racism and stigma, but it also helps to ensure that the experiences and realities of First Nations people, Inuit, and Métis people are separately considered, and equally represented, in health research. Below are some of the elements for researchers to consider as part of this process.



Build in Time for Establishing Trusting Relationships and Engagement

- Acknowledge that relationships are multi-phased, non-linear, and ongoing processes throughout a project. Relationships may also continue long after the project has ended.
- Identify yourself - "who am I and why I am doing this research"?
- Ask for permission to work with the First Nation, Inuit and/or Métis community/organization.

- Commit to learn from, and actively listen to, the First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis community/organization and adapt research to their needs.
- Recognize the work already being done by First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis community/organization, and identify opportunities to collaborate and build capacity.
- Facilitate dialogue to learn about the health needs and priorities of the First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis community/organization and let them guide you on how the research can best address these.
- Learn about unique histories, realities, geographies, cultures, languages, protocols, and governance structures of the First Nation, Inuit and/or Métis community(ies) researchers will directly engage with.
- Ensure reciprocal opportunities and that work aligns with community visions and goals, including self-determination.

Privilege First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis Voices Throughout the Project Lifespan

- Follow community guidance, direction, and leadership in decision-making, co-design, and best practices for collaboration.
- Hire community members as research assistants.
- Honour and engage, when appropriate, Elders and Knowledge Keepers.
- Be aware of and seek opportunities to integrate traditional knowledge and practices, Two-Eyed Seeing, and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.
- Use and reference literature and resources produced by First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis people whenever possible.
- Recognize that leadership roles in community-based research and knowledge mobilization should be determined collaboratively with First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners, and Indigenous leadership or co-leadership may be the most appropriate approach in most contexts.



Use Ethical Research Practices when Working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, Communities, and Organizations

- Ethical research practices must be integrated in the project design.
- Involve the First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis community/organization from the beginning of the project and throughout its lifespan.
- Understand the importance of data sovereignty for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities and organizations, including [OCAP® Principles](#), the [National Inuit Strategy on Research](#), and the [Métis Nation Data Strategy](#) and/or the [Red River Métis Data Governance Strategy](#).
- Know if the project requires application to the [Tri-Council Policy Statement \(TCPS 2\), Chapter 9](#) which establishes the ethical framework for conducting research involving First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.
- Learn if there are ethical processes, governance structures, or cultural protocols necessary to do research with the particular First Nation, Inuit, or Métis community/organization.

Commit to Learning about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

- ✓ Review the [TRC 94 Calls to Action](#) and [UNDRIP](#) articles specific to health.
- ✓ State how the research project will advance reconciliation, self-determination, health and healing, and social justice.

Develop Appropriate Consent Forms

- ✓ Consent forms guarantee the free, prior and informed consent of participants before engaging in the project. They also ensure that the people, organizations, or communities:
 - fully understand the project, what is expected of them, and how they will be involved
 - know what their rights are (including the ability to leave the project without penalty and how the results will be shared out)
 - know how confidentiality and anonymity, if requested/required, will be honoured
 - understand the benefits from participating in the project (i.e. honoraria, receiving resources back, a say in how their words are used, voluntary time back from the researcher, or participating in the sharing out of the findings).

Incorporate Flexibility in all Phases of the Research

- ✓ Respect the timing and scheduling needs of the community/organization (i.e. cultural and community events, land-based and seasonal harvesting practices).
- ✓ Be prepared to alter or expand research timelines, objectives, etc based on community need.

For additional reading and tools for learning see the [resource list provided](#).



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Disclaimer Statement

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