Assessing Capacity to Conduct Indigenous-Based Research and Engage with Indigenous Communities in the Prairie Provinces

RESOLVE MANITOBA
EVALUATION REPORT

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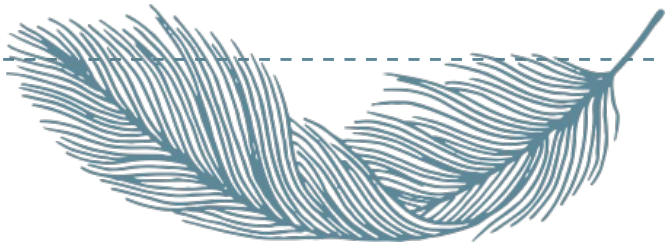

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This evaluation report was written for RESOLVE Manitoba (Research and education for Solutions to Violence and Abuse), a member of the Alliance of Canadian Research Centres on Gender-Based Violence.

RESOLVE Manitoba is based at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Ininiwak, Anisininewuk, Dakota Oyate and Denesuline, and on the National Homeland of the Red River Métis.

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Nicole is a descendant of Cree ancestors and a Citizen of the Red River Métis. Her family originates from the area that was once the St. Peter's Indian Reserve and Peguis First Nation, where her mother holds her status. Nicole works and lives in Winnipeg with her two children and husband. She currently works in the Master of Social Work Based in Indigenous Knowledges Program as the student advisor as well as a sessional instructor. Nicole's background is in social work where she worked in the social services system for over 15 years. She holds both a BSW and an MSW from the University of Manitoba. She has worked as a research associate with the Manitoba Métis Federation where she began to foster her research skills. She focuses her research on Indigenous research and Indigenous research methodologies. Nicole's work is centered on giving back to her community because they deserve the best.

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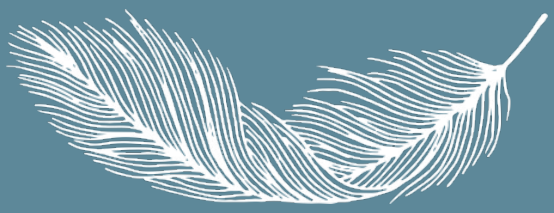
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This evaluation report outlines RESOLVE Manitoba's capacity to conduct research with Indigenous Peoples and engage with Indigenous communities. Given the recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry's (MMIWG) Calls to Justice, RESOLVE recognizes that it is imperative that any research relating to issues of family violence and gender-based violence, including violence against women and girls, be conducted in ways that are methodologically sound. inclusive of Indigenous communities, incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and caring, and are culturally safe.

Assessing RESOLVE Manitoba's capacity to conduct Indigenous-based research and engagement with Indigenous communities is long overdue. Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) and communities have experienced harm and exploitation from non-Indigenous researchers for centuries. Unsurprisingly, this has led to a high level of mistrust of non-Indigenous researchers by Indigenous Peoples, organizations, and communities. Indigenous communities and organizations are limiting their involvement in projects unless non-Indigenous researchers demonstrate their willingness to develop authentic relationships with them and carry out their studies in ways that embrace important principles, such as good faith, reciprocity, and trust. Research involving Indigenous Peoples or related to Indigenous realities must be conducted in new ways - ways that extend beyond adhering to the principles of OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) and that centre the expertise of Indigenous researchers.

RESOLVE's mandate is to conduct research on family and gender-based violence. The Prairie Provinces have the highest rates of intimate partner violence in the country, with Manitoba having the second highest rate of gender-related homicide (Statistics Canada, 2023;[1] Sutton, 2023[2]). Further, Indigenous women are four times more likely to be victims of violence (Assembly of First Nations, n.d.[3]). Given the high rate of violence in the prairies and the over-representation of Indigenous women and girls as victims/survivors, it is imperative that RESOLVE conducts research that is both culturally safe and culturally competent.

As part of reconciliation efforts, RESOLVE Manitoba must acknowledge the harms perpetrated against Indigenous Peoples. To carry out efforts of reconciliation, universities across the country, including the University of Manitoba, are engaging in initiatives aimed at Indigenizing and decolonizing their curriculum. The proposed project is congruent and complimentary to this important work as it extends these efforts into the realm of research.

1 Statistics Canada. (2023). Trends in police-reported family violence and intimate partner violence in Canada, 2022. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/231121/dq231121b-eng.htm
2 Sutton, D. (2023). Gender-related homicide of women and girls in Canada (85-002-X). Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2023001/article/00003-eng.htm
3 Assembly of First Nations. (n.d.). Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. https://afn.ca/rights-justice/murdered-missing-Indigenous-women-girls/

RESOLVE: BACKGROUND

Mandate and Objectives

RESOLVE is a research network that brings together community organizations, government decision makers, and academics/researchers whose work is to address and prevent gender-based violence from three Prairie Provinces. RESOLVE conducts and engages in community-based research that focuses on family and gender-based violence prevention. RESOLVE has locations at the University of Calgary, the University of Saskatchewan, and the University of Manitoba. RESOLVE's work is based on the principle of collaboration between researchers, policymakers, community organizations, and individuals affected by family and gender-based violence. In addition to collaboration, RESOLVE conducts ***"action-oriented research […] which focuses on projects with joint research and service policy innovation goals"*** (RESOLVE, 2023, para. 2).

RESOLVE's objectives are:

1. Conducting and encouraging practice and policy-relevant research in the areas of family/gender-based violence and violence against women.
2. Providing educational input for various community constituencies and students with regard to the development of research skills.
3. The focused dissemination of research findings to various influential target groups in a manner which raises the probability of their adoption in policy or practice innovation (RESOLVE, 2023, para. 3).

Organizational Structure

RESOLVE's organizational structure is comprised of the following entities:

1. Partnership Board
2. Member institutions (University of Manitoba, University of Winnipeg, Brandon University, University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan, University of Calgary, and University of Lethbridge)
3. Lead institution (University of Manitoba)
4. Institutional Offices (University of Manitoba, University of Saskatchewan, and University of Calgary)
5. Academic director
6. Provincial directors
7. Regional council
8. Provincial steering committees

RESOLVE Manitoba's Steering Committee, for example, is comprised of members from various community and government organizations and university academics from various faculties across three universities (UM, UW, and Brandon U), such as social work, community health sciences, sociology, health sciences, and criminal justice. RESOLVE Manitoba strives to have members from various geographical locations within the province such as rural, urban, and northern representation. The committee is chaired by the director of RESOLVE Manitoba.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

This project is aligned with the aims of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's Calls to Action, as well as the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) and its Calls to Justice. These calls compel academic institutions to examine their capacity to engage with and conduct research with First Peoples.

Project Objectives

This evaluation was guided by four objectives:

1. Increase RESOLVE's capacity to conduct community-engaged Indigenous research based on stronger relationships with Indigenous partners based on the fundamental principles of the 5R's (respect, relevance, responsibility, reciprocity, and reverence) and other principles that ensure research contributes to well-being and good relationships with Indigenous Peoples.
2. Contribute to the development of anti-colonial research[4] that is respectful and inclusive of Indigenous Peoples and traditions.
3. Foster greater trust between academic researchers and Indigenous communities.
4. Increase collaboration and partnerships with Indigenous scholars across the Prairie Provinces, including Manitoba.

These objectives provided the focus for the project and guided the process.

Methods

The project occurred in five phases:

1. An Advisory Committee was established to help guide the project. The Committee was comprised of Indigenous stakeholders, including Elders and/or Knowledge Holders, representatives from three Indigenous organizations (each representing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities), which focus is family/gender-based violence, Indigenous academics, and a graduate student who identified as Indigenous.
2. A comprehensive literature review was undertaken to collect information about conducting culturally appropriate and safe research with Indigenous Peoples and communities, guidelines, principles of Indigenous-based research, ways to apply Indigenous methodologies, and challenges.
3. A comprehensive background paper was written that provides a rationale for the project, explains the harms of western research frameworks and outlines ways that institutions and centres are changing their research frameworks based on the historical and ongoing harms experienced by Indigenous Peoples and communities.
4. There was an examination of RESOLVE's core mandate, mission, and guiding principles; as well as all governing documents, including the RESOLVE Manitoba Steering Committee Terms of Reference.
5. We extended invitations to community organizations within Manitoba. We held community consultations in the form of conversational interviews with representatives of eight (8) Indigenous organizations, including Circling Buffalo Inc., Southern Chiefs' Organization, Manitoba Métis Federation, Manitoba Inuit Association, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, Blue Thunderbird Family Care, Wahbung Abinoonjiag, and First Nation Healing Centre, over the summer and fall months in 2023. We also met with Indigenous scholars and researchers.

[4] In this work, we define anti-colonial research following Hart et al. (2017) as research that centers Indigenous knowledges and critically engages and analyzes settler colonialism, its practices, and impacts. By doing so, anti-colonial research "reclaim[s] space, remove[s] the focus from colonial worldviews, and re-center[s] Indigenous Knowledges" (Klymochko et al., 2024, p. 15 in this report).

The Report

The current report provides an overview of our findngs based on the background research and conversations with Indigenous organizations and Indigenous researchers and scholars. The report consists of the following sections:

- Rationale/background paper that explains the harms of Western research approaches and outlines institutional changes that can be implemented based on examples around the world.
- Findings from our conversations with Indigenous community-based organizations and Indigenous scholars about RESOLVE's relevance to the Indigenous Nations, important considerations when designing, conducting, and completing research studies on gender-based violence, and a model of collaborating and partnering with Indigenous communities.
- We provide a set of recommendations to improve RESOLVE's partnership with Indigenous Peoples.
- Drawing from the findings and conversations with Indigenous organizations and scholars, we suggest that RESOLVE adopts a framework ***"The Principles of the Sweetgrass Braid"***[5] to move forward with research in a good, respectful, and ethical manner.

5 We learned about this framework from Objibwe Elder Mary Ritchie, as explained in Victor et al. (2016). This framework reflects what we heard from the Indigenous community organizations and scholars and is based on three "overarching" principles of understanding, responsibility, and relationships (see last section of the report on p. 53 for more information.)

Rationale and Background[6]

Introduction

Colonial and western[7] perspectives have dominated most research involving and concerning Indigenous Peoples.[8] In response, the authors of the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019) argue that the development of policies and programs that aim to engage Indigenous Peoples' needs ***"a more equitable representation"*** of Indigenous perspectives (p. 85). This notes the importance of centering ***"Indigenous worldviews in research frameworks, epistemologies, and research terminology"*** (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019, p. 87). In this review, we provide Indigenous critiques of western research approaches, their impacts on Indigenous Peoples and communities, and the importance of anti-colonial research. We also review Indigenous research frameworks developed in response to harmful research practices and provide a road map for moving forward.

6 This rationale and background paper was authored by Nicole Klymochko and Logan Stalker, then revised and edited by Masha Kardashevskaya and Bright Thorsteinson. Subsequently, several sections were added from Rachel Charette's contributions to the Indigenous-based research literature review.

7 We use western (instead of Western) to acknowledge the power differentials within current research practices and as an act of resurgence. Carlson (2016) argues "resurgence pushes outwards from this center, re-claiming space that had been occupied by settler colonialism" (p. 5).

8 We acknowledge that the term Indigenous is an international term. For this literature review the term Indigenous refers to the original habitants of Canada, prior to contact, "There are three constitutionally defined Indigenous groups in Canada including First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI). To reflect the diversity of Indigenous Peoples and to include all, regardless of status, nationhood, membership or community affiliation, the terms Indigenous and FNMI are applied interchangeably. It is acknowledged that many FNMI people refer to themselves differently and in their own languages" (Ontario Native Women's Association, 2018, p. 1).

Indigenous Critiques of Western Research Approaches

Indigenous academics critique the ability of western research approaches to understand Indigenous Knowledges. Two main categories of western research approaches, quantitative and qualitative, contain unique assumptions of reality and ways of studying reality based on a western view of science, knowledge, and the world (Kovach, 2010; Smith, 2012; Yilmaz, 2013). The application of these research approaches may be problematic in Indigenous contexts even though the ***"Indigenous methodologies can be situated within the qualitative landscape"*** (Kovach, 2010, p. 25). In the past, qualitative research methodologies, such as ethnography, were often exploitative of Indigenous Peoples and misrepresented Indigenous cultures (Smith, 2012). Research that employs western research paradigm largely tends to benefit researchers, not the research participants (Kovach, 2010).

As argued by Kovach (2010), ***"[t]here is a fundamental epistemological difference between western and Indigenous thought [that] causes philosophical, ideological, and methodological conflicts for Indigenous researchers"*** (p. 29). Within Indigenous epistemology, the ***"self"*** is seen ***"in relation"*** with (and this relation can be in relation with animate or inanimate subjects, such as land or the cosmos) (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008). This is not the case in western epistemology. This difference leads to an unwelcoming environment for Indigenous researchers wanting to use the western paradigm (Kovach, 2010). Moreover, the use of western research methodology to develop policies and practices that impact Indigenous Peoples can be harmful. This harm is created by research This harm is created by research methodologies that are not based on Indigenous Knowledges[9] or situated within Indigenous culture and, therefore, may be irrelevant to the Indigenous context.

Indigenous academics critique western research approaches by problematizing the structure, methods, and relationships central to academic research. Eurocentrism, fundamental to settler colonialism, has been an underlying factor in research and its environment, including academic institutions (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Gaudry, 2011; Styres et al., 2010). Gaudry (2011) argues contemporary academic research extracts knowledge from marginalized communities for subsequent dissemination to mainly academic and government audiences. Thus, for example, early ethnographic research utilized quick and short interview sessions, leaving communities disenfranchised from knowledges (Kovach, 2010). Data was collected from the ***"other"***, interpreted through a western worldview and presented as ***"exotic"***; in a way that did not benefit Indigenous communities (Kovach, 2010).

The extractive nature of western research is problematic for Indigenous Peoples. Often, extractive research is conducted ***"on Indigenous peoples"*** and does not serve the interests of the people being studied. Communities do not define the problem, research questions, and neither do they evaluate the research findings. The research is produced from the outsiders' perspectives, leading to findings that tend to be measured against western knowledge and culture. In addition, extractive research often targets academic audiences and belongs to the university; and researchers do not see themselves as responsible to the communities they study or in maintaining the integrity of extracted knowledge (Gaudry, 2011). Styres et al. (2010) argue that academic career advancement and success within modern universities favour high quantities of research output rather than the development of positive relationships that benefit research participants. Universities do not value collaborative research projects (Styres et al., 2010).

Impacts of Western Research Approaches on Indigenous Peoples and Communities

Indigenous scholars have pointed out that the quantity of research that has been conducted on Indigenous lands and peoples in the last couple hundred years has

9 Indigenous Knowledges is often used in the plural to indicate the acknowledgment of "shared commonalities" and "diversity of many tribal ways of knowing" (Kovach, 2010, p. 20). Kovach (2010) uses "Indigenous knowledges," "Indigenous epistemologies," "tribal knowledge," and "tribal epistemology" interchangeably.

made Indigenous Peoples one the most researched peoples in the world (Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003). Further, how the data was collected, what it has been used for, and who ended up benefiting from such research has created a lot of mistrust and resistance (Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003). ***"In Indigenous Nations across the world, research is a dirty word"*** (Rowe & Kirkpatrick, 2018, p. 2).

Research involving Indigenous Peoples has historically been conducted without their consent. Since the Enlightenment and the subsequent formalizing of scientific thought, western research and knowledge have been used to generate and justify various colonial practices that aimed to control and dominate colonized peoples (Akena, 2012; Smith, 2012). Indigenous Peoples were analyzed, compared, and controlled through the western processes of knowledge creation (Smith, 2012, Wilson, 2008). Research benefitted researchers and furthered the colonial agenda, negatively impacting Indigenous Peoples (Wilson, 2008). These negative impacts include the exploitation of Indigenous Peoples and communities, the exclusion of Indigenous perspectives and worldviews, and the construction of colonial narratives and stereotypes.

Exploitation of Indigenous Peoples and Communities Through and In Research

In Canada, research involving Indigenous Peoples has been conducted unethically and without proper consent. For example, in the 1930s, health studies were conducted on Indigenous infants with the support of the Department of Indian Affairs (Lux, 1998). Government researchers subjected Indigenous infants to trials of the Bacille Calmette–Guérin (BCG) vaccine for tuberculosis, despite concerns about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccination at this time. Though the BCG vaccine was successful at preventing tuberculosis, the research was experimental and was conducted in Indigenous communities because their lives were considered less valuable by the government and academic researchers at the time. The research was motivated by the need to protect surrounding non-Indigenous cities, businesses, and immigrant populations from tuberculosis, and to prove the vaccine was effective in the ***"less evolved races"*** (Lux, 1998, p. 277).

Mosby (2013) highlights the exploitative nature of several nutritional studies conducted during the 1940s and 1950s in Northern Manitoba at several Indian residential schools by leading nutritional experts and several government departments. These studies were conducted during a period of widespread malnutrition due to the relocation of the Indigenous children from their original lands into ***"unfamiliar, and often unforgiving, new Arctic settlements"*** (p. 171). Despite the development of the Nuremberg Code (which set the ethical code for medical research), the studies were conducted without proper consent procedures instilling fear in the Indigenous children who participated in these studies. At this time, the ***"Aboriginal bodies"*** were seen as ***"'experimental materials'"*** (p. 148). There were no benefits for the Indigenous participants or communities involved. On the contrary, the research experiments had worsened the nutritional status of the participants and caused further health issues.

Bull (2010) reports that researchers often prioritize their own interests over the needs of the Indigenous communities, leading to misquoting, exoticizing, overstating potential research benefits to gain support and trust, and not sharing the results with the communities who participate in the research studies. Thus, Brunger and Bull (2011) report that in the case of the Nunatsiavut Inuit communities, researchers collected hair and blood samples, disclosed little information about the purpose of their study, and then left without sharing research results. There have been numerous other studies where this was done, such as the DNA research with the Nuu-chah-nulth People (Garrison et al., 2019) and various other research projects that looked at cultural heritage and language (for example, see Bell & Shier, 2011). Bell and Shier (2011) describe how the Kwak'wala speakers asked to access their language data for language retention and revival from researchers, but they were denied based on the intellectual property law. Even if Indigenous communities have the means to engage in litigation with academic researchers and institutions over data access issues, they may choose to not pursue a legal course of action because financial resources are limited or intended for essential community needs (Bell & Shier, 2011).

Exclusion of Indigenous Perspectives and Worldviews

Indigenous perspectives and worldviews have been excluded in many research projects conducted by governments and academia. For instance, in 1994, Statistics Canada conducted three national longitudinal surveys on the links between people's well-being, lifestyle, and social environments in the areas of health, children and youth, labour, and income to assist public policy development. However, the surveys excluded First Nations Peoples on reserves, Inuit People in the provinces, and Indigenous Peoples living off-reserve who were selected randomly. The only Indigenous Peoples represented were from the Yukon and Northwest Territories in two (out of three) surveys (First Nations and Inuit Regional Health Survey National Steering Committee, 1999). The exclusion of Indigenous communities' perspectives is problematic because it does not allow for an accurate representation of the realities experienced by all Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The policies informed by these surveys were only relevant to the groups sampled and were irrelevant to others not included in the study.

> Indigenous worldviews have also been excluded from academic research. Indigenous oral traditions, healing practices, and cultural knowledges were either seen as inferior and disparaged in western thought or compared to determine whether the Indigenous worldview was valid and, therefore, valuable (Gaudry, 2011; Matthews, 2017; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008). When Indigenous thought was researched, it was done from a western perspective, which led to fragmentation, misrepresentation, and devaluation of the Indigenous nations (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Castellano, 2004; Gaudry, 2011; Smith, 2012).

The exclusion of Indigenous worldviews negatively impacts Indigenous scholars and students and can leave them feeling uninvited in academia (Kovach, 2010). For example, Albert (2014) notes that graduate students and their supervisors who use feminist, critical, or Indigenous frameworks, when applying for funding from the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) had to modify their research projects due to the CIHR guidelines that center traditional western approaches. Thus, in the case of young Indigenous researchers they found that it was difficult to explain and justify processes involved in developing qualitative Indigenous-based research projects or advocate for the sole use of qualitative or Indigenous methodology[10] (Albert, 2014).

Construction of Colonial Narratives and Stereotypes

Western research has and continues to reproduce and reinforce harmful narratives and stereotypes that support colonial systems and justify the oppression of Indigenous Peoples (Gaudry, 2011; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008). Academic research that focuses on a research problem within Indigenous communities and proposes and imposes outside solutions has supported harmful colonial narratives, such as the ***"Indian Problem"*** in the Canadian context and situates Indigenous Peoples within a deficit model in contrast to a strength-based model (Mosby, 2013; Smith, 2012). The ***"Indian Problem"*** refers to how the federal government has historically understood their relationship with Indigenous People. The federal government's policy towards the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada was laid out by the Indian Act of 1876. The Indian Act aimed to assimilate and eradicate the ***"Indian culture,"*** thus, solving the ***"Indian problem"*** (Coté, 2001, p. 17). Despite changes to the Act, its intent has remained the assimilation of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada (Coté, 2001). For example, the nutritional experiments studied by Mosby (2013) served the purpose of assimilation by changing the diets of Indigenous Peoples leading them away ***"from indolent habits inherent in the race because of their hitherto easy means of sustenance by hunting anf [sic] fishing"*** and making them accustomed to ***"'modern' foods"*** (A.E. Caldwell, 1948 in

10 It is important to note here that Albert (2014) seems to suggest that Indigenous methodology is similar to qualitative methodology, however, several Indigenous researchers argue that it is rather a paradigm and juxtaposing qualitative and quantitative research methodologies without questioning the paradigms – epistemology, ontology, and axiology that inform western methodologies may risk essentializing and failing to recognize and understand the diversity of Indigenous experience (Walter & Andersen, 2013; Wilson, 2008).

Mosby, 2013, p. 163, L.B.Pette, 1951 in Mosby, 2013, p. 164).

Communities worry that researchers view all Indigenous Peoples as the same, misrepresent data and communities, aim to further assimilate Nations, or operate from an assimilation perspective, and financially coerce participation in research (Brunger & Bull, 2011; Bull, 2010; Styres et al., 2010). Even when researchers present data accurately, the public availability of the data is a concern as it could eventually result in community misrepresentation (Brunger & Bull, 2011). Such a concern is warranted, as members of Inuit communities note, there is a history of research findings specific to only one Inuit community being inappropriately applied to all Inuit communities (Brunger & Bull, 2011).

Moving Forward: How to Conduct Research in an Ethical and Culturally Safe Way with Indigenous Peoples

Moving forward to avoid the mistakes of the past and prevent harms of research, researchers can consider the use of anti-colonial theory and practices in their work. Hart et al. (2017) define anti-colonialism as ***"the proactive, political struggle of colonized peoples against the ideology and practice of colonialism"*** (p. 333). Hart (2009) further explains that anti-colonialism considers power dynamics through a critical analysis of society, settler colonialism, ***"and how it influences the construction of traditional Indigenous knowledge"*** (p. 30). Thus, anti-colonial research is the centering of Indigenous Knowledges and critical analysis of the impacts of settler colonialism. It aims to reclaim space, remove the focus from colonial worldviews, and re-centre Indigenous Knowledges.

Smith (2011) describes that basing our thoughts and actions within critical theory and practices in not enough. Centering critical approaches within a western approach still centers a colonial perspective. Therefore, it is important that the frameworks of the Indigenous research protocols and practices are based on the theory and practices of anti-colonialism. Moving forward towards anti-colonial practices in research requires a shift in the perspectives of researchers to include and center the needs of Indigenous communities versus that of the researcher or academic (and other) institutions.

Hart et al. (2017) suggest that anti-colonial research needs to include an analysis of settler colonialism, center Indigenous values, knowledges, and relationalities. Additionally, research needs to clearly outline its benefits as defined by communities participating in the research. Carlson (2016) includes the importance of land in research. ***"Anti-colonial research acknowledges, respects, and engages with the protocols and natural laws of the Indigenous lands"*** because land is a living being, (Carlson, 2016, p. 502). Researchers need to consider the impacts of research beyond the effects on community members. Research should not harm participants and the land.

Anti-colonial research should be conducted and developed in unison with the community. Research should embody wholism, that is, ***"it attends to the heart, spirit and the body in addition to the mind. It attends to values, emotion, history, and context"*** (Carlson, 2016, p. 503). Research needs to maintain and uphold self-determination, autonomy and accountability of the research participants and embody reciprocity. Reciprocity means that the outcomes of the research should be given back to the Indigenous communities. In doing this, researchers need to examine their social location, reasons for conducting the research, and the intersection of settler colonialism. This allows them to ***"explore the impact of their social location on the research, and engage in critical reflexivity regarding the ways in which they enact and reproduce colonialism"*** (Carlson, 2016, p. 502).

Absolon and Willett (2005) argue that neutrality does not exist in research. Gaining trust is essential in conducting research with participants, including Indigenous Peoples and communities. This is why locating oneself as the researcher is an essential part of the research process. A researcher must explore their own social location (Johnston et al., 2018), which can help research participants decide if, what and how they want to share. This also helps make the researcher knowable to the research participants, which can help disrupt the power dynamics that are inherent in research relationships.

According to Hart et al. (2017), research on Indigenous Peoples and communities should (wherever possible) be conducted by Indigenous Peoples and for Indigenous Peoples' benefit. In instances where research is conducted across settler/Indigenous contexts it is argued that it must be conducted in an anti-colonial and Indigenist frameworks. Research should also be led by the Indigenous members of the team, as the settler researcher must never ***"wear the expert hat"*** (Hart et al., 2017). Further, they indicate that it is the Indigenous research team that should decide if a settler is an ally and can be partnered with to do research (Hart et al., 2017). Simpson (2004) argues that non-Indigenous academics who are true allies can do this research but that they need to challenge research that conforms to the colonial power structure and become rooted in an anti-colonial and decolonizing framework.

The system of knowledge or paradigm that might guide research conducted with Indigenous Peoples and communities could include an Indigenous research paradigm and Indigenous methodology. The philosophical approach to research might include anti-colonial and Indigenist approaches, in that Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being, and Ways of Doing are centred (Wilson et al., 2019). Epistemology or Ways of Knowing is expressed in constant learning whereby there is a continuous ***"expansion and contraction"*** depending on relationships, and ***"social, political, historical, and spatial"*** transformations (Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003, p. 209). Knowledge can be ***"learned and reproduced through […] listening, sensing, viewing, reviewing, reading, watching, waiting, observing, exchanging, sharing, conceptualizing [, etc.]"*** (p. 209). Knowledge needs to be useful. Ontology or Ways of Being are expressed in reciprocal relationships. In these relationships, we earn rights by fulfilling our responsibilities. Ways of Being change with the changing times and norms. Axiology or Ways of Doing is the maintenance and practice of the relationships between entities that can be found in ***"languages, art, imagery, technology, traditions and ceremonies, land management practices, social organization and social control"*** (Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003, p. 210).

Indigenism takes an anti-colonial stance, is grounded in place and time, and focuses on establishing our own knowledge frameworks from Indigenous perspectives (Hart, 2009). Anti-colonialism questions western power and privilege and focuses on strategies to recover traditional Indigenous Knowledges (Hart, 2009). Within Indigenism, Indigenous Peoples have a responsibility to revive kinship roles through cultural beliefs and Indigenous practices such as ceremony (Hart, 2009). This creation and transmission of Indigenous Knowledges needs to be acted upon daily as a way of life, rather than just be a position one takes or a process one uses (Hart, 2009).

Indigenist research is about relationships, relationships with ourselves and with all our relations (Wilson, 2008). We must understand where and how we are connected as well as how we fit into the web of relationships that make up our research (Wilson, 2008). Indigenist ontology and epistemology are based on the understanding that reality is relationships, that we are connected with the questions that we research, and that by properly approaching the research, we strengthen our existing relationships with all of our relations, including our ideas and intentions in pursuing research (Wilson, 2008). Awareness of connections and relationships bring everything into being, and it is important to be open and attentive to this (Wilson, 2008).

Relationality also means that a researcher must ensure respect, reciprocity, and relationship guide the research (Wilson, 2008). Our relationships with the community and connections are as meaningful as the work we do (Wilson, 2008). The research process is accountable to the relationships. Every step of the research process, from coming up with a question to developing methodology and methods of data collection to analysis, to final presentation of research, we should strive to fulfill our responsibilities to relationship. We should also be ensuring that we are doing something that will benefit the community and respecting the values of the community (Wilson, 2008). For the research to be relational and follow relational accountability, the methodology, research methods, analysis and presentation of the results need to be based in a community context and demonstrate respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility.

When doing research by, with and for Indigenous Peoples, the approach can lay the foundation in how the research proceeds. For many Indigenous researchers,

each phase of their research begins with ceremony, perhaps with a tobacco offering and prayers for guidance to do things in a good and respectful way, which will benefit the community. This approach is important because spiritual power and connections are realized when tobacco is involved (Wilson & Restoule, 2010). A researcher may consider offering Indigenous Elders, practitioners, and participants tobacco for participating in research projects as a sign of respect for traditional protocol. This would be dependent on the customs of the community the researcher is working alongside.

Similarly, offering the use of smudge with sage and other medicines can also help when engaging with Indigenous participants to ground participants, purification of the space and for self-care if there are heavy emotions. These ceremonies may be different depending on the nation. Using ceremony throughout the research can help to build relationships, seek guidance, show honour and respect, and show gratitude. Once research collection, analysis, interpretation, and results are completed, holding a gathering and feast for Indigenous communities is an important way to continue the relationship that has been built and so that the findings can be offered back to the community and feedback can be collected.

Ensuring food and beverage are available and providing a gift or honorarium also honours the value of reciprocity. Sharing food is as important as sharing time, voices and connecting (Johnston et al., 2018). Gift-giving perpetuates a custom of interacting with others and is given to acknowledge the sharing of information and time which also honours reciprocity (Johnston et al., 2018). Opening sessions with a smudge and having it available during the interviews or focus groups honours the participants, help them with sharing, and honour the fact that research is ceremony (Wilson, 2008).

Within any research conducted with Indigenous Peoples and communities, it is important to ensure the approach honours relationship and is based on respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility (Kovach, 2010; Pidgeon & Riley, 2021). According to Pidgeon and Riley (2021, p. 3), Indigenous research practices should include ***"respect for Indigenous ways of knowing and being, relevance to the community, reciprocity in the research processes and responsibility in the relationships between researchers and the community."*** This requires a researcher to spend the time it takes to build and nurture relationships so that this understanding can be developed.

Honouring these can help to ensure that research is conducted in a good way. In showing respect, the researcher must strive for an equal relationship between themselves and participants (Johnston et al., 2018) and by asking permission first. Responsibility means being accountable to all relations (Johnston et al., 2018) and not only the participants in the research. This approach means researchers need to take responsibility for the knowledge shared through the research and make sure it is not misused or leads to any harm. Relevance means that the research undertaken must serve a purpose for the community (Johnston et al., 2018). Finally, reciprocity is a way of maintaining balance in the research relationship (Kovach, 2010) and is honoured by providing a tobacco, a gift or honorarium, by giving participants opportunities to share, review and approve what they have shared and receive copies of research findings.

Ethical considerations are heightened when the research involves Indigenous Peoples and communities. There are a variety of ethical guidelines that stem from a variety of governing instruments such as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (TCPS2), Ownership, Access, Control, Possession (OCAP®), United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board, and the Canadian Social Worker Code of Ethics (Schnarch, 2004, Lovett et al., 2019). Chapter 9 of TCPS2 is about research involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada and serves as a framework for the ethical conduct of research involving Indigenous Peoples. In accordance with Chapter 9, research with Indigenous Peoples and communities should be based on respectful relationships, collaboration, and engagement between researcher and participants (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 2018).

OCAP® is self-determination applied to research (Schnarch, 2004). Its key ideas are around the collective ownership of group information, control over research and information and management of access to data and physical possession of data. While it was created to apply to data from a First Nation context, the ideas within OCAP® are also applicable to Inuit, Métis, and other Indigenous Peoples internationally as well as within Indigenous communities and rural and urban centres. Following the principles of OCAP®, it is important to ensure research conducted will work to build respectful relations, lessen power differentials, provide more control to the community, and serve to benefit community (Schnarch, 2004). Related to the ideas of OCAP® are Indigenous data sovereignty and governance. Both of which are supported under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and strive to ensure Indigenous Peoples benefit from data practices and mitigate against potential harm (Lovett et al., 2019).

The spirit and intent of both OCAP® and Chapter 9 of TCPS2 remain relevant regardless of whether research is conducted in a First Nation, rural, or urban community (Masching, 2014). An urban setting would be considered an Indigenous community of interest without a formal Indigenous governing structure (Kovach, 2009), making the application of these ethical guidelines a little more challenging. An Indigenous advisory group or Indigenous advisors would be beneficial in this case to ensure that the research is being led in part by Indigenous Peoples.

It is crucial to note that in applying Indigenous methodologies, we should avoid assuming that Indigenous Peoples are ***"culturally and intellectually homogeneous"*** (Kovach, 2010, p. 166). There is great diversity among Indigenous nations in Canada and beyond (Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008). And, some Indigenous researchers employ a combination of Indigenous and western research methodologies, which is expressed in the Two-Eyed Seeing approach within the qualitative research realm (and main discussions about Indigenous methodologies have so far focussed on qualitative research) (Peltier, 2018; Walter and Andersen, 2013). Other Indigenous researchers employ various other methodologies, including a quantitative methodology (for example, see Walter & Andersen, 2013). The Indigenous methodologies, as argued by Walter and Andersen (2013), cannot be reduced ***"to tradition and culture"*** (p. 71).

Overview of Innovative Indigenous Research Frameworks in Response to Harmful Research

In recognition of the importance of shifting research perspectives and embodying the principles of anti-colonial research, organizations and institutions have begun to develop Indigenous research protocols and frameworks. The following will provide an overview of four Indigenous research frameworks from the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc. (MFNERC), Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch (MEW), and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). Each of the frameworks prepares researchers for working with Indigenous Peoples and communities. The guidelines aim to ensure research is centered on Indigenous research approaches and knowledges.

In 2014, The MFNERC developed Guidelines for Ethical Research in Manitoba First Nations: Principles, Practices and Templates. The objective of the guidelines was to provide a framework that allows Indigenous communities to implement and develop their own research frameworks including the individual ethical practices (MFNERC, 2014). MFNERC outlines research practices and a Code of Research Ethics that a researcher should consider when entering a research relationship with Indigenous communities. One of the major tenets of these guidelines, for example, is ***"promoting mino-pimatisiwin (a good life)"*** (MFNERC, 2014, p. 2). This ***"involves protecting and preserving our Indigenous knowledge, culture, and traditional practices"*** (MFNERC, 2014, p. 2). The researcher should submit a research proposal to the Chief and Council allowing community representatives to review the proposal and decide if the project is a fit for the community. Pending the approval of a research proposal, a research committee should be developed. The committee should comprise community members with varying degrees of knowledge on the topic and research in general. The committee's role is to create a community Code of Research and a list of

requirements for the researcher to complete. The list includes but is not limited to the rationale and intent of the project, methodologies, consent, and outline of a process for reporting (MFNERC, 2014). In addition to the above-noted responsibilities, the research committee should ensure a consent process (MFNERC, 2014). Following the research instruments' development and approval from the community leaders, the research committee will present the project to the community. This is an essential step as it provides ***"direct information regarding the research, answers questions, and explains the importance of the research and any benefits"*** (MFNERC, 2014, p. 5). Once the project is approved, ***"it is the researcher's obligation to learn and apply the protocols of the community"*** (MFNERC, 2014, p. 5).

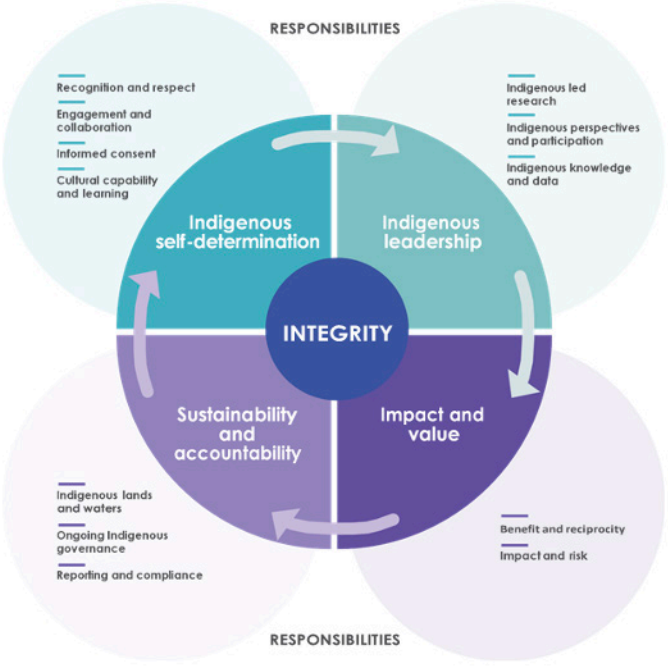
The AFN (n.d.) developed the First Nations Ethics Guide on Research and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in recognition of the paradigm shift in research. This guide is designed to be a tool for communities to utilize and reference when engaging in research. It includes templates that communities can amend to meet their research needs and a list of ethical protocols to consider in research relationships. The guide [11] seeks to empower them to develop and implement research protocols which align with their worldview. The AFN also outlines the need for data sovereignty Data sovereignty includes the right for the community to have complete control ***"over their unique Aboriginal Knowledge"*** (AFN, n.d., p. 7). In addition to data sovereignty, the guide outlines the importance of forming a relationship with the community and being ***"an equal partner"*** (AFN, n.d., p. 8) throughout the research relationship. The relationship begins with approval from the community before the commencement of the project. Approval and consent can be withdrawn at any time during the research process. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ***"end research that uses Aboriginal Knowledge and release a First Nation from any and all obligations associated with a research project if the knowledges providing community revokes consent"*** (AFN, n.d., p. 9). The guide is designed to be a broad representation of guidelines that will allow communities to amend and adapt the guide to meet their needs and ensures research does not perpetuate harm (AFN, n.d.).

The Mi'kmaw communities created a committee to oversee research involving the community and ensuring research does not perpetuate harms to participants and protects their unique knowledges (MEW, n.d.). The guide created collectively by the Mi'kmaw communities explains the process for conducting research and suggests that all research projects should be reviewed by the committee of the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch (MEW). The Mik'maw communities also recognized the need for and importance of developing research principles to ensure research ethics and the protection of their knowledges and the community. The principles outlined in the guide stress the importance of community involvement at all levels of research and include the importance of data sovereignty. Data sovereignty entails that knowledge belongs to the community, the land, and territories they were acquired from. Mi'kmaw People have the right to control and protect their knowledges and culture because Mi'kmaw communities are the ***"guardians and interpreters of their cultural and knowledge system"*** (MEW, n.d., p. 2). As the knowledge belongs to the community, ***"all research, study or inquiry into Mi'kmaw knowledge, culture and traditions involving any research partner belong to the community and must be returned to that community"*** (MEW, n.d., p. 3).

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATISIS) Code of Ethics (2020) is founded on the core principles of ***"Indigenous self-determination, Indigenous leadership, impact and value, sustainability and accountability"*** (p. 2). These values provide protocols that guide researchers and institutions when conducting research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Within each of the four core principles, there are responsibilities for the researcher. Figure 1 provides an overview of the core principles and the corresponding responsibilities of the researcher. The code was developed with the understanding and respect for the diversity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders regarding their unique knowledges (AIATISIS, 2020). The principle of self-determination acknowledges the importance and the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

[11] Data sovereignty is also a principal upheld in the Ownership, Control, Access and Possession: The Path to First Nations Information Governance (FNIGC, 2014). OCAP notes the importance of Indigenous communities having control over their data, knowledges, and research projects which concern them.

to be involved in all aspects of research which concern their communities. Self-determination includes ***"building relationships of trust from which respect and the integrity of research flows"*** (AIATISIS, 2020, p. 12). The principle of Indigenous leadership centers on the importance of research led by the community. This involves supporting the rights of the communities to make informed decisions based on their unique and diverse knowledges, values and respecting the views of community members (AIATISIS, 2020). By ensuring research is led by the community, researchers can support the third principle of impact and value. This principle entails the need for research to benefit the community and clearly outlines the study's benefits and risks. The fourth and final principle of sustainability and accountability calls for ***"researchers and institutions to have accountability, over the long term, for the impacts of their actions"*** (AIATISIS, 2020, p. 21).



Like the AIASTISIS (2020), in recognition of harmful western research, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) published a research tool kit. The tool kit was developed in collaboration with Partners for Engagement and Knowledge Exchange (PEKE). The tool kit was based on research conducted for their study Health Research Strategic Plan: Faces to the Sun: NWAC Health Research Strategy 2021-2026. Following the study, they ***"examined how the research can empower, uphold, and honour Indigenous ways of knowing and being, while also contributing to social, economic, cultural, and political well-being of Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people"*** (NWAC, 2022, p. 10). The tool kit is based on four areas building relationships through collaboration, centering Indigenous epistemologies, responding to the community, and ***"developing capacity and accessibility"*** (NWAC, 2022, p. 10). Through the process of developing the tool kit NWAC consulted and conducted conversations with both NWAC staff and community members to inform the process.

The tool kit provides a road map for conducting ethical and good research within Indigenous communities. It provides an overview of the historical impacts of research in Indigenous communities, provides an overview of the ethical considerations, and outlines funding streams. The tool kit centers the ***"five fundamental principles of Indigenous research ethics: Reciprocity, Respect, Relevance, Responsibility, and Relationships"*** (NWAC, p. 12, 2022). NWAC encourages researchers and communities utilizing the kit to consider how these principles can be centered in research projects with Indigenous Peoples.

Conclusion

In this background paper, we have provided an overview of the critiques of the western research approaches, impacts of western research on Indigenous Peoples and communities, the theoretical conceptualization of anti-colonial research, and the practical guidelines for anti-colonial research practice. The literature indicates that research approaches need to move drastically towards practices that avoid causing harm and focusing on the well-being of the Indigenous communities. Research needs to embody the notion of ***"guesthood"*** that assumes ***"respect and appreciation for the inherent intelligence and commitment of Indigenous practitioners and their work"*** (Morelli & Mataira, 2010, p. 5). Morelli and Mataira (2010) argue that research needs to be conducted ***"to make a positive difference for the researched"*** (p. 6). There has been enough individualistic research completed within Indigenous communities, and a shift is imperative.

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Evaluation Findings: RESOLVE's Engagement with Indigenous Partners

For this evaluation, we reached out to several Indigenous community-based organizations and to Indigenous academics in Manitoba. Some of the community-based organization and academics were familiar with RESOLVE's work; however, many learnt about RESOLVE from the consultants. Indigenous partners expressed an appreciation of RESOLVE's mandate. However, they also provided critical feedback on the mandate, objectives, and procedures at RESOLVE. This section outlines the inputs of Indigenous partners regarding the general framework of RESOLVE's engagement with Indigenous Peoples.

RESOLVE's Mandate, Its Importance to the Indigenous Peoples, and Gaps

Participants of our study indicated that RESOLVE's mandate was important for Indigenous Peoples because

> *"a research centre dedicated to ending violence or addressing violence is really critical for Canada as a whole and for the Prairie provinces specifically and those most impacted are Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+. So, I would say the Centre is critical."*

The mandate fills an important gap in Indigenous research as there is a direct correlation between violence and Indigenous Peoples.

> *"I understand that your mandate is gender violence. And there's an Indigenous component of that…"*

Understanding the current state of missing and murdered Indigenous women is an ongoing crisis that continually requires ongoing focus and attention as it has a direct correlation to violence and gender-based violence.

> *"Murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls. Not sure how much we need to elaborate on that. It's obviously a very important part of your mandate."*

However, there was a collective acknowledgement among representatives of community-based organizations and scholars that RESOLVE's mandate does present some challenges as currently presented. The mandate does not mention the unique circumstances of Indigenous women:

> *"The mandate doesn't specifically identify engagement with First Nations communities. It's kind of generalized, right? And that goes back to my earlier comments about having cultural context and understanding. I think that that's kind of missing from the mandate. And when I think about it, I mean the body of population that has experienced the most violence, which is our Indigenous women is totally missing from the mandate of RESOLVE."*

The mandate also lacks anticolonial or decolonial aspects which are important in shifting Western research practices:

> *"Because when you think about the objective of this project in particular, you know, to increase the capacity to build relationships to work from an anti-colonial lens. Then where is the root of that objective coming? If there's not the beginning spark within the mandate itself in recognizing that this approach to working is important. It needs to connect*

back to the mandate".

Another gap in the mandate of RESOLVE is a lack of a tie to the principles of OCAP®. One participant shared:

> *"I think that RESOLVE would have to align its initiatives with OCAP® principles, respect the autonomy, the self-determination of Indigenous People regarding their data, and how it's used. You don't want coding of data to be another level of violence inflicted on Indigenous People, and you don't want RESOLVE to be engaging in a level of violence that your mandate isn't directing it to be that way."*

Importance of Community-Based Research

Many of the participants pointed out that research is instrumental to understanding the lived realities and to influencing policymaking from the perspectives of the Indigenous Nations. Research can be used by the Indigenous Nations and organizations to advocate on behalf of their own communities.

> *"When we're trying to make those upstream arguments about investments, if you can't make a really hard and crisp argument, governments don't believe you, right? So, there is an awful lot of gaps that thoughtful research could really help us fill; and having to come up with the money to do research all the time ourselves is really difficult. Because you are carving a little bit off of your program delivery funding to pay for a little bit of research. So, you're literally taking away from people who you're supposed to be delivering service to. So, anyway, there's a significant amount of important research that needs to be done and could be done that I would hope would help to wake up Canadians to the significant inequities that I see every day."*

The community-based aspect of RESOLVE's research currently being conducted is important as it centers community knowledges and acknowledges diversity.

> *"it's really important to prioritize community knowledge, Indigenous knowledges that are specific and local and contextual in the larger setting. So, I feel like the mandate is important to Indigenous communities for those reasons."*

Another participant shared:

> *"And I really love that community-based aspect of it, because it's really important to prioritize community knowledge, Indigenous knowledges that are specific and local and contextual in the larger setting. So, I feel like the mandate is important to Indigenous communities for those reasons."*

Strength-Based Research

Strength-based research is needed. Research on gender-based violence is important; however, there has been minimal research that uplifts Indigenous women and explores their strengths. There is a need for research that looks at the strengths of Indigenous Nations.

> *"[Research needs to look] at women's experiences of gender-based violence and domestic violence from a place of strength and resilience, despite, right? And asking questions and seeking answers that look at how they've been able to survive rather than victimhood only. I think, is something that we need to do, because these women are resilient, and they do provide for their families, even in difficult situations. And so, I think that there's a need for research like that out there in the world". A shift is needed to refocus research to strengths verse detriments."*

Indigenous Representation and Work with Indigenous Researchers and Scholars

There is a need for a greater representation of Indigenous Peoples within RESOLVE. This includes representation at the institutional and project levels.

> *"Just thinking about all of that and I think that definitely having within your governance structures having Indigenous academic and community representation probably be really important".*

Increasing support for researchers already in community is required when developing and implementing research projects. This can be done in several ways. One participant shared that this could look like fostering an environment for Indigenous researchers to gather.

> *"Can you create a space for Indigenous researchers to come together as a collective and resource that in a way that maybe there's a once-a-month Indigenous research community of practice where people come together, and they visit and they bead and they share. And they talk about the work that they're doing and leading in a way that supports them to be able to show up for their communities".*

This can also include being a liaison between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers to connect and work together centering anti colonial practices.

> *"An anti-colonial approach recognizes that there's a space for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to do things differently in a way that pushes back against and create space for decolonizing work. And so that's kind of as I was thinking about - that space for RESOLVE, there is an opportunity for non-Indigenous researchers to walk alongside Indigenous communities and be supportive of Indigenous researchers in a way that takes that anti-colonial stance. That is different than what I just shared as well, so wanted to just highlight that".*

Part of increasing capacity is supporting Indigenous researchers to develop research skills. Working in partnership with communities it is important to create sustainability for communities to continue the work long after researchers have concluded their research.

> *"…I think about our Indigenous population. We need to train more Indigenous People to do work around this area because with all the work that's been done in the past, we shouldn't have this kind of violence in our society, but it's still there. So, I just feel like there's so much work that needs to be done."*

More Proactive Engagement with Indigenous Community-Based Organizations

Many of the participants of these consultations, especially the representatives of the community-based organizations, were not aware of RESOLVE. Thus, one of the participants expressed:

> *"I would also say that I don't know if everybody is aware of the Centre. I think that awareness is also really important because if RESOLVE is taking a look at how it does things and the way it works and all of that - which I think is very good - I think having sharing sessions or information sessions with community might be really helpful and maybe you're already doing that, but to really breakdown those barriers between a post-secondary institution, especially one that is way out in an area where not a lot of us live..."*

The participant continued to list Indigenous community-based organizations and social movements that would be crucial to connect with to build a stronger relationship with Indigenous organizations working on the issue of gender-based violence, such as Ka Ni Kanichihk, the MMIWG Implementation Committee, and individual Indigenous women activists and academics whose leadership has been instrumental in the MMIWG2S+ movement.

Findings: Special Considerations in Engaging Indigenous Partners

Close engagement with Indigenous community-based organizations and Indigenous academics at the University of Manitoba and beyond to develop community-engaged research projects requires that RESOLVE examines several considerations. This includes understanding the in-depth understanding of the Indigenous context, such as, the impact of colonization, trauma, and a lack of trust because of this, diversity of and within Indigenous communities, the negative impacts of research on the Indigenous Nations, and other aspects of Indigenous Peoples' lives within a settler colonial context.

Colonization, Trauma, and Lack of Trust

Colonization is a backdrop against which most research is conducted on gender-based violence because "a lot of victims of crime and survivors of violence tend to be Indigenous People." Past trauma of colonization plays a critical role in understanding the context of research on gender-based violence with Indigenous Peoples.

> *"I think about the historical context. So, Indigenous people have experienced historical violence. It's also ongoing. There's still the trauma. I think about the ongoing legacy of residential schools. And I think about too the attitude of settler societies towards Indigenous women, obviously, the whole issue around missing and murdered Indigenous women plays a huge role in the violence that is perpetrated against Indigenous women. Patriarchy is a big part of it, too, because that's something that Indigenous men have internalized as well. That's part of the whole internalization of colonization. The internalization of views and perspectives and worldviews that were not a part of our societies at one time".*

The trauma of colonization contributes to mistrust towards outsiders, including researchers, as well as to the general reluctance of Indigenous Peoples to share their personal stories. In addition, past research has been harmful towards Indigenous Peoples and created mistrust because researchers have not given back to the communities. Indigenous communities feel that they have been researched extensively without positive changes coming out of these research studies. Thus, research often feels like "a one-way street."

> *"Some of the intergenerational implications of colonization and the disconnections that have happened within our communities as a result. And so, a lot of the impacts that we're seeing as a result of this continued colonial imposition and violence, in terms of gender-based violence, there's a definite, direct connection between the two."*

Diversity of Communities, Within Communities, and Intersectionality

As mentioned before, the term Indigenous includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples. Further, Indigenous communities are highly diverse from one another, they are not homogeneous. There are also differences between First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. Then, there are Status and Non-Status Indigenous Peoples, too. It is important to understand these differences and keep these differences in mind when collecting, analyzing, and presenting the data.

Within Indigenous communities, ***"every community is different."*** This means that ***"what happens in one community isn't necessarily going to happen in an-***

other community." Communities may practice different religions and spiritual traditions with some communities living the traditional way and others living more ***"Western"*** way, including practicing Christianity as their main religion. The way things are done in one First Nation community can be different from another First Nation community.

> *"Every community is different. We're seeing that the diversity amongst every nation is huge. So, what happens in one community isn't necessarily going to happen in another community. We're going to find different scenarios right across the board."*

Gaps in current research on gender-based violence stem from the lack of intersectional analysis of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit experiences, and accounting for differences that exist within each of these communities, too. An intersectional analysis can better inform the work of the Indigenous community-based organizations and of the governments.

> *"There is very little data that is specific to First Nations, or specific to Métis, or specific to Inuit. There is a lot of missing data."*

Two-Spirit Peoples and members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community experience numerous struggles. Not everybody accepts them for who they are. There may be differences across generations with younger people being more accepting. It is imperative to be aware of the intersectional experiences of the Two-Spirit people.

> *"A lot of the time there's really complex things and they were talking about women. I said, okay, but there's parts of that you're missing - we're talking about female health in a way that only women have those parts but not only women have those parts and then they were like, "Okay, yeah, we're not teasing out our trans folks who still have," and you know, it's very complicated and we have a very vibrant Two-Spirit community in Manitoba. So, it would be very good to have representation from them as well because they experience a lot of gender-based violence."*

Another aspect that relates to the intersectional understanding of the context within which gender-based violence occurs, which then also affects how we address and prevent gender-based is the question of socio-economic challenges that many Indigenous Peoples experience:

> *"And, think of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In most communities, research is one of those things that is higher up on the - if you look at the triangle - this Maslow's hierarchy was stolen from the Blackfoot people - that whole concept. But when you think about it, research is not something that's high up on the needs of most people, because what is most needed in many of our communities is housing, a place to live, food to eat. We're still at crisis points in in many of our communities around those areas. So how can RESOLVE champion research, which is something that's higher up on the Maslow's hierarchy there."*

Gender-Based Violence Affects Everyone including Women, Two-Spirit Peoples, and Men

Many Indigenous women experience violence. In addition, there are also many Two-Spirit and/or 2LGBTQ+ individuals who experience gender-based violence. In the past, Two-Spirit Peoples had to leave their homes because they were not accepted, but today there is more recognition and understanding of gender diversity. However, it is important to consider that in the communities there can still be discrimination against 2SLGBTQQIA+ Peoples and they experience high levels of gender-based violence. In addition, the community-based organizations pointed out that it can be very difficult for members of the Two-Spirit community to seek help when they experience gender-based violence because of how little acceptance they experience in their own communities. Research projects need to be designed to take into consideration experiences of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Peoples. Community-based organizations also point out that there are Indigenous men who experience violence[12]. Thus, the

12 Read the report authored by Percy Lezard, Zoe Prefontaine, Dawn-Marie Cederwall, Corrina Sparro, Sylvia Maracle, Albert Beck, and Albert McLeod titled "MMIWG2SLGBTQQIA+ National Action Plan. Final Report and published in April 2021.

Manitoba Métis Federations (MMF) Northwest region created a program called "Breaking the Silence" that aims to teach boys and men to speak out about the violence they experienced.

> *"It's very complicated and we have a very vibrant 2-Spirit community in Manitoba. So, it would be very good to have representation from them as well because they experience a lot of gender-based violence."*

> *"So, a lot of the stuff that we do with our gender-based violence program here and the awareness that we bring is towards women and that's because the numbers show women. But the more we've gone out to our communities and the more we've heard stories, there are so many men. So, so many men."*

> *"It's not a woman's issue. It affects everybody. It affects every community. Every age cohort, you know, it's not a woman's issue. They need to understand that this is huge. That's just what I mean."*

Truth, Reconciliation, and Indigenism

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action provide guidelines for the kinds of changes that Indigenous Peoples would like to see in Canada to support reconciliation. This includes supporting Indigenous self-determination, respecting Treaties, and respecting Indigenous rules and regulations. In practice, this can mean realizing the importance of land-based activities and of cultural revitalization.

> *"And I think it's important to recognize Truth and Reconciliation, bringing back land-based activity, and the culture that was destroyed. People have to revitalize. I always say indigenize it, but not everybody gets what I mean."*

Findings: Understanding the Impacts of Western Research Frameworks

There is a long history of the devastating impacts of Western research frameworks on Indigenous Peoples and communities, as outlined in the background paper. Indigenous partners who contributed to this self-evaluation have expressed that these harms continue impacting, and therefore, need to be considered when designing, conducting, and disseminating RESOLVE's research.

Tensions Created by Western Frameworks

When researchers attempt to use Western frameworks to conduct Indigenous research, it results in tension between the two different models. Western and Indigenous research frameworks have different foundations which impacts the research process and the outcomes. This impacts the validity of the knowledge being produced through research.

> *"I would say the gap is that it's starting from a completely different foundation than it needs to start from. So, when we think about Indigenous ontology, epistemologies, axiology's, methodologies - they start from a place that is a worldview that understands knowledge in a completely different way. It understands that there's multiple ways of knowing being and doing, and that it's in relationship with the*

land and with languages."

Barriers and Gaps of Western Research Frameworks

Western research frameworks often present ongoing issues and concerns for Indigenous communities. This is evident in the university structures when research is conducted within Indigenous communities or with Indigenous Peoples. There is often a tension between Western research frameworks and Indigenous research which results in ***"pitfalls and barriers that exist in terms of conducting Indigenous research."***

Beyond the foundational challenges and barriers presented, Western research frameworks present concerns related to understanding the unique experiences of Indigenous Peoples in society. This impacts the ability of outsiders to advocate in partnership with Indigenous communities.

"Indigenous People face unique challenges, barriers in accessing supports or voicing their experiences or concerns. So, it makes it crucial for organizations like RESOLVE to be there, to be able to advocate for them and with them, and to be able to do so in a culturally sensitive manner that understands and takes into account some of the historical contexts that have a role to play in situations".

Centering Community

Western research frameworks have a vastly different foundation than Indigenous research. The differing worldviews impact the design, focus and dissemination of research within community. Research is developed and designed by institutions not necessarily connected to the needs or wants of a community.

> *"We need to move away from top-down approaches to a more community-centered participatory research model that, I think, is usually more effective because you get buy-in when you've got people from the community who have a stake in the way that you do research."*

In shifting the design of research to be community-centered, this can increase community participation both in the design and collection of information for the project. This brings community voices to the forefront of research and ensures that the research is centering the desires of the community.

> *"It is usually more effective because you get buy-in when you've got people from the community who have a stake in the way that you do research. And it's really important to include those voices whereas if you come in there and you're saying, I'm doing this research and this is how it has to pan out because this is what our research ethics board says, you have to do this, this and that, right? So, you're taking some expertise out of the hands of people who really are the experts on how to do."*

Shifting our Understanding of What Knowledge Is

It is important to acknowledge and center that knowledges are vast. They can be produced in many different forms. Understanding what knowledge is and where knowledge comes from is important for Indigenous research. Institutions often preface Western knowledge bases as the preferred in the design of research. Indigenous research requires a shift in our understanding of what knowledge is and what considers it valid.

> *"Research and evaluation are knowledge production activities. So, they're activities that produce what we consider as knowledge and evidence and as best practices. Euro-Western or Western framework and methodologies are based upon world views that are often dichotomist to many Indigenous worldviews. And so, the very foundation of the starting point about what is important to measure, how it's important to measure, what is knowledge, what is evidence? All of the questions within your Western framework start from a particular way, a particular worldview".*

Knowledge is diverse and the lack of acknowledge-

ment from a Western research perspective continues to perpetuate the ongoing narrative that Indigenous communities are homogenous. Which is not true, there is diversity among the different communities, and nations which needs to be reflected in the research design.

> *"Gaps in in Western research models is really understanding the cultural context and the diversity amongst our people, not just amongst our cultures but the diversity amongst our understanding of who we are. I think, too, is that we need to move away from this top-down approach."*

Findings: RESOLVE's Collaboration with Indigenous Partners

Participants emphasized that there is a need for more collaboration between various institutions, including community-based organizations, universities, government agencies, and research centres, such as RESOLVE to ensure that we do "not research the same things over and over because that's just wasted time and money" to address gaps in research, and to support the work of Indigenous community-based organizations based on their needs.

Model of Collaboration

Models of collaboration should be Indigenous-centered and -led. The collaborative work can start with RESOLVE reaching out to Indigenous organizations and communities. Due to the lack of interaction and distance from Indigenous communities, the Indigenous community-based organizations may not know about RESOLVE and its work. There are several considerations when breaking down these barriers and building a collaborative relationship. These are:

- Engaging with key actors.
- Giving space to provide feedback and suggestions. Being flexible and open to changes. This also suggests that the conversations need to take place before the study has been developed.
- Willing to come to the space defined by the community partners. Community-based organizations can open up spaces for researchers. Community members do not have to come to spaces defined by RESOLVE, but they can host RESOLVE in the space that is comfortable to them and their community members. The space at the university can be ***"intimidating."***
- Conversations need to be done in a culturally and emotionally safe way.
- Sharing skills should be one of the objectives of the relationship.
- The partnership with the community-based organizations should be done in a ***"co-creating"*** manner. This means that the relationships should aspire to be egalitarian and aware of power dynamics and differentials and aspire to address and mitigate these affecting the relationship in a negative way. Community-based organizations should be able to give feedback or suggest changes to the way RESOLVE works.
- The collaboration and the collaborative project design should aim to benefit communities RESOLVE works with economically as well. This may mean asking the communities or the community partner if there are local community members who can prepare food/tea/coffee. This can help to create ***"a little bit of economics in the community."***
- Communication lines should be open and allow for either party to ask questions freely. RESOLVE staff should ask questions from their community partner when they are not sure about protocols. So should the staff at the

community-based organization.

- Honoraria should be discussed and agreed upon. This concerns everyone who is part of the project, whether these are Elders, Knowledge Holders, members of the advisory council or research participants.

Engaging with Key Actors

Research allows to make ***"more compelling arguments"*** based on the research findings. However, collaborative work should be based on a specific Indigenous-centred model of collaboration that engages with key actors in Indigenous communities. Key actors in Indigenous communities are the political institutions, Elders and Knowledge Holders, community-based organizations, women's activists, community members, and Indigenous researchers.

Political Institutions

If researchers are planning to conduct research in Indigenous communities, researchers should be informing Chief and Council or other political institutions such as the MMF of their intentions and the project. This can help the beginning stages of fostering a relationship between the community and the research team. Political institutions can help inform community members about researchers and the research.

> *"That understanding has to be done with the leadership beforehand because they do represent the voice of the community. Having some sort of introduction with the leadership is important to Chief and Council and that way they are able to promote it and talk about it in the community or at community meetings."*

Community-Based Organizations

It is crucial to connect with the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community-based organizations ***"from the beginning."*** This involves reaching out to the organizations who are doing work in this field and building connections with them. This can be done through meetings and sharing sessions about the work that RESOLVE does. The initial contact can be established by sending out an email to the main person at the organizations. Often there are barriers between post-secondary institutions and Indigenous communities. This is especially pronounced for the Fort Garry campus of the University of Manitoba because it is situated far from the areas where Indigenous Peoples reside.

There are numerous community-based organizations that work on gender-based violence, and specifically on the issue of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG2S+). Today, there is a Manitoba MMIWG Implementation Committee that brings together almost all Indigenous women's organizations. Working and connecting with the organizations that are part of this network is important for the work that RESOLVE does.

Elders and Knowledge Holders

It is crucial to consult with Elders and Knowledge Holders from the very beginning to move research forward in a good way. As one participant we met with shared, Elders and Knowledge Keepers are not just "old people" they are people who have an in depth understanding of the community and are often well connected. Elders and Knowledge Holders are people:

> *"Who [are] willing to guide people, willing to encourage people, willing to share stories. Somebody that's not proud in an ignorant […]. [They] are humble, approachable – you need to be approachable and just really understanding – know your ways, I guess. This is a huge thing for me because a lot of people, "Oh, you are old, so you are an Elder." No, it doesn't work like that."*

Their role in research can include making sure the research is conducted in a respectful and safe way. They can help open projects or meetings with a prayer, do a smudge, provide support, and conduct ceremonies. They bring unique perspectives and often have intimate knowledge about the community, and the focus of the research. The engagement with Elders and Knowledge Holders should be ongoing throughout the research to ensure that research is conducted safely. In addition, Elders and Knowledge Holders with lived experience and deep knowledge and understanding of gender-based violence can be instrumental in provid-

ing direction for research projects as well as supporting Indigenous research participants.

Advisory Committees, Organizational Boards, and Staff

Advisory councils are often organized ad-hoc for specific research studies. Participants suggested to make sure these advisory committees do not only bring together the academics, but also the people with lived and living experience. Elders and Knowledge Holders can be invited to sit on these committees as well. However, Indigenous presence is also crucial on organizational boards because sometimes organizations ***"put Indigenous People on advisory circles as opposed to actually the real board."*** Having Indigenous representation at the board level can allow Indigenous Peoples participate in shaping the work and direction of organizations. This also concerns staffing. It is important to have Indigenous researchers as staff members. This should be a part of the equality, diversity, and inclusion strategy of the centre.

Indigenous Researchers

It is crucial that there is Indigenous representation in the research team when conducting research with Indigenous People. Indigenous researchers understand the culture and the context. Indigenous communities can feel more comfortable speaking with Indigenous versus non-Indigenous researchers.

> *"I know people are more open to me because I am one of them. […] I think having the ability to communicate with them on a really simple level, they are going to be more receptive to me. They are going to listen to me. They are going to talk back with me, and I am not going in there to say this is how it should be done and that's it."*

Having the research team be reflective of the community you are working in partnership with is important.

> *"I was just thinking about inclusivity in research design. You need to have someone who is Indigenous, who is connected to communities, who knows the ins and out, who have a pulse on community on-reserve and have a pulse with community off-reserve and outside of Inuit communities and in Inuit communities as well is in Métis communities. So, I think, you really have to make sure that research designs are inclusive of these diverse Indigenous perspectives and diverse methods."*

Non-Indigenous researchers at RESOLVE also need to have cultural safety training and have deep understanding of the history of colonization.

> *"It's hard when you're an Indigenous person and you're being researched by a non-Indigenous person because you often feel like they don't really understand where you're coming from. So, I think to make sure that all your researchers have cultural safety training and have a very strong understanding of the impacts of colonization and how it has affected our ability to trust researchers because there's a huge barrier there of trust where a lot of Indigenous people don't even feel there is trust where, you know, a lot of Indigenous people don't even feel safe working with researchers because of the harms that Western society has put on us over the years, right?"*

Community Members

It is important to consider community members with lived experience and knowledges in the various areas. There are lots of people in communities with diversity of experience and knowledge in gender-based violence, including members of Two-Spirit communities. There needs to be an acknowledgement of this in research partnerships. Not everyone needs to have certificates or degrees. Researchers should connect with communities to help enhance the research.

> *"I think that that would be a really great way of doing it is to actually combine those things - honor lived experience knowledge and Indigenous knowledge as we do academic research because it's all valuable. But I think when we extrapolate from data, you don't get the full picture."*

"I've seen when I travel to lots of communities already and through my work experience - I've seen a lot of the Two-Spirit people… Almost like they have to leave home because they're not accepted. It's just something that's starting to be recognized now. Before there was a lot of homophobia and a lot of people were shunned for being who they really were born to be."

Findings: RESOLVE's Research Process and a Good Way

Research at RESOLVE typically has several stages, including research design, data collection, data analysis, and research dissemination. For Indigenous Peoples, it is important to have a good way of opening, sharing the knowledge, and then a good way of leaving. The phrase ***'in a good way'*** is often used when researchers are working in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and communities. This phrase leads its meaning to be interpreted by the researcher. What does ***'in a good way'*** truly mean and how can RESOLVE ensure it is entering into research in a meaningful and respectful manner? The following will outline considerations for researchers to design research that upholds ***'in a good way'***![13]

Respect

Respect is an overarching principle of Indigenous-based research. It should govern all relationships and procedures with the Indigenous communities. There are various intersecting aspects of respect that are crucial in designing research, building relationships, conducting ethical research, and disseminating research. Respect means being humble, ***"non-judgmental,"*** and open-minded:

"Well, just have a general acceptance of who it is or what it is that you're doing research on and not form your own opinion when you're doing research. You need to keep an open mind and an unbiased approach."

Being open-minded can mean that one is also open to other ways of doing, knowing, and being, and respecting ***"the autonomy and self-determination"*** of the Indigenous Nations:

"Why can't you know the university […] be a little bit more open and conciliatory, and be respectful by saying, "Hey, we can do this in a good way and respect that parallel existence."

Respect means knowing history and culture, putting the preliminary work, and having a thorough understanding of the context. Knowing the history and respecting the people will also define one's approach in relating with the Indigenous research participants.

"Knowing the history, learning and having prior understanding of Nation's histories."

"It's really understanding where they come from, their livelihoods, what they've been through before you approach them."

Knowing history and having a thorough understanding of the context can help prevent mistakes and avoid misrepresentation that can harm relationships with Indigenous communities:

"The one final thing – actually, this is one thing I forgot to say earlier on is that - the

13 You can read the Framework Guide "Working in Good Ways" prepared by Nicki Ferland, Anny Chen, and Gerardo Villagrán Becerra at the University of Manitoba Community Engaged Learning for a comprehensive discussion of the "good way."

other thing is sometimes, in a misguided way, and I don't think this will be your case, and it's probably an example that wouldn't occur when we're looking at gender-based violence, but sometimes communities that are not in any way connected to the situation end up getting asked to provide the blessing for whatever's going on. So, just being careful that you are talking to the right people is really important. I've seen universities do that in particular where they are connecting with a particular First Nation, and that First Nation has nothing to do with the situation, but they're being called and sort of seen as blessing or clearing whatever piece of research needs to be done. But meanwhile you're talking about people from a different nation, right?"

The process of honouring and respecting protocols should be based on the understanding that every Indigenous community is different. This means that it is best to ask ahead of time about the protocol from the community representatives. The awareness of this diversity can also inform what ceremonies or gifts one offers. For example, Indigenous individuals who follow the traditional way can prefer medicine bags, whereas those who practice Catholicism can prefer rosary and other relevant gifts.

"I'll use this MMIWG roundtable talk. […] And so, they had these beautiful little medicine bags. So, you had a choice. I took the medicine one. We got this little piece of wood and shell for our medicine to sit on and we can use it. I choose not to use it just because I want it to always be here. But they also have the option of another bag with the rosary and stuff. Because regardless that we're all Indigenous, we all have different beliefs. So it's incorporating those and acknowledging them and respecting them."

But respecting protocols also means respecting the intellectual property of the Indigenous Nations:

"I think there needs to be some implementation of some ethical guidelines that respect Indigenous ways of coming to know what our traditions are and having respect for our intellectual property."

Respect should be the basis of relationship-building, which is a crucial part of research with the Indigenous Peoples. This has overarching implications for the whole research process, including ethics, data sovereignty, and other aspects of research.

"So, community engagement, you have to be actively and respectfully engaged with Indigenous communities. I think that's really key. That means listening to their needs, their perspectives, and involving them in the decision-making process and building partnerships with Indigenous leaders, with Indigenous organizations, with Elders, with people who are connected to communities."

It is important to ***"go in gently"*** when conducting research with the Indigenous Peoples. Researchers need to be humble in their own positioning and be ready to listen to the people with respect.

"I'm not going in there to say this is how it should be done and that's it. That's my way, you know. I think, our people are very simple, very respectful. If you talk to them and listen, I think they'll be more receptive of us going in there and them wanting to share."

Relationships and Research

As mentioned before, Indigenous Peoples mistrust researchers because of harmful research practices of Western research frameworks. Individuals we met with felt that this was an important aspect to be considered when designing and implementing research projects with Indigenous Peoples and communities.

"And a lot of the mistrust of researchers, mistrust of universities is similar among the populations that she's working with. And thinking about how you build relationships in good ways is important."

Relationality plays a large part in Indigenous research. Relationship building should begin before a research project commences. This includes spending time in

community, talking with community members in informal ways, sharing meals, engaging in conversations, etc. There needs to be ***"an invitation into relationship building:"***

> *"[…] invitation to relationship, deep listening and then thinking about how you might resource participation in some of those initial kinds of conversations. So, what does it look to invite people into a conversation in a good way. Are there any protocols that need to be followed? Is there food offered, all those kinds of things about being in a space together to have a good conversation."*

When designing research, it is important for RESOLVE to include time and funds for meaningful relationship-building and community engagement which extends beyond simply community consultations. This process should begin before a research relationship is even established.

> *"Thinking and remembering that often Indigenous research projects take a lot longer in that relationship building. And so, the time that it takes is important and that is a part of the research that often doesn't get funded. So, when I talk about protocols and gift giving and food and child minding and transportation, and all of those things that it takes to start to build relationships within a research project with a community, Indigenous researchers in many cases aren't funded to do that kind of work."*

The invitation to enter into a relationship can help with establishing how the researcher and the community can work in partnership. In this process, researchers do not just come and tell what each of the parties will be doing, instead researchers offer ***"the menu of options."*** There needs to be flexibility and deep listening in the process of developing the relationship.

Additionally, this should include outlining the nature of the relationship the researcher and community are entering into. Having clear boundaries and understanding of the nature of research, impacts and outcomes can help strengthen research relationships between RESOLVE researchers and communities.

> *"When you invite communities to participate in something - what is being clear about what it is that you would like, and whether this is a short-term relationship, a long-term relationship, what are you actually going to be able to do something with what they're sharing with you? And so just being really upfront about what is possible and what might not be possible in in the context of your work. And having that explicit conversation. Or if you don't know, that's okay, too. But just making it clear, you might not be able to address all of the priorities that communities are bringing forward for you. But this is what we can work on together if they're interested."*

During the relationship-building phase of the research is where values and principles can also be established between the researcher and the community ***"identifying what values and principles are important in creating a community-driven relationship. And then what could those values or principles look like in action?"*** This ensures that the research remains community-centered.

Relationship-building is where RESOLVE can demonstrate to the community their commitment to embodying Indigenous research methodologies, because

> *"So much of building relationships is walking the talk. And so, you can say that you'd like to do this work in this particular way, and a lot of it is just going to be people waiting to see if you're actually doing what you say you're going to do, right? And so that's kind of the measure and the level of trust. And it's so often built on relationship".*

Relationships can lead to and help center commu nity-based research. Research that is driven by the community with their needs at the center versus the researchers or larger institutions.

> *"I think, all of my research is really relationship- and community-based, right? And those relationships take years to develop. And that's a true fact. And so, it might be researchers from RESOLVE who plan to go into community and ask these questions, start volunteering*

and being known in the communities in which you may find participants".

This can also help with research not being extractive in nature but

> *"being there, not to extract knowledge, but rather to just be part of the community. And then when a project comes, they put up the poster and they put out the thing on Facebook, and they recognize your name, and they recognize who you are, and then they're more willing to speak with you, right? So, does it take more time? Yes, it does. But this is going to be a commitment, a result for years to come. Then it's time well spent, right?".*

Research is Sacred and the Role of Ceremony

One important principle in thinking about research with Indigenous Peoples as suggested by the participants of this study is understanding that research is sacred. When participants engage or participate in a research study, they agree to share their personal stories. These stories may be stories of their lives and violence that they experienced. This needs to be treated with the utmost respect and care.

Research is also a process of building trust. Indigenous communities do not trust researchers, especially non-Indigenous researchers because of the ongoing harms of colonization and of Western research frameworks. If Indigenous participants agree to share their stories, this means that they developed trust towards the researcher. This trust, however, is very fragile and can be easily broken. Research should aim to maintain and nurture the trust that was developed.

Researchers, scholars, and practitioners we met with indicated that incorporating ceremony from the start of the research is important. This not only supports the development of the project itself, but the people involved.

> *"The Knowledge Keepers Guide Group shared with us a teaching that it's important for us who are doing that work as researchers, evaluators, community leaders to take care of the spirit of the work. And in order to do that we had to start our work together in a good way, and that meant that we started our work together in ceremony, and we continued to follow that ceremony throughout all the seasons, in attending to our responsibilities to each other and to the community that we're working with."*

The role of ceremony needs to be centered. Ceremony is a part of the whole research process. One participant, for example, shared that their research process was guided by ceremony and

> *"included the team supported by Knowledge Keepers and led by Knowledge Keepers, we went into sweat together, and then we had a feast, and we had a pipe ceremony and a feast, and then at different points and times like in the year, the Knowledge Keepers led us through pipe ceremony, and feast again".*

The ceremony in research honours the sanctity of research and acknowledges the work that was done. Research should be honoured, shared, and bring knowledge to the communities that have contributed to it. The data collection process itself as well can be accompanied by ceremony. For example, after an interview or a conversation, especially on a subject as sensitive as gender-based violence, there can be a cleansing ceremony offered to participants that allows them to process their feelings and find closure after the interview may have re-opened some memories.

> *"[…] Trust is pretty shallow. There is a lot of mistrust. And once you start to build it – it is sacred. You really have to be very careful and feed and water that trust so that it grows as opposed to just becoming the 100th terrible thing that's happened that month in that community. So, it is a sacred responsibility."*

Cultural Safety and Care

Cultural safety can be demonstrated in several ways throughout the entire research process.
The first aspect of cultural safety is representation

on research projects. Having Indigenous researchers and team members can help to increase security when meeting with research participants.

> *"I think just being Indigenous myself coming from the reserve, you know, I know people are more open to me because I'm one of them. I don't go there in a 2-piece suit as if saying I'm better than you. No, I'm one of you, I'm one of yours."*

Another aspect of increasing cultural safety is understanding the unique histories of Indigenous Peoples. This includes how policies and institutions have impacted the day to day lives of Indigenous Peoples.

> *"…I think it's important for research on Indigenous People to be done by Indigenous People. Just given the history of colonization and the way that policymaking has often interfered with our life more than helped it. So, I think that's also important to consider because policy has a very colonized way of doing things..."*

When conducting research with Indigenous Peoples, it is important to go slow and talk gently. Non-judgmental, open-minded approach should be maintained throughout the research process. Due to the history of colonization and the ongoing impacts, Indigenous Peoples can be hesitant to share their stories. This should be treated with the utmost respect and care. Care also means being respectful towards the culture of the people and the diversity of cultures and experiences within Indigenous communities. Asking for guidance and inquiring without making assumptions is important. Respect also means being prepared and knowing ahead of time who you are meeting with.

> *"Because regardless that we're all Indigenous, we all have different beliefs. It's incorporating those and acknowledging them and respecting them. A lot of - I'll say - a lot of Métis people are Catholic as well as First Nations, they're still Catholic after everything that they've been through, they're still Catholic. That's just what they believe and what they choose. […] So, it's building that connection and acknowledging everybody's ways. They played the drum, but they also had - they brought in Métis music, and they brought in Inuit singers - you just incorporate everybody because we all live different ways. So, you acknowledge all of them culturally."*

Offering support during and after research meetings, ensuring that when researchers have concluded their meeting's offering support is important, especially if the topic can be triggering. This support can be in the form of offering follow up meeting with the opportunity to debrief.

> *"Definitely have trigger warnings and then, follow up, debriefing or if you can't do that yourself then have an agreement with an organization or a staffer that can do those follow-up appointments - just to make sure once we dig up all the information that we want, that people took so many years to bury and hide away and then talk about it and bring it up again - that follow up is really important…"*

In research, leaving in a good way is important. Within the context of research on gender-based violence, this means ensuring aftercare. Aftercare can be done with the help of supports available in the community and working together with them, working with Elders and Knowledge Holders, as well as bringing in ceremonies and Indigenous ways of healing into the research process. Ensuring that researchers are offering a variety of aftercare options is important.

> *"Having a wellness person present would be really important just to help them navigate the feelings that they're going through with the research and everything. It's hard when you're an Indigenous person and you're being researched by a non-Indigenous person because you often feel they don't really understand where you're coming from."*

Support should also be offered during the research meetings as well.

> *"…make sure that your participants, your survivors are feeling safe. Safety is of the utmost importance and it's not just environmen-*

tal safety but it's how safe they feel, right? You can increase that perceived sense of safety by doing things like offering that Elder or Knowledge Keeper, offering one on one wellness person if they need, offering access to medicines and those sorts of things as well."

The importance of creating a safe space with no barriers is important to foster a safe environment during research. Often the formalities of research can impede the relationality which then impacts the stories or data that is gathered.

"…even the environment that you're sitting in, the space where it's being conducted. There should be no barriers – [not sitting] behind a desk and then no podiums, there's no hierarchy. It's in a circle or it's in a space that you feel everyone feels welcome to talk openly. That's one way of trying to incorporate cultural safety…"

Cultural safety training was also noted as being important for ensuring the safety of Indigenous research participants.

"[So] I think to make sure that all your researchers have cultural safety training and have a very strong understanding of the impacts of colonization and how it has affected our ability to trust researchers because there's a huge barrier there of trust where a lot of Indigenous People don't even feel there is trust..."

Reciprocity, Gifting, and Honorariums

Reciprocity is a principle that suggests that one does not only take, but also gives. In a research context, this can be expressed in gifts and honorarium. Gifts, honorariums, and sacred medicines were all noted as important in the research process for participants and helpers, such as Elders and Knowledge Holders.

"Many of our cultures also operate on a gift giving perspective. We've always been like that."

Gifts need to be appropriate, thoughtful, and relevant. As each community and Nation is diverse it is important for researchers to connect directly with the community or Nation they are researching with and ask about appropriate and respectful forms of compensation or gifts. It is best when they are Indigenous made by local artisans. In this way, gifting itself supports Indigenous economy. Gifts also need to be culturally appropriate. For example, some Nations have a practice of tobacco offering, whereas another Nation may prefer Labrador tea or Ulus. Community members also appreciate food, such as fruit baskets and baked goods. Interviews can also provide food, such as Bannock, jam, and tea.

"I think, also, in the actual action of the research, often Indigenous-based plans have tobacco, which is lovely…. but that doesn't encompass our entire nation. And so, I always ensure that I ask a question. Would you like tobacco, tea, or jam? To extend a deeper understanding of the diversity in our communities."

Another participant added:

"You want to make sure that you speak to those folks to find out what is appropriate for them. I can't say what is appropriate for some people to engage them in research. I have my perspectives. I've been taught, you know, about how to do that in a good way, but you need to talk to people and find out from them what is a good way for them."

Individuals we met with noted that there are concerns and barriers with the levels of compensation found within institutional financial structures. Larger institutions such as research centers and universities often have policies and processes for what compensation can look like.

"And thinking about university levels of compensation, they are not nearly enough for what it is that they're actually bringing. So, thinking about like Knowledge Keepers – they should be paid as much as PhDs in terms of the value of the knowledge that they bring.

And often in universities, people with PhDs aren't paid enough. So, all of that kind of kind of thing. I just recently had a conversation about compensation, and if you're asking a Knowledge Keeper to come for a full day to share ceremony to share teachings, all of those kinds of things, it wouldn't be unreasonable for me to suggest $1,000 for a day. I know that's not as near the policy that universities are using right now, which is really problematic. So, thinking about it - what is the what is the basic living wage, for example, and go up from there."

Gifts and honorariums extend beyond medicines and monetary items. Gifts can come in various forms and can be given throughout the research process.

"When I talk about protocols and gift giving and food and child minding and transportation, and all of those things that it takes to start to build relationships within a research project with a community, Indigenous researchers in many cases aren't funded to do that kind of work. But that kind of work actually makes the research projects more successful in the end, even if it takes a year longer than was intended. Because of that foundational relationship building and so offering a way, if you're thinking about supporting Indigenous researchers, how can you support that relationship building to happen with communities in a way that might not be prioritized in other granting spaces".

Another participant shared about the importance of food:

"…We have good meals and enough of a meal that people actually are able to take some of the food home with them afterwards as well, which is really important in many Indigenous cultures."

Dissemination of Research

The sharing of research is crucial because of how research with the Indigenous Peoples has often been extractive. The outcomes should be shared in various ways. This ensures that research can be used by the community as well as by funders. Results that are plagued with jargon are often hard to read. Results should be shared in various ways such as print, emails, video, podcasts, community gatherings etc. In disseminating the research results, the researcher should be following the lead and advice of the community.

"And to also bring the data back to them. So, whatever community you're working with or survivors, make sure that you're following up with them and giving them a copy of whatever, you know, report or findings that you come up with based on the research that they contributed to. I think it always needs to come full circle and be given back to them so that they can."

Results should be shared in a way that upholds transparency. Sharing where the stories come from, who the researchers met with, etc.

"It is just being transparent and how you've come up with your - where your research has come from, who you've touched base with? It's where are these numbers coming from? And that's a huge thing with the federal government - they have all these wonderful numbers, but where did they get them from? They never share any of that. And so just sharing it with everybody".

The sharing of research is important because this means we honour the stories, and the work of the community, research participants and researchers.

"And then honoring that work and acknowledging it - that's important, right? You just don't want it to sit on the shelf, you want it to really actually bring knowledge in the community for the work that we've done on it."

Data Sovereignty

In addition to different foundations of research, there remains the ongoing concern of data sovereignty and who owns the stories collected during research. It is

important for researchers to be open about how they will care for the stories of participants.

> *"I would say that there's an expectation within university, of course, that the researcher owns everything that is created, which I often have what I call relational accountability agreements with whatever organization or community that I'm working with, and that in that agreement, you know, really makes explicit what I will do to take care of the data".*

It is important that researchers ensure that data or the stories collected during research are done in compliance with the principles of OCAP® and the TCPS2. This can create barriers for RESOLVE as data is often seen as the property of the institution or the researcher. However, the stories being shared belong to the sharer. From an Indigenous perspective there is a responsibility to share that knowledge gained so others can learn.

> *"Making sure that you are incorporating the OCAP® principles – ownership, control, access, and possession of data. And that's a hard thing for organizations to give up is control of data. But the thing is that data does not belong to them. Even if someone openly agrees and consents to participate in intervening. That's their knowledge that comes from their world view, their community, and my knowledge is not my knowledge. …I don't own it. My responsibility is to share my knowledge, not to hoard it, and not to make money from it".*

Data sovereignty is complicated. There are institutional, community, Nation policy expectations of protocols surrounding the collection of data.

> *"That not only communities, but nations, have sovereignty over the data collection of their people. And so it's like an added element to the research project I appreciate, and for my nation, so the Red River Métis Nation and MMF, there's protocols that researchers have to follow in order to be able to engage with our citizens. It's messy, it's imperfect but it is what the nation requires, and so all researchers in RESOLVE should be reaching out to consultation and engagement at the MMF. And seeking the Métis Community Research Ethics Protocol (MCREP) and filling that out"*

In response to the barriers created by ethics and data sovereignty, one participant noted that maybe there needs to be a dual process for ensuring data sovereignty.

> *"Why can't there be two sets of data. University of Manitoba owns that data. But there is a mirror data that's owned by the First Nation? Why can't there be this 2-way of walking in the world? Why does one group get to exclusively say, this is our data if you're doing research for the University of Manitoba. First of all, you would not get money attracted for a research project if you weren't doing that research with the Indigenous community on the first place. That's their data. Who the hell is the University of Manitoba to decide that that gets to be their data, and they build that into their legal agreements."*

Beyond the ownership of data, there remains concerns regarding data management

> *"And it's not just data sovereignty, it's data management. So, the community says we want to have sovereignty. Are they holding it in a server or are we holding it in a server, but they have the encryption that they can give out to whoever they want to have access to that."*

Adhering to the principles of OCAP® is important in research because people are sharing their stories for a reason. The stories must be kept safe, and only information that is needed, be shared with the public. This is to ensure the safety of research participants especially in smaller communities.

> *"Well, I think it's important - the safety and security of the data - protecting people's stories because when people share like their stories or their experiences, especially as survivors, you know, it's a hard thing and they don't want that information to be aired out*

everywhere, right? So, I think it's important to only use what information you absolutely need to and to ensure that there's safety and integrity in your data to ensure that it's only accessible by those who need to access it and it's stored safely and just to be/have the utmost respect for the stories that were shared."

Data sovereignty also includes people being aware of how their stories will be shared and used in the research.

> *"…Indigenous communities must control how their data is solicited, collected, analyzed and operationalized. They decide when to protect it and when to share it. where the cultural and intellectual property rights reside and to whom those rights adhere, and how those rights are governed."*

Research Ethics Boards

Ethics is an area within research that can create tensions between researchers, communities, and institutions. Currently, researchers adhere to the principles of OCAP®, TCPS2, and institutional research boards. The policies within these various bodies continue to present barriers for communities when participating in research.

Ethics Review Boards have a fundamentally different view of research based on Western ways of knowing. Ethics often creates tension between the foundation of relationality created between researcher and community. Ethics can be a barrier to research participants sharing their stories.

> *"It's very challenging to navigate. There are ways that you can explain why what you're doing is the most ethical way to do things. It's just not very straightforward. When you're trying to be relational with people, trying to be in a relationship and they're like, "Wait a minute, let me just explain these 4 pages of ethics and our agreement before we have tea." It's just so weird too, right? That kind of stuff is very strange."*

The lack of understanding of Indigenous research and Indigenous methodologies often creates issues for researchers trying to implement them. Often review boards do not have adequate representation and Indigenous research methodologies are often scrutinized by outsiders.

> *"Having someone on the Institutional Review Board that actually understands Indigenous methodologies, it's hit or miss. And having, you know, questions come back to me on the Ethics Review that felt patronizing and paternalistic, a little bit. So that was really interesting in the ethics process".*

Western research ethics can be difficult to navigate and can create barriers for research participants and researchers. When researchers are trying to develop relationships with communities, this can often be seen as unethical by Research Ethic Boards.

> *"If you are going to volunteer in these communities, then there's kind of that layer of understanding that you have to express to the Ethics department about why it's acceptable."*

Another participant shared that relationship-building, although important, creates barriers when navigating Western ethics boards.

> *"the idea of creating relationship has created problems. So, my current project that I have going with the University of Manitoba Métis students because of the relationship that we developed over 5 years, I couldn't interview them. They would not allow me to be the interviewer."*

There is also the issue that current ethics guidelines assume that the researcher is an outsider. Ethical guides such as OCAP® and TCPS2 do not account for researchers who are members of the community.

> *"[…] one thing that we have been seeing as a problem is that current ethics guidelines were designed with the assumption that the researcher is a settler. And that creates certain barriers when you are a community member doing research in your own community, both*

in terms of the odd shape of the hoops that you have to jump through, but also the way that those hoops themselves can reinscribe violence in an unintended way."

Research centres should consider how they develop their own ethical frameworks in addition to the University or institutional boards. This can help increase accountability and ensure that the community guidelines are met prior to focusing on the institution ones. This can add another layer to the ethics of a project that is community-centered.

"I was just thinking, maybe RESOLVE could also consider consulting with an Elder or a community member to develop their own internal ethical approaches to conducting whether or not their research is ethical or not before they submit it to the universities, our Research Ethics Board. And so, this is where you could engage in conversation, and you can engage in building a relationship with an elder from the community if you are so lucky to have someone who's willing to do that…"

Other Considerations When Engaging in Indigenous-Based Research

Inclusivity and Diversity in Research

The importance of inclusivity in the research design is important. Prioritizing having someone who understands and has knowledge of the communities you are working with is important. The community should be represented in the research team. The team should also be reflective of the diversity within Indigenous Nations (i.e. Cree, Saulteaux, Métis etc.).

"I was just thinking about inclusivity in research design. You need to have someone who is Indigenous, who is connected to communities, who knows the ins and out, who have a pulse on community on-reserve and have a pulse with community off-reserve and outside of Inuit communities and in Inuit communities as well is in Métis communities. So, I think, you really have to make sure that research designs are inclusive of these diverse Indigenous perspectives and diverse methods".

The Importance of Stories

Stories are important for sharing of knowledges. Stories are a way Indigenous Peoples can connect, learn, pass knowledges to the next generation, and teach one another. However, in Western research, stories are often not valued. Stories need to be centred in research because that is what researchers are asking of participants, to share parts of their story for research.

"I think that research doesn't value stories - the history of people's lives and their stories."

From an Indigenous perspective research is about storytelling. Research is also an important way to learn about the world around you.

"Storytelling is a really big thing as well. And the thing is we all learn stories. That's how we start, all of us, when we're little our parents told us stories, or we listened. I think about when I was younger, and I would hear the adults talking around the table while we were supposed to be in bed right, and their stories, what they talked about, would always be so fascinating. I couldn't go to sleep, you know, overhearing those stories, but that's how we all learn. And people learn best when they hear a story".

Advisory Committees and Guiding Groups

Inclusivity can extend beyond the research and be accomplished through developing an advisory committee or guiding group. Their role can be helpful in guiding the project.

> *"How can that internal capacity be built to reflect on whether what's being created is actually being done in alignment with that good way. And so, an Indigenous Advisory Council, Indigenous Research Advisory Council that might be resourced to show up and to do that work to help build that capacity and think about things that might not be thought about in terms of the protocols or the methods, or the procedures. So really, again, it starts right from the beginning of where is this work starting from. And it needs to start from Indigenous voices".*

Role of Elders and Knowledge Holders in Research

When developing an advisory committee or guiding group, Elder or Knowledge Holder representation is important for RESOLVE given the nature of the research conducted.

> *"I think, what is the wise guidance of Elders in terms of studies that might involve violence against women? They would talk to you about how to approach it, how to approach your research subjects in a respectful way… how do we do it in a good way and even are there any ceremonies that need to be engaged in because when we're talking about our ancestors that have to be returned home and returned to their burial sites, we are talking about something that for our communities has a very strong spiritual and ceremonial component. So those are all the reasons that I would say an Elders council can be a very important part of the work".*

Elders and Knowledge Holders should also be involved in projects from the beginning. One participant shared that engaging in conversations with Elders and Knowledge Holders in the design and implementation of projects.

> *"…We have in the past included Elders in the planning stages and kind of talk with them through what we call the project. Talk with them about what we want the project to accomplish. And is that something that they think you know we should be doing? Or how should we be doing that, or what kind of questions? And it's not that you have to listen to every word the Elder says. Do it exactly like they told you, every Elder will tell you something different, anyways, but it's just having that kind of conversation. It's really good to just check in with folks."*

Given the nature of the research that RESOLVE conducts, participants we met with noted that offering supports during and after research is important.

> *"Have an Elder or a Knowledge Keeper - really, it could be either – to be present and to be a support in one-on-one interviews with people in case they did get distraught. So that they could offer and not that I can't – so that they could offer a smudge or a prayer or a type of ceremony – maybe they had an eagle feather, and they fan people or offer things like that. There are different practices that they might have that I don't. I also would have loved to have had a sharing circle with an Elder or Knowledge Keeper present sharing but also supporting the folks that were in attendance, if they needed some support."*

Often researchers want to center Elders and Knowledge Holders to be part of their research. However, their role in the research should be meaningful and have purpose with the topic and research project.

> *"I'm going to caution here that this isn't an opening prayer offered for five minutes by an Elder who then is never to be seen again - this is building a relationship. That means that you actually put into the process what the Elder is telling you to do. And so that's an important thing".*

The Shift from Participant to Relative

One participant we met with shared that they shifted their view of participants from participant to relative. This shift impacts the way stories are shared through research. The shift creates a more intimate relationship between the researcher and participants, and later the readers and the stories being shared.

> *"…Therefore, you treat them with respect and the reverence required for a relative. So, when you're using their words, their testimonies, how would you want those held up and lifted up in your own community and your own family, which then prevents you from doing things that are unethical, but also that are not in the best interest of the women who you're collecting the stories from in the first place. When we think of them as part of our kin, you deal with it differently. You ensure that you speak their truth and not the truth you want. You don't hold their words to fit whatever analyses required."*

Allyship in Research

Understanding the role of allyship in research is important for RESOLVE. There are many allies within the university setting and within the community who have great knowledge of Indigenous research and communities. Fostering connections with allies can help to distribute the work to be done.

> *"…It makes me think of really great scholars that I know that are settler scholars that are really strong in Indigenous and women and genders studies that are just so amazing."*

Allies can be of great support in research projects. Working with allies who practice and embody Indigenous research in their work can be an asset to RESOLVE.

> *"…But I think that Indigenous or non-Indigenous, it's important to have people who were just knowledgeable and who can bring that lens and who can bring that understanding of how to work with Indigenous peoples and communities."*

Recommendations

Based on the information shared with us the following outlines the recommendations based on themes and findings of our interviews with community organizations, Indigenous scholars, and researchers.

Immediate Recommendations

1

RESOLVE needs to consider the gaps in their mandate. As the mandate is the foundation for research being conducted it is important that the gaps be addressed.

- Being aware that Manitoba has the highest percentage of Indigenous population out of the Canadian provinces and Indigenous women experience higher rates of violence it is important that RESOLVE acknowledge the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization. This needs to start at the root of RESOLVE which is their mandate.
- The OCAP® principles need to be included in the mandate.
- The mandate also needs to acknowledge the anti-colonial and decolonial nature of RESOLVE's research. This will ensure that future research is also rooted in those principles.

2

RESOLVE needs to increase their presence in the community. During our conversations with community organizations many had little to no knowledge of the work RESOLVE is doing. RESOLVE is a collaborative research institution and increasing their presence in the community will be key.

- Hosting events both in person and online such as for International Women's Day, Gender-Based Violence Awareness Month, Red Dress Day, also known as the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit Peoples. This would help RESOLVE become better known in the community and foster familiarity between RESOLVE researchers and community members.
- RESOLVE should consider forming a closer relationship with more community organizations conducting research such as but not limited to the First Nations Health and Social Secretariate, the Infinity Women Secretariat, etc.

3

RESOLVE needs to increase their relationality in the design of research projects.

- RESOLVE needs to ensure that their research plans include adequate time and funds for relationship building in the community.
- RESOLVE should develop an invitation for communities and research participants which outlines the values, and principles of the project in addition to outlining the nature of the relationships. This should include the duration of the relationship, the roles, and responsibilities of RESOLVE. The invitation should also include how the relationship will end in a good way.

4

RESOLVE needs to increase their transparency in their Guidelines for RESOLVE Research Projects.

- It needs to be clearly outlined how RESOLVE will enter into research relationships.
- The nature of the research relationships and

how RESOLVE with work with communities, Nations and other centers should be defined prior to beginning projects. This should be done in collaboration with project stake holders.

5

RESOLVE should ensure that researchers within the center have cultural safety training prior to beginning research within the community.

6

RESOLVE needs to increase their aftercare, following research interviews with participants. This needs to be clearly articulated in the research proposals. There should also be a variety of options for aftercare that participants to access from community supports to ceremonial. Options should be representative of the diversity with Indigenous communities.

7

RESOLVE needs to ensure that compensation for helpers, Elders/Knowledge Holders, and participants is adequate and provided in a manner that is consistent with the needs of the community. Individuals we met with, indicated that sometimes cheques or gift cards create unnecessary barriers.

- RESOLVE should consider offering participants various ways to be compensated.
- Compensation should be reflective of the work being done. Often institutional rates do not account for added prep time or travel. These items need to be considered.
- When asking Elders/Knowledge Holders for support, RESOLVE should be exploring whether a helper is needed. If so, helpers need to be compensated accordingly.

8

RESOLVE should consider continuing to lessen the barriers present for participants in research projects. This can include the location for research meetings, travel, ensuring that there is food, childcare, etc.

9

RESOLVE needs to incorporate The Principles of the Sweetgrass Braid into its research design.

Long-term Recommendations

10

RESOLVE should consider developing their own internal ethical guidelines for research. This can encompass a two-eyed seeing approach which incorporates both western and Indigenous perspectives.

11

RESOLVE should consider how it can increase capacity of Indigenous researchers both in terms of representation within RESOLVE but also increasing connections within the community.

- RESOLVE should provide opportunities for community members to build research skills and gain research experience as much as possible. This will help to increase the capacities of communities and foster reciprocity in the process.
- RESOLVE should hire Indigenous research associates with connections to community.

12

RESOLVE needs to explore further how they can center Indigenous research ethics.

- RESOLVE should consider developing their own internal data management system. That is accessible by community members as needed.
- RESOLVE should develop their own internal ethics review board with community represen-

tation. this will help RESOLVE center community control of research projects and increase the self determination of Indigenous communities.

13

RESOLVE should also consider becoming a hub for researchers. Hosting researchers to present their work or conferences to bridge the gap between the institution and community researchers. Being on the campus of the University of Manitoba, RESOLVE can work in crease relationships with rising Indigenous researchers at the undergrad and graduate levels.

14

RESOLVE needs to review its internal documents and guidelines for research. Currently the guidelines and policies indicate that RESOLVE will adhere to university policies regarding research. While these policies are important, RESOLVE needs to consider how the elements of Indigenous ethics can be embedded in their research.

15

RESOLVE should review the Guidelines for RESOLVE Research Project.

- Criteria 4 Cultural Respect and Integrity, item C needs to reflect policies beyond the TCPS chapter 9. It should note that when applicable RESOLVE will adhere to policies outlined by Indigenous research institutions (such as the MMF, FNHSSM).
- Criteria 6 Ownership and Research Data needs to be reflective of and acknowledge data sovereignty of Indigenous Nations.
- Criteria 7 Publication of Study Results notes that “decisions about the publication of study results will be jointly made among the research team, including how/where the result will be published and order of authorship”. It needs to be clearly defined who the research team includes. As currently presented missing from here are the voices of the community and participants.
- There is no mention of research with Indigenous Peoples, Nations, and communities. There needs to be an additional criterion which outlines the need to follow community protocols and acknowledging the diversity in community.
- Outline the research relationships, responsibilities, invitation and ending needs to be included in the guidelines.

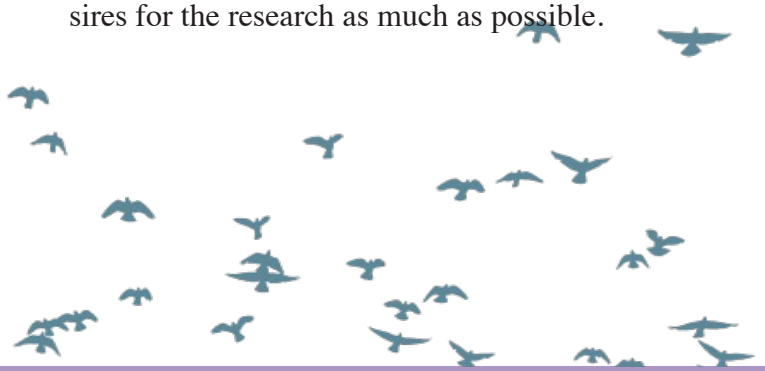
16

The Terms of reference for RESOLVE’s Steering Committee has lots of representation from the academy and community organizations, missing are the voices of community members and Elders and Knowledge Holders. There should be spots designated for more voices outside of the academy and organizations.

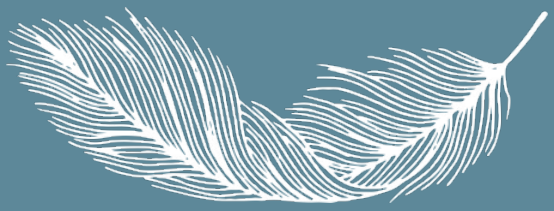
17

RESOLVE needs to consider the ways in which research is disseminated.

- Findings should be accessible through various means such as print, online, long form, summary etc.
- The language within the disseminated items needs to be reflective of the audience. Many individuals we met with spoke about findings being difficult to understand and filled with jargon. The knowledge mobilization plan should be discussed and informed by the voices of the researcher, participants, and community.
- The dissemination should be mutually agreed upon with the community and center their desires for the research as much as possible.



MOVING FORWARD IN A MEANINGFUL WAY: THE PRINCIPLES OF THE SWEETGRASS BRAID



Introduction

The information and perspectives shared with us during our various meetings with community organizations, academics and Indigenous researchers has provided a framework for RESOLVE to move forward with research in a good, respectful, and ethical manner. What we heard from the individuals we met with can be summarized into three overarching principles. These principles are understanding, responsibility and relationships.

These principles present much like the strands of a sweetgrass braid. Each strand of the braid has an important role ***"separately, each strand is not as strong as the strands are when braided together"*** (Objibwe Elder Mary Ritchie, as cited in Victor, Goulet, Schmidt, Linds, Episkenew & Goulet, 2016, p. 441). On their own, the strands have no strength but together they create a strong entity.

As the sweetgrass is braided, it needs to be flexible to bend and move into place. This is also true for these principles. While they offer a guide there needs to be flexibility in their application. The way forward is not through rigid adherence, but through an understanding that these principles will change and shift depending on the work being done.

As the braid is formed, there are two key roles in the process - the braid holder, RESOLVE and the braider, the community. Together they form a partnership to ensure that the sweetgrass is braided with enough tension to not unravel. Both of their roles are important - ***"the sweetest way is to have someone else hold the end so that you pull gently against each other… Linked by sweetgrass, there is reciprocity between you linked by the sweetgrass, the holder as vital as the braider"*** (2012, Kimmer, p. ix).

Strand One: Understanding

RESOLVE needs to consider the impacts and ongoing implications of colonization in the work that they do. These impacts are far reaching and although there has been work done to acknowledge this, more needs to be done. Violence within communities is an extension of colonization and affects everyone.

This understanding extends to the impacts of Western research frameworks. Western research has been a tool used to further the colonial agenda. This tool has included but is not limited to the homogenizing of Nations, and the control of what is considered valid and true knowledge. This has led to mistrust between Indigenous Peoples, researchers, and institutions.

Nations and communities are diverse and as such this diversity needs to be acknowledged and considered in the design and application of research. Each Nation and community will have their own set of protocols for guests entering into relationship. RESOLVE should be reaching out to each community they plan to partner with to understand what the unique protocols are and how they can ensure they are entering into the research relationship in a respectful way. This diversity also extends to status, non-status, and citizenships of Indigenous Peoples. Intersectionality is an important part of understanding.

Understanding the complexities of ethical practices within institutions is important. Ethics boards often have a different view of research which often results in barriers for researchers. These barriers can lead to the fostering of an untrusting relationship between communities and larger institutions. This needs to be acknowledged in research and discussed openly.

Strand Two: Responsibility

Stories are an important part within Indigenous communities and Nations. There are generally two types of stories - sacred and teaching. As such, RESOLVE needs to treat 'research data' as stories. When engaging in research with participants, they are sharing a part of themselves for the purpose of teaching RESOLVE so that change can happen. It is the responsibility of RESOLVE to treat research and stories of participants as sacred.

This responsibility extends to the care taken during research meetings. There needs to be care during and after meetings with participants. Violence can be difficult to talk about and continues to be stigmatized in society. Taking care of participants is key to maintaining a trusting and caring relationship. This also needs to be diverse, and representative of the community RESOLVE is working in partnership with. This also extends to increasing cultural safety for participants.

In addition to care, research needs to foster and uphold cultural safety within the design and implementation. This includes ensuring there is representation on projects that reflect the community and that space being used for research is welcoming and safe. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure this is being accomplished.

Compensation for participating and working with Centers on research projects is an ongoing struggle within larger institutions. Researchers have a responsibility to ensure that compensation is adequate. Gifts should also reflect the Nation RESOLVE is working with. There is much diversity among communities, and it is the responsibility of RESOLVE to ask communities their preference prior to giving gifts.

When entering into the research relationship, it is the responsibility of the researcher to understand the protocols of the community. This means that researchers need to take the time to get to know communities and Nations to ensure that they are entering into relationships in a respectful manner.

Data sovereignty is an aspect of research that is newer to the mainstream institutions. As such, there is a lack of understanding of what Data sovereignty truly means and how researchers and centers can support it. In shifting the understanding of research data to stories, it implies that there is an intimate relationship with what is being collected during research. It is important that RESOLVE understands the importance of Data sovereignty and how to ensure that the stories they are hearing and collecting are being used respectfully.

Strand Three: Relationships

Relationships are foundational to the research process. Relationships should be based on meaningful engagement and reciprocity. Entering into relationships takes time. Often researchers do not allot enough resources for the forming of relationships during research projects in the design. As a result of the negative impacts of research within Indigenous communities and Nations, researchers need to take the time to form relationships with communities and Nations prior to beginning. Research relationships need to be founded on clear communication of expectations of the research, the nature of the research relationships and the outcomes, including how the research will be beneficial for the community.

Inviting communities into a research relationship is one of the first steps to establishing a relationship. Working in partnership on research projects inherently implies that a relationship has been formed. Relationality is a key aspect of Indigenous research and working with Indigenous communities. RESOLVE needs to be forming relationships with multiple people when engaging in research with Indigenous Peoples. This can start with forming connections with communities and organizations, volunteering time in community, etc.

Relationship can include the forming of advisory or guiding committees for research projects. This is an

area in which inclusivity can be increased and community protocols can be discussed.

Fostering relationships with Indigenous communities is central to the research. Relationships with Elders and Knowledge Holders are important to have from the beginning of research projects. They should be involved in each aspect of the project from the design to dissemination.

Relationships also extend beyond Indigenous Peoples and communities. Allies are important and can be a great support during research projects.

Researchers need to ensure that relationships are being formed with key actors. This includes but is not limited to local political institutions (Chief and Council, MMF, etc.), community organizations, and community members from the start of the development of research projects.

Conclusion

The sweetgrass braids provides principles for RESOLVE to take what was heard from community organizations, scholars and researchers and begin to shift their research structures. The principles within this braid of sweetgrass start with the understanding required to enter into relationships, the responsibility of researchers and centers and finally, outlines the relationality aspects. The sweetgrass braid provides the road map for moving forward in a meaningful, respectful, and ethical manner when engaging in research with Indigenous Peoples, communities, and Nations.

References

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