

Indigenous Youth Voices

A Way Forward in Conducting Research
With and by Indigenous Youth



First Nations Child & Family
Caring Society of Canada

INDIGENOUS
**YOUTH
VOICES**

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ABOUT INDIGENOUS YOUTH VOICES

Indigenous Youth Voices (IYV) was created by and for Indigenous youth in response to the TRC and to address Call to Action 66:

We call upon the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation and establish a national network to share information and best practices.

Indigenous Youth Voices is a networking organization that connects Indigenous youth and groups, and advocates for Indigenous youth priorities on the terms and standards that Indigenous youth set for themselves. The IYV mission is to seek advice and support from Indigenous youth across Canada. We work to maximize the voices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth by connecting and including Indigenous youth, including those who are part of Indigenous youth organizations, councils, groups or grassroots initiatives.

In 2018, Indigenous Youth Voices collaborated with youth across Canada to provide a report and requirements to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, the Honourable Carolyn Bennett. This culminated in the *Roadmap to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #66* being released in 2018. While it remains to be seen if the requirements for reconciliation with Indigenous youth will be implemented by the federal government, it is clear to Indigenous Youth Voices that Indigenous youth across Canada know what they deserve in reconciliation.

ABOUT THE FIRST NATIONS CHILD & FAMILY CARING SOCIETY

The First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada (the Caring Society) is a national non-profit organization ensuring that First Nations children and their families have culturally based, and equitable opportunities to grow up safely at home and in their communities, be healthy, get a good education and be proud of who they are and where they come from.

INTRODUCTION

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released their Final Report and 94 Calls to Action in 2015 to inspire a transformation in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Call to Action 65 calls on the federal government, through the Social Studies and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.

As the fastest growing demographic in Canada, the voices, experiences, and priorities of Indigenous youth matter in research, both ethically and equitably. Furthermore, research about Indigenous peoples, including Indigenous youth, has historically been conducted in ways that do not respect the self-determination and wellbeing of Indigenous communities. In response to the role of research in “reproducing colonial relations,” the Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) were developed (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014, p. 6). Another ethical standard for conducting research with Indigenous communities is set out in the *Tri-council policy: Ethical conduct for research involving humans*. Both OCAP and the Tri-Council Policy Statement set out a standard of engagement when conducting research with Indigenous communities, however, neither have set out distinct standards for research with Indigenous youth. Indeed, the Tri-Council Policy Statement simply identifies Indigenous youth as a diverse interest group within communities (Canadian Institute of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2014, Article 9.6). Research with Indigenous youth must have holistic ethical standards that upholds the spirit and intention of reconciliation

In partnership with the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society, Indigenous Youth Voices received an Indigenous Research Capacity and Reconciliation—Connection Grant. As part of this grant, Indigenous Youth Voices conducted six community-based facilitated sessions inviting over 50 Indigenous youth from a diversity of communities and backgrounds to collaborate on reconciliation-based requirements for conducting research with and for Indigenous youth. Our research was conducted in a holistic and meaningful way that put as much emphasis on a respectful process as it did on results. The findings and requirements for conducting research with and for Indigenous youth reflect a broad overview of the data we collected from the community sessions. This paper offers a way forward in rethinking and reshaping research that is meaningful, inclusive, and respectful of all Indigenous youth. It is clear from the conversations had during the community sessions that Indigenous youth know what they deserve in reconciliation and are their own best advocates. As such, in order to fulfill TRC Call to Action 65, Indigenous youth must have a leadership role in the creation of a national research program that is done in a holistic and ethical way, as defined by Indigenous youth themselves.



KEY TERMS

Indigenous: For the purpose of this paper, Indigenous is inclusive of First Nations, Inuit and Métis. All First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth have very distinct histories and contemporary realities which this paper has endeavoured to honour.

OCAP: A set of principles that reflect First Nation commitments to use and share information that brings benefit to the community while minimizing harm. The principles include Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (The First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014).

PATH: Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope is a visual planning tool that is used to solve problems, set short- and long-term goals, and create an action plan. The PATH process starts by looking at the future, first by engaging in a collective dreaming process and then works backwards to identify the first steps towards a specific outcome (O'Brien, Pearpoint, & Kahn, 2010).

Touchstones of Hope: A set of guiding principles that are defined and brought to life by Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. It encourages grassroots approaches to caring for Indigenous children (Reconciliation in Child Welfare), respectful collaboration and work with Indigenous peoples (Reconciliation in Canada) and young people participating in reconciliation initiatives (Children and Youth + Reconciliation). The foundation of the movement is about creating space for respectful and meaningful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to occur (Touchstones of Hope).

Two-Spirit People: A term that has been chosen to reflect traditional Indigenous gender diversity. A person may choose to identify as Two-Spirit because of their sexual-orientation, sexual or gender identity or roles. It is a term that some may choose to distinguish from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ+) identities (First Nations Centre, 2012).

Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans: A joint policy of Canada's three federal research agencies (the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)) which promotes the ethical conduct of research involving humans.

Youth: Defined for the purpose of this research project as individuals 30 years of age and under. Indigenous communities have complex and diverse understandings of who their youth are, so as much as possible this research endeavoured to be inclusive of each community's understanding of youth.

METHODOLOGY

Our main research question was, “What does meaningful research look like for Indigenous youth?” Based on previous research conducted by Indigenous Youth Voices, Indigenous youth indicated that they have little to no control over the direction of research conducted by and/or for Indigenous peoples, and as such, have profound distrust of research processes and practices (Indigenous Youth Voices, 2018). Indigenous youth have expressed profound frustration and disappointment at being over-consulted, without any real or meaningful change or support (p. 22). Indigenous youth voices and priorities matter in research, both ethically and equitably. In order to fulfill the spirit of TRC Call to Action 65, Indigenous youth must have a leadership role in the creation of a national research program in a sustainable and holistic way.

Our research project was conducted utilizing the Touchstones of Hope principles which we interpreted in the context of research including:

- ▶ **Culture and language:** affirming Indigenous cultures and languages by ensuring that community sessions were conducted in a culturally safe and specific manner
- ▶ **Holistic approach:** endeavouring to work in a holistic manner by making space for participants to drive the community sessions
- ▶ **Self-determination:** affirming Indigenous self-determination by making space for participants to dictate how research should be conducted with themselves and their community
- ▶ **Structural interventions:** making structural interventions by ensuring that community sessions were conducted in a safe and respectful manner. Often, this meant conducting community sessions in spaces identified in the community as a safe one. All those in a position of power during the research process required a vulnerable sector check.
- ▶ **Non-discrimination:** being non-discriminatory by ensuring that Indigenous ways of knowledge is given full credence.



These guiding principles set the basis for a respectful and meaningful collaboration (Touchstones of Hope).

This project built on the previous work of Indigenous Youth Voices and supported six community sessions. The goal of the sessions was to ensure that the research process and results amplify the voices of Indigenous youth who have been underrepresented previously in research conducted by Indigenous Youth Voices, and other research projects. For example, the community sessions focused on youth living in remote and fly-in communities, youth living in northern communities and

in urban spaces, youth who are either currently or were in care, Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Indigenous youth, and Inuit and Métis youth. These specific groups of Indigenous youth were identified in the Indigenous Youth Voices Roadmap as having a more difficult time having their voices heard (Indigenous Youth Voices, 2018). We conducted three separate community sessions in Ottawa focusing on Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+, and Inuit experiences, and another one for youth working with Aboriginal Youth Opportunities. A community session was conducted in Old Masset in Haida Gwaii, as well as Edmonton and Toronto. These sessions focused on youth living in remote communities, Métis, and Urban Indigenous experiences. We had planned an additional community session to take place in St. John's, Newfoundland, but were forced to cancel due to weather. This speaks to the need for research to have the capacity to allow for complex travel to remote communities.



Building on established relationships and working to enhance capacity in communities is consistent with identified Indigenous research ethics (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2014, Article 9.12). With this in mind, community sessions were conducted by leveraging existing networks and relationships built by Indigenous Youth Voices. A community lead was identified in each community to help facilitate the organization and outreach of the community sessions. As well, this process ensured that community sessions followed the protocols of each community, and ensured that the community sessions were conducted in a safer and more meaningful way for the community. For example, working with a community lead within the Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Indigenous community in Ottawa, it was determined that the participants would feel safer and more at ease if a respected knowledge holder be present instead of an Elder.

Consistent with the principles of participatory action research, the community sessions endeavoured to be a meaningful opportunity for Indigenous youth to shape the project and outcomes (Rutman, Hubberstey, Barlow & Brown, 2005). The community sessions were facilitated using the Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) process to identify best practices for research with Indigenous youth (O'Brien, Pearpoint, & Kahn, 2010; Quinn & Saini, 2012). We used the statement, "Indigenous youth will meaningfully participate in research when ..." to frame this collective dreaming process. This approach is in keeping with the Indigenous Youth Voices foundation that Indigenous youth are the experts of their own lives, and know what ethical and responsible research looks like for themselves.

Preceding the PATH-facilitated exercise, we conducted a short presentation. While the intention of this presentation was to ensure that all participants had a foundational understanding of research methodologies and ethics and to set some grounding questions, each community had a different experience with the presentation. Some community session participants found the presentation to be too prescriptive, while others found the presentation useful. The presentation was conducted at the discretion of the facilitator, which helped alleviate some of these differences.

In accordance with the *Tri-council policy statement for ethical conduct: Research involving humans*, written consent was obtained prior to the PATH-facilitated process. We developed an informed consent form for the project, which was reviewed with participants. We emphasized their rights as participants, including affirming confidentiality of information collected, control over the information and their right to withdraw from the research. Although informed consent is an important part of any research process, it is important to take into consideration that consent ethics stem from an institutional perspective, resulting in shortcomings. Firstly, the informed consent form itself can be daunting, and if not written or discussed in an accessible way, can prove to be a barrier to respectful and safer participation. Secondly, as Indigenous peoples, we are bound to an ethical code of conduct that is far more encompassing than that of institutional ethics, which tends to be more concerned with “liability concerns” (Kovach, 2009). This research project took into consideration our own understandings of accountability and responsibility, not only to the participants, but also to their families and communities. Our research is guided by the same codes of conduct that govern our everyday lives as Indigenous peoples (King, 2016, p. 51). Reciprocity and relationships were the cornerstone of our research ethics.



WHAT WE KNOW

As part of the facilitated community sessions, we asked Indigenous youth to discuss their experiences with research. In all sessions, youth identified barriers to meaningful, inclusive, and respectful participation in research. There were distinct experiences for each community, but there were common themes including: how there is little space or valuation in engaging a diversity of Indigenous youth voices and perspectives in research; how research does not take into consideration historic and ongoing trauma and oppression; how research is conducted in a way that is not culturally relevant; and how many youth do not feel safe nor respected in research.

Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Indigenous Youth

We invited Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Indigenous youth to attend a community session in Ottawa. The youth at this session discussed how their safety is often compromised when they are asked to take part in research. Researchers do not take into consideration the unique ways in which Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Indigenous youth must be supported. Researchers often provide space for Indigenous community members who are homophobic and transphobic, and harm Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Indigenous youth. The safety of Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Indigenous youth is compromised in research processes, forcing them to alienate themselves from community spaces that are meant to be supportive and safe. Spaces that are meant to foster a sense of identity, offer cultural supports and resources are policed by individuals who enforce strict gender roles, resulting in youth feeling as if they must put on “masks” to fit in and access culture.

Research with Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Indigenous youth often centers on the pain and harm they experience, as opposed to resistance and uplifting topics. This puts youth at risk of being triggered or re-victimized, and is often accompanied by a lack of support during the research process. This is coupled with the fact that Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Indigenous youth experience the highest rates of suicide amongst Indigenous youth. They are at the greatest risk of experiencing negative mental health and physical outcomes due to the continued impacts of colonial ideologies on gender and sexuality still present within many Indigenous communities (Dyck, D. R., 2012; First Nations Centre, 2012).

Research often does not meaningfully take into consideration the experiences of Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Indigenous youth. They often feel forced to speak about their experiences and feel tokenized by a process that does not honour and respect their Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ identities. Youth pointed out that research is very gendered, and leaves no room for Two-Spirit voices. Researchers lump in Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Indigenous youth with all Indigenous youth and communities without considering how to meaningfully engage and value their voices.

Haida Youth



Youth Center in Old Masset, Haida Gwaii

The Haida community session was held in Old Masset, Haida Gwaii. Haida youth indicated that they were not often included in research. In fact, many youth spoke of just one research paper that they are aware of, that speaks to the experiences of Haida youth. This echoes their concerns of being left out of important conversations relating to them. Compounding this, the research that is being conducted with Haida is often only inclusive of the “regulars,” or those community members who have strong voices and elevated positions of power

within the community. This exclusion is exacerbated by the realities of the remoteness of Haida Gwaii; researchers often do not prioritize the cost of conducting in-person research in Haida Gwaii or the lack of communication infrastructure like high-speed internet.

Research that does occur in Haida Gwaii is not accessible for Haida youth. Many youth spoke of their responsibilities to their families, including looking after them and using traditional means like hunting and fishing to provide food. Research processes often do not take into consideration that many Haida youth have to spend their time caring for their families. Haida youth discussed how research processes remain inaccessible as it does not take into consideration the time constraints and emotional capacity for Haida youth to take part in research.

Métis Youth

Métis youth were invited to take part in a community session in Edmonton. Social, economic and technological barriers were identified as hindering the ability of Métis youth to meaningfully engage in research. Métis youth specifically talked about the technological barriers (for example, limited internet access) of the Métis Settlements in Alberta being a barrier to meaningful inclusion. Researchers often do not understand the historic and ongoing realities of Métis youth, and how Métis youth feel distrustful and fearful of research. Research processes remain inaccessible for many Métis youth who often contend with depression and substance abuse within their families and communities.

Métis youth indicated that the research conducted with Métis does not often include a diversity of perspectives and experiences. Métis youth from the Settlements especially discussed the lack of opportunity to meaningfully share their experiences. Furthermore, the youth discussed how they have to be their own advocates against “pushy” researchers who do not respect their autonomy and consent. The youth discussed how research is not often conducted meaningfully due to capacity and time constraints.

Inuit Youth

We invited Inuit youth living in Ottawa to take part in a community session. The youth at this session indicated that research processes were not respectful of Inuit youth experiences and knowledge. Research does not respect or value their history. The youth indicated that research often generalizes their experiences, and often did not take into consideration the distinct realities between all Indigenous groups and between Inuit. For example, the youth discussed how a lot of research excluded their experiences as urban Inuit youth in favour of Inuit youth living in the north.

Inuit youth described their experiences with research and other education experiences as being exploitative and not meaningful. Research processes do not allow space for subsequent feedback or interpretation of findings that researchers might find. This leads to misinformation and leaves Inuit youth feeling tokenized and undervalued. This is exacerbated by the fact that Inuit youth have noted that researchers often profit off their knowledges and stories, be that through monetary, social, or professional gain. Those who do take part in research and provide knowledge often are not recognized nor acknowledged as collaborators. The youth described how this exploitation occurs alongside the discrimination and stigma that a lot of Inuit face, especially in Ottawa.

Toronto Indigenous Youth



Indigenous youth at the Toronto community session

We invited Indigenous youth living in Toronto to take part in a community session. The youth discussed how research is not currently grounded in respectful processes. For example, research often involves intrusive and invasive questions. There is very little space for honesty and holistic responses in research processes, as Indigenous youth often feel distrustful of the process. Indigenous youth's knowledge is not respected or valued, and they are rarely recognized and

acknowledge for their collaborations. Indeed, the youth pointed out that Indigenous ways of knowing and research through traditional means is often determined to be illegitimate in favour of research being led by settler researchers.

The youth discussed the diversity of Indigenous peoples who are being excluded in research. They specifically discussed Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Indigenous youth being excluded. When Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Indigenous youth are being included, very little support is given to alleviate any homophobia and transphobia they might experience. The youth see some research processes as giving space to further marginalize Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Indigenous youth in Indigenous communities.

Aboriginal Youth Opportunities

Indigenous Youth Voices had the opportunity to talk about research with Aboriginal Youth Opportunities (AYO), a Winnipeg-based Indigenous youth group. Youth in this community session indicated that in a lot of ways, they were “just trying to survive” and research often does not take into consideration their realities nor provide support. Youth at this session indicated that they continue to feel the pressures of being “researched to death” as any input into research is not meaningful as their time and knowledge is not valued and recognized. In fact, they indicated that research is often conducted to the detriment of their wellbeing, health, and safety.

Youth described research as being exploitative. Researchers parachute into communities and usually focus on the negative aspects of a community, disregarding any positive happenings. For example, the AYO youth talked about researchers using terms like “at-risk” or “vulnerable” to describe many Indigenous youth, which indicates that the researcher has not actually done any work to fully understand Indigenous communities. The terms and their accompanying “stigma statistics,” only feed into their systemic oppression, fueling youth fears of judgement and increased culturally irrelevant services. These terms and misunderstanding cause further harms in communities and to Indigenous youth.

MAJOR THEMES

There is a diversity of needs and requirements for meaningful research in all the Indigenous communities we collaborated with. What became apparent, however, is that Indigenous youth have shared experiences of research and know what reconciliation-based research looks like.

Research as a Part of Community Building

Indigenous youth identified that research has the capacity to be used as part of community building. Research has the potential to uplift Indigenous youth and can be used for the betterment of communities. This requires researchers to conduct research that is holistic and culturally specific with relationship-building as a cornerstone and this should be taken into consideration when outlining the capacity and process of the research project. Making space to include Indigenous youth as collaborators, not merely subjects, in research is an important step towards ensuring that research is part of community building. Indigenous youth discussed how meaningful it would be if research included Indigenous youth in the entire process, from designing to interpretation of results.

Indigenous youth identified, as key part of reciprocal relations, that research processes need to build in capacity for continued conversations beyond the end of the research. Researchers have a responsibility to youth they collaborate with in research, and as such, need to meaningfully include youth in interpreting the results as well as have an opportunity to see results before they go public to ensure they are represented in respectful ways. Further, in keeping with OCAP principles, researchers have an ongoing responsibility to disseminate research results in an accessible way that is inclusive of Indigenous youth.

Indigenous youth see research as part of their wellbeing. However, for this to meaningfully occur, research needs to expand to include and honour Indigenous ways of knowing as well as traditional research practices. While including Indigenous youth as part of research processes is one aspect, ensuring that methodology is holistic and culturally specific is another aspect. Indigenous youth made it clear that holistic and culturally specific research processes and methodologies are an important step in their wellbeing, and a cornerstone of community-building.

Respect, Safety and Dignity

In keeping with relationship-building, Indigenous youth affirmed that research needs to be respectful, safe, and non-discriminatory for Indigenous youth. Indigenous youth need to feel that they have control and jurisdiction over the process, including the ability to stop the research process entirely if need be.

Ethics criteria set out by research institutions and post-secondary institutions may be falling short for Indigenous youth. Although the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans outlines the need for special measures to be taken to ensure the safety of diverse groups within Indigenous communities, it is clear to Indigenous peoples that this not being followed. A consent-based process is paramount to ensure that research processes are respectful of Indigenous youth and their knowledges.

Ethical Research Means Meeting Basic Needs

Youth discussed how research tends to be inaccessible and exploitative in their communities. Indigenous youth are faced with increased rates of poverty, high food costs, lack of housing, clean drinking water and discrimination. All of these factors make it difficult for Indigenous youth to be meaningfully involved in research, or even be in a good place to be involved in research. Youth also indicated that research is exploitative, often taking advantage of the trauma and harm experienced in communities. It is clear to the youth that researchers profit off the trauma experienced by youth, and indeed, perpetuate the harm.

Indigenous youth discussed how research is about forming meaningful relationships. Ensuring that research is conducted in a safer manner, and working to ensure that the systemic issues that face many Indigenous youth are fought, is part of honouring relationships. Researchers have an ethical responsibility to acknowledge the systemic and ongoing oppression that Indigenous youth endure, and to identify the ways they perpetuate and alleviate that oppression.

Frustration and Concern

Indigenous youth do not have positive experiences with research. The historic relationship between Indigenous peoples and research was one of exploitation, and that relationship continues today. The youth indicated that efforts have been made to ensure the safety and dignity of Indigenous peoples in research, but substantive change that includes reciprocity, ownership of knowledge and culturally specific research has not occurred. Youth made it clear that westernized research processes often have exploitative results that only cause further harm in Indigenous communities. Indeed, Indigenous youth discussed how research tends to often focus on the harms in communities, and not so much the resilience and resurgence that Indigenous youth also experience and demonstrate. There is a deep concern that these harms that researchers tend to focus on define Indigenous communities, and indeed, Indigenous youth. Indigenous youth want to be defined by their resilience and success.

Diversity of Indigenous Youth Voices

Youth discussed how research is not meaningful, in part because it is not inclusive of the diversity of Indigenous voices. Amongst First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, there are a diversity of identities, experiences and stories that must be honoured. Many youth pointed to an individual or only certain groups of Indigenous youth within their communities being included in research. An example that many youth used was the tendency for researchers to include youth who are occupying leadership roles within National Indigenous Organizations or other formal Indigenous governance institutions. The exclusion of Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Indigenous youth, Indigenous youth living in remote communities and Indigenous youth who are living away from their home communities were all identified as being consistently excluded from participating in research. In keeping with the understanding that research has the capacity to be used for the wellbeing of Indigenous communities, it is important that research is holistic. This means meaningfully including all the diversity of voices that exists within Indigenous communities.

REQUIREMENTS

The Indigenous youth that shared their truths and concerns with us were very clear that the information they shared with us were not recommendations or advice to take lightly. These are *requirements* and standards for ethical and meaningful engagement with Indigenous youth.

Accessibility

Research must be accessible, from the initial stages of the project to the dissemination of results.

Research needs to be developed and delivered in language that is accessible for Indigenous youth. This includes Indigenous languages and language that is not simply written in academic terms.

Researchers have a responsibility to work with Indigenous youth to identify and overcome barriers that prevent meaningful youth participation. Some of these barriers include transportation, child care, and fair compensation for the time and energy Indigenous youth spend.

Indigenous Youth Developing and Leading Research

Research must work in ways that uplift Indigenous youth and build their communities. As much as possible, research must be beneficial to the resurgence of Indigenous cultures, ceremonies, languages and stories.

Researchers have a responsibility to work with youth to change narratives.

Holistic Approaches

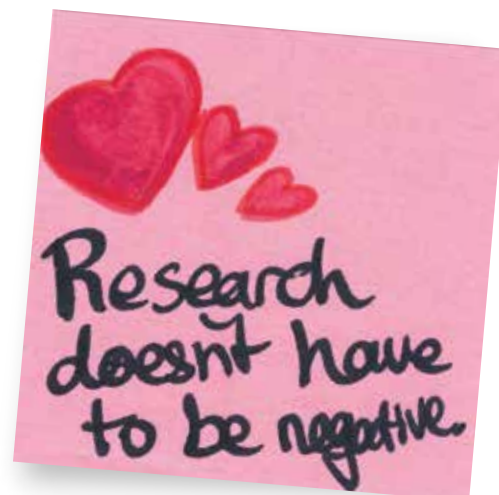
Research must include the entire community and be inclusive of the diversity found within Indigenous communities. Indigenous youth indicated that researchers have a responsibility in ensuring that Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ youth, as well as Elders, children, youth and families all need to be meaningfully included.

Research Ethics Defined by Indigenous Youth

Research must uphold the respect, safety and dignity of Indigenous youth as defined by youth themselves. While the ethics that provide the baseline for this are found in such documents as the Tri-Council Policy Statement, research ethics must be defined by the youth themselves with respect to their distinct needs.

Community-Led and Culturally Specific

Research must include the capacity for communities to lead and define the research themselves. Relying on “distinctions-based” approaches does not honour cultural specificity nor the diversity





of youth experiences found within First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities.

Research must be led by trusted researchers and conducted in a culturally specific manner as defined by the community. Elders and Knowledge Holders should be respected and valued for the specific knowledges they hold.

Reciprocity

Relationship-building and a sense of reciprocity must be the cornerstone of research. Indigenous youth made

it clear that researchers must have a sense of responsibility and accountability that extends beyond the limitations of a specific research project.

This includes building trusting and meaningful relationships before research begins to ensure that relationships are maintained past the end of the research. Indigenous youth see this as an important mechanism in ensuring that researchers begin to value and define youth for their resilience and successes.

Support the Implementation of TRC Call to Action 66

Indigenous youth have indicated that the best way to contribute to building capacity with Indigenous young people is by supporting the implementation of TRC Call to Action 66. Multi-year funding is integral to the wellbeing of Indigenous youth.

CONCLUSION

Indigenous youth must be meaningfully included in leadership roles when fulfilling TRC Call to Action 65. The meaningful inclusion that Indigenous youth require has been outlined in this paper, and indeed, numerous reports in the past decade. The requirements for meaningful research set out in this paper correlate to the *Guidelines for Ethical Engagement of Young People* by the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society, as well as the *Roadmap to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #66* by Indigenous Youth Voices. Furthermore, the requirements for meaningful research with Indigenous young people expand upon the principles set out in OCAP and the Tri-Council Policy Statement. Although this paper offers a way forward in reshaping research to be meaningful, inclusive and respectful for Indigenous youth, a vast amount of work has been done to affirm research ethics within Indigenous communities. It is important to Indigenous youth that substantial action be taken to implement these standards of research, as opposed to further research on the subject. Though youth have outlined their requirements for meaningful inclusion and how research continues to exclude them, it is important to point out that research has been paramount to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the two Wen:De reports by the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society which have informed the important work reconciliation. If anything, this speaks to the vital aspect of ensuring research is accessible and relevant to youth. Indigenous youth know what they deserve in reconciliation, and what constitutes reconciliation-based research. It is time to close the chapter on harmful research and instead, move towards research that is accessible, holistic, respectful, reciprocal and culturally specific. It is time for research to support Indigenous youth and be uplifting.

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