

Culturally Grounded Knowledge Mobilization

Tune In to Tune Up 2026

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Why This Matters

Historical research challenges:

- Research conducted **on** Indigenous peoples
- Extractive research practices

Moving forward:

- Respect
- Reciprocity
- Relationship building
- Community Benefit

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What is Knowledge Mobilization

The process of:	In Indigenous research:
Sharing knowledge	Community access
Applying knowledge	Cultural relevance
Ensuring research informs action	Practical benefit

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Indigenous Self-Determination in Research

Indigenous communities have the right to:

- ▀ Define research priorities
- ▀ Determine research methods
- ▀ Control how knowledge is shared
- ▀ Decide whether research occurs

Key concept: Indigenous Data Sovereignty

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OCAP® Principles

OCAP®

- ▀ Ownership
- ▀ Control
- ▀ Access
- ▀ Possession

Supports Indigenous data governance and self-determination

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Other Frameworks in Canada Respecting Data Sovereignty in Research

Note that it is important to take a distinctions-based approach when choosing a framework that works best for the Indigenous community you are engaging in research with.

Frameworks in Canada that Respect Data Sovereignty in Research:

- The Tri-Agency guides say that projects are required to recognize Indigenous self-determination and governance including Indigenous data following First Nations of OCAP®, CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance, and/or FAIR principles
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, National Inuit Strategy on Research (NISR)
- Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch
- Métis Data Sovereignty Principles: Ownership, Control, Access, Stewardship (OCAS)

These frameworks are key to ensuing self-determination is respected.

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IRLET

Indigenous Research Level of Engagement Tool (IRLET)

Purpose:

- Evaluate Indigenous engagement in research
- Guide ethical research practices
- Support culturally competent knowledge mobilization

Used by:

- Researchers
- Students
- Grant reviewers
- Research partners

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IRLET Engagement Criteria

IRLET evaluates through four key areas:

1. Partnership with Indigenous stakeholders
2. Knowledge into Practice
3. Strengths-based approaches
4. Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing

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Saskatchewan Centre for Patient-Oriented Research		Indigenous Research Level of Engagement Tool				
Score	1	2	3	4	5	Criteria Score
Partnership with Indigenous Stakeholder(s)	Indigenous stakeholders are informed by research teams about projects but are not invited to engage in any phase of the project. The project appears to offer no lasting or tangible benefit to the Indigenous stakeholders. The budget does not meet the needs of the Indigenous stakeholders.	Indigenous stakeholders are named as team members who are consulted throughout the project in regard to research priorities and outcomes. The project offers limited, short-term benefits to the Indigenous stakeholders. It is unclear whether the budget meets the stakeholder's needs and/or financial supports are not identified.	Indigenous stakeholders are named as team members who are involved throughout the project in identifying research priorities and outcomes. The project offers tangible benefits to the stakeholders, although limited and short-term. The budget meets some of the stakeholder's needs and some financial supports are identified.	Indigenous stakeholders are active partners who collaborate with team members throughout the research project. The project offers a numerous and long-lasting tangible benefits to the stakeholders. The budget meets many of the stakeholder's needs and financial supports are identified. The project proposal is attainable and accountable.	Indigenous stakeholders are equal partners with decision-making autonomy over attributes of the research project (e.g. use of Indigenous research methodologies). The project offers meaningful and lasting benefits to the stakeholders. This includes long-term training and capacity building, policy change. The budget meets all of the stakeholder's needs and numerous financial supports are identified. The project proposal is attainable and accountable.	
Knowledge into Practice	Indigenous stakeholders are informed of knowledge translation plans and activities by research team, but do not have decision-making power in regard to their data.	Indigenous stakeholders are consulted and minimally involved in developing knowledge translation plans and activities with research team, but do not have decision-making power in regard to their data.	Indigenous stakeholders are involved in the development and application of knowledge translation activities with research team, but it is unclear whether communities have decision-making power in regard to their data.	Indigenous stakeholders collaborate with research team in determining knowledge translation plans that are beneficial to Indigenous stakeholders. Indigenous stakeholders have some decision-making power in regard to their data. There is a healthy research relationship, but there is no formal research agreement in place.	Indigenous peoples' self-determination is respected as active creators and implementers of the knowledge translation plan. A research agreement is in place, reflective of OCAP and/or Meets data-governance principles, outlining a comprehensive knowledge translation plan that is beneficial to Indigenous stakeholders.	
Strengths-based Approach	The proposed project relies on Western-colonial based health indicators that are deficit-based, as well as Western health models to identify solutions.	The proposed project appears to consider existing Indigenous strengths-based approaches (e.g. resiliency and wellness) but does not appear to move towards overcoming deficit-based models.	The proposed project appears to be aware of Indigenous historical and social realities (trauma-informed) and is informed by Indigenous resiliencies and wellness however aims to provide solutions based on Western health models. The project appears to move towards overcoming deficit-based models.	The proposed project is aware of historic and social realities (trauma-informed) and references and capitalizes on Indigenous resiliencies and wellness as defined by Indigenous community partners. This project appears to move towards overcoming deficit-based health research models but may be informed by Western-colonial based health indicators.	The proposed project is aware of historic and social realities (trauma-informed) and aims to improve quality of life and offer strengths-based solutions by building on Indigenous pathways to resiliency and wellness. The proposed project shifts perceived deficits away from the individual and places health issues into the appropriate context (e.g. colonialization, systemic racism).	
Indigenous Knowledges and Ways of Knowing	Western knowledges and ways of knowing are privileged throughout the proposal. The proposal does not include any plans to include any Indigenous stakeholders in contextualizing and interpreting data.	Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing are recognized, though not meaningfully engaged within the proposal. The proposal includes plans to consult Indigenous stakeholders about data, however their roles are unclear or tokenized.	Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing are acknowledged and there is effort in the proposal to include them in methodologies, analysis, etc. The proposal includes plans to involve Indigenous stakeholders in contextualizing and interpreting data, their roles are clearly outlined but participation is limited.	Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing contribute greatly to the proposal, this is reflected in methodologies, analysis, etc. Indigenous stakeholders help decide which knowledge and ways of knowing are used. The proposal includes plans to collaborate with Indigenous stakeholders in order to contextualize and interpret data, their roles are clearly outlined but participation is not integrated throughout the entire duration of the project.	Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing are privileged throughout the proposal, methodologies, analysis, etc. Indigenous stakeholders help decide which knowledge and ways of knowing are used. The proposal indicates that Indigenous stakeholders will work closely with the research team to contextualize and interpret data, their roles are clearly outlined and participation is integrated throughout the entire duration of the project.	

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Partnership with Indigenous Stakeholders

Meaningful engagement includes:

- Indigenous partners involved in decision-making
- Engagement across research stages
- Community priorities guiding research

Goal: equitable partnership

<p>Partnership with Indigenous Stakeholder(s)</p>	<p>Indigenous stakeholders are informed by research teams about projects but are not invited to engage in any phase of the project.</p> <p>The project appears to offer no lasting or tangible benefit to the Indigenous stakeholders. The budget does not meet the needs of the Indigenous stakeholders.</p>	<p>Indigenous stakeholders are named as team members who are consulted throughout the project in regard to research priorities and outcomes.</p> <p>The project offers limited, short-term benefits to the Indigenous stakeholders. It is unclear whether the budget meets the stakeholder's needs and/or financial supports are not identified.</p>	<p>Indigenous stakeholders are named as team members who are involved throughout the project in identifying research priorities and outcomes.</p> <p>The project offers tangible benefits to the stakeholders, although limited and short-term. The budget meets some of the stakeholder's needs and some financial supports are identified.</p>	<p>Indigenous stakeholders are active partners who collaborate with team members throughout the research project.</p> <p>The project offers a numerous and long-lasting tangible benefits to the stakeholders. The budget meets many of the stakeholder's needs and financial supports are identified. The project proposal is attainable and accountable.</p>	<p>Indigenous stakeholders are equal partners with decision-making autonomy over attributes of the research project (e.g. use of Indigenous research methodologies).</p> <p>The project offers meaningful and lasting benefits to the stakeholders. This includes long-term training and capacity building, policy change. The budget meets all of the stakeholder's needs and numerous financial supports are identified. The project proposal is attainable and accountable.</p>
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Knowledge into Practice

Knowledge must lead to tangible outcomes such as:

- Community benefit
- Policy improvements
- Accessible knowledge sharing

Examples:

- Workshops
- Community presentations
- Plain, accessible language summaries

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Strengths-Based Research

Move beyond deficit narratives

Focus on:

- Resilience
- Culture
- Community strengths
- Indigenous knowledge systems

Strengths-based Approach	The proposed project relies on Western-colonial based health indicators that are deficit-based, as well as Western health models to identify solutions.	The proposed project appears to consider existing Indigenous strengths-based approaches (e.g. resiliency and wellness) but does not appear to move towards overcoming deficit-based models.	The proposed project appears to be aware of Indigenous historical and social realities (trauma-informed) and is informed by Indigenous resiliencies and wellness however aims to provide solutions based on Western health models. The project appears to move towards overcoming deficit-based models.	The proposed project is aware of historic and social realities (trauma-informed) and references and capitalizes on Indigenous resiliencies and wellness as defined by Indigenous community partners. This project appears to move towards overcoming deficit-based health research models but may be informed by Western-colonial based health indicators.	The proposed project is aware of historic and social realities (trauma-informed) and aims to improve quality of life and offer strengths-based solutions by building on Indigenous pathways to resiliency and wellness. The proposed project shifts perceived deficits away from the individual and places health issues into the appropriate context (e.g. colonization, systemic racism).
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Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Research should respect Indigenous ways of knowing:

- Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Knowledge Holders
- Storytelling
- Relational accountability
- Land-based knowledge

Indigenous knowledge is a valid knowledge system

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Final Takeaways

Culturally grounded knowledge mobilization requires:


- Respectful relationships
- Indigenous leadership
- Community benefit
- Strengths-based approaches
- Respect for Indigenous knowledge systems
- Recognition that not all KM outputs will result in academic publications

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Q&A



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Closing Thoughts & Resources

- Research Impact Canada MobilizeU:
<https://researchimpact.ca/learning/mobilizeu/>
- Indigenous Research Level of Engagement Tool (IRLET) Training:
<https://iceclearning.fnuniv.ca/courses/indigenous-research-level-of-engagement-tool>
- IRLET: <https://www.scpur.ca/porlet20>
- Tune In to Tune Up – Indigenous Data Sovereignty (2024). Discussion series recording at the University of Regina:
<https://library.uregina.ca/c.php?g=701458&p=5347986>
- Knowledge Translation Planning
Template: https://www.sickkids.ca/siteassets/learning/kt_planning-template_may2021.pdf

