

Doing evaluation in a
“Good Way”
with Indigenous
people

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A little about me

²
Gigizheba Waabishkaa
Waabigwan



Outline

1. History of research with Indigenous people
2. Why evaluation and research is important for Indigenous people
3. Ethical considerations when working with First Nation people – decolonizing the evaluation process
4. 4 guiding principles and the research process, relevance for evaluation
5. The Two Pillar Anishinaabe framework

History of Research in Canada involving Indigenous people

Era of Helicopter research

- Long history of researchers going in/out of community with no benefit to FN
- Expropriation & misrepresentation of knowledge/data
- Conducting research beyond what was agreed to
- Total disregard for cultural protocols

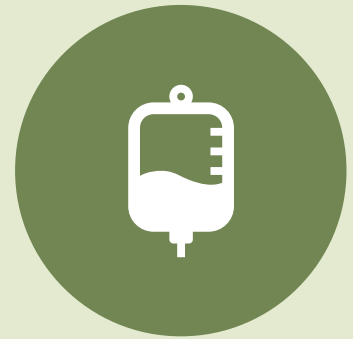
Examples of research gone wrong



HUMAN NUTRITIONAL
DEPRAVATION
EXPERIMENTS



IMMUNIZATIONS: TB/
SMALLPOX



BLOOD SAMPLES – USED
FOR PURPOSES NOT
APPROVED




Before we get into Indigenous approaches to research/evaluation

- Good reason why Indigenous people mistrust outside researchers/evaluators
- First Nation/Indigenous people have begun to assert their rights over research and data.

Foundational documents/reports:

- RCAP, 1996 – ‘Aboriginal’ people must be considered full partners in the research



UNDRIP Truth and Reconciliation &

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – called for respect and recognition of the human rights of Indigenous peoples.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) – called for wide and sweeping **ACTION** to address Injustice

History of FN ethics in MB

1996: Resolution passed by the AMC

Formation of the Health Information Research Governance Committee (HIRGC) as the First Nations research ethics board to:

- Oversee Regional Health Survey (RHS, 2001-2002)

2007: Amendment the AMC resolution

Strengthening FN control over research. Research must be done with First Nations and satisfy three ethical guidelines (Free Prior and Informed consent, OCAP, and FN ethical principles) now included:

- Review all research proposals involving FN



Today: 4 Ethical Guidelines

FREE PRIOR INFORMED CONSENT

FIRST NATIONS ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

FIRST NATIONS PRINCIPLES OF OCAP

BENEFIT TO FN

Free Prior Informed Consent

Consent (agreement) to participate in research requires both community and individual consent

Is this relevant and applicable to evaluation?

Key Questions to ask:

- Does the research involve a significant # of FN?
- Does the research involve 1 FN, or more? (If one or a group of communities in a Tribal Council area, individual community or TC Council protocols prevail)
- Consent must be:
 - Free (voluntary – no pressure);
 - Prior (before any info collected)
 - Informed (FN and person needs to know what research purpose, methods, use would be ahead of participation).



FIRST NATIONS PRINCIPLES OF OCAP

- O- OWNERSHIP
- C- CONTROL
- A- ACCESS
- P- POSSESSION

➤ OCAP is fundamentally tied to:

- self-determination
- self-governance – First Nations governments, like other governments, need data on their people
- the preservation and development of First Nations cultures.

➤ *OCAP allows a community to make decisions regarding why, how and by whom information is collected, used and shared for research, evaluation and planning purposes.*



OCAP : Ownership

Relationship of First Nations to their cultural knowledge/ data/ information

Community/group owns information collectively just as individuals own their personal information

Distinct from possession (stewardship).

TM by First Nations Centre

OCAP: Control

- Control or meaningful involvement in all aspect of research, including information and data
- Governance over all aspects and stages of research and information management projects and processes that impact them. *This includes generating or validating research questions that are meaningful and important to FN*
- extends to resources, policy, review processes, formulation of conceptual frameworks

OCAP: Access

First Nations must have access to information, data about themselves and their communities, wherever it is held

FN involved in the management and decision-making regarding access to their collective information

OCAP: Possession

When FN data is in the possession of others (e.g. government, universities), there is a risk of breach or misuse (Especially when trust is lacking between owner and possessor)

- FN possession of data is ideal where possible
- Other institutions may have stewardship/ agreements in place to protect the data

First Nations Ethical Standards

- ▶ 63 First Nations in Manitoba from several distinct nations, languages and cultures – Cree, Dakota, Dene, Ojibway, Anishininew
- ▶ Each FN can have our own views and ideas
- ▶ In March 2005, Elders from our nations in MB met in workshop on research ethics and agreed on the following principle:

“Research is a relationship based on respect and it takes time to build trust.”



ACCOUNTABILITY

- ▶ Researchers and evaluators first and foremost consult, dialogue, report data/findings, and be accountable to their First Nation partners/leaders/community prior to **any publication of reports/papers**
- ▶ HIRGC is accountable to the Chiefs in Assembly (AMC)
- ▶ First Nations partners/leaders/community have right to be **acknowledged or participate in authorship** depending on role in research
- ▶ First Nation partners/leaders/community have right to **dissent**


Protocol, in general:

- Contact and engage FNHSSM/Community/FN partner prior to/or at the idea or draft stage of proposal
- Draft proposal, involve partners in research design, consider feedback
- Finalize proposal
- Submit proposal to AMC HIRGC/Community/Tribal Council obtain letter of support
- University Research Ethics Board (if research based)
- Maintain communication/consultation/engagement through entire research process

Discussion Questions?

Are these research concepts adaptable to evaluations?

What are some of the consideration when working with FN/I/M people in Manitoba?



Why is research and evaluations important?

- We need to be able to look at where we have been, what we have done and determine if worked, or not, in order to things better
- We need to decide if our activities are matching our goals
- Identify our strengths and areas where we need to improve
- Just doing things “because that is the way we have always done it this way” is not good use of our time
- Funders understand numbers, we sometimes make a case for continued funding or more resources
- Sometimes we need to make difficult decisions that perhaps our resources can be better utilized elsewhere



Big Driver: for Indigenous Evaluation Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

- ▶ Call to Action 55: We call upon all levels of government to provide annual reports or any current data requested by the National Council for Reconciliation so that it can report on the progress towards reconciliation.

Doing the work in a good way

Disclaimer –
entirely my own
perspective

Decolonizing and Indigenous Methodologies

- ▶ work be situated, relational, and includes Indigenous theories, approaches, ethics and methods
- ▶ Strategic Indigenous Methodologies are motivated by **anti-oppressive and anti-colonial agendas** (Ray, 2021)
- ▶ 4 of several **Key Elements** include:
 - ▶ **Self-location** – important for Indigenous people/communities begin by identifying who we are, where we are from, who our ancestors are. For non-Indigenous this identification allows people to know who we are, what our biases & establish trust
 - ▶ **Relationships and Relationality** - The relational nature of Indigenous epistemology acknowledges the interconnectedness of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of individuals with all living things and with the earth, the star world, and the universe. Indigenous epistemology is fluid and nonlinear (Smith, 2012).
 - ▶ **Seek guidance** of Elders/Knowledge Keepers
 - ▶ **Inclusion of Indigenous voices/perspectives** - tell a collective story





Key points about IM

- Learning about local/community context and protocols (relationship building)
- World view/perspectives of local cultures (respect)
- Engaging community and local participation/inclusion of local contexts and realities (respect)
- Role of ceremony and feasting (honouring/respect)
- Indigenous adaptation of outcomes-based framework
- Nation-based and strength-based indicators/indicator development (strength-based indicators)
- Planning for the end/communication plan

Learning about local/community context and protocols

3 distinct Indigenous groups in Canada: First Nation, Inuit and Metis.

Several distinct First Nation nations. In Manitoba: Dene, Cree, Anishinew (Oji-cree), Dakota and Anishinaabe & Metis

Each of these distinct groups have unique languages, protocols.

Even within nation distinctiveness: some traditional, others blended with Christian values, others more Christian or in some cases all three.

Important to know the communities you are working with – difficult to do without visiting the communities, building relationships.

Some communities will establish the new relationship with ceremony or prayer.

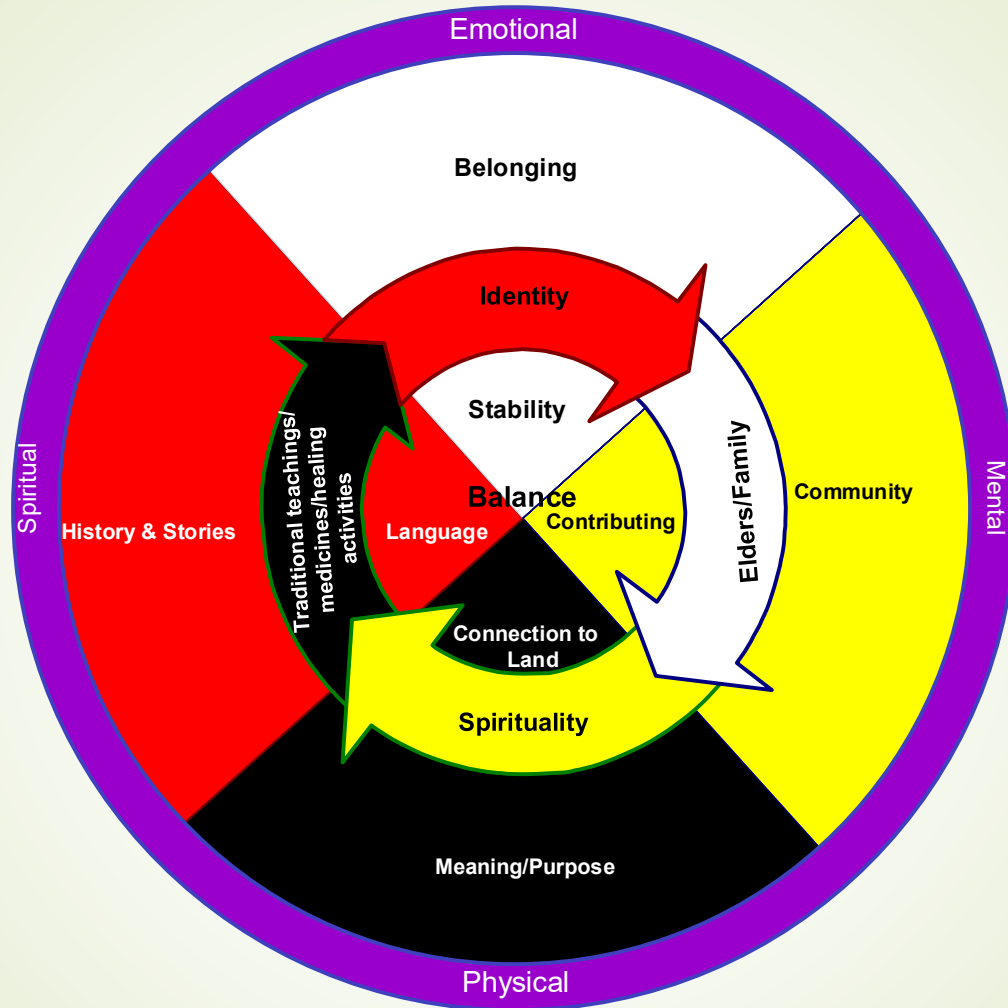
Feasting, sharing meals always a good way to engage community.



World view/perspectives

- ▶ Important to know that there are different worldviews and perspectives that may impact your evaluation questions/approach:
 - ▶ Medicine Wheel/Holistic perspectives
 - ▶ Creation stories that differ from Christian
 - ▶ Christian traditions
 - ▶ Blended traditional and Christian

Looking Back Moving Forward





Generally, Holistic world view:

- ▶ Relationship of people to the natural world
- ▶ Connectedness of all things, both animate and inanimate
- ▶ Life is cycle – started in the spirit world, on to childhood-adolescence, adulthood and later years
- ▶ Concepts that are steeped in language and not always translatable to English



Frameworks for working in a Good Way: the Four “R”’s

- Respect
- Relevance
- Reciprocity
- Responsibility



Indigenous adaptation of simple outcomes-based framework

- ▶ Core elements are rooted in decolonizing and Indigenous methodologies.
- ▶ Evaluation process involves:
 - ▶ Visiting goals/objectives of program or initiative and reframe as SMART goals
 - ▶ Revisiting anticipated program outcomes and creating measurable objectives for each goal
 - ▶ Creating and/or matching Indicators to outcomes
- ▶ Creating or utilizing strength-based measures, if possible
- ▶ Collect data using multiple methods/Indigenous methods



Regardless of what evaluation framework you use, a culturally safe evaluation involves:

- Building trust and relationships
- Self-location & reflexivity
- Use of local protocols/practices.
- Inclusion of important contextual factors:
 - Historical
 - Social
 - Cultural
 - Environmental
- Meaningful involvement of Indigenous people
- Making space/centering Indigenous voices and knowledge
- Inclusion of Indigenous frameworks/methodologies

Counting for Nationhood: Manitoba First Nations Community-Based Indicators of Well-Being

Positive Goal-Oriented Community-Based Culturally-Rooted/-Relevant

WHAT ARE INDICATORS?

There are many definitions of "indicators", but to Manitoba First Nations these numbers or measures are characterized as: capturing positive aspects; holistic; going beyond mainstream "standard"; complementing immeasurables or qualitative aspects of First Nations well-being; accurate and meaningful reflection of First Nations unique situation.

These measures should have the effect of:

- Increased understanding of the First Nations experience, situation and needs;
- Providing the evidence-base for action by decision-makers that cannot be ignored; and,
- Producing positive results and benefits.

In order to make numbers or measures work for us, we must:

- Identify what are appropriate and meaningful measures for us;
- Identify how we can use these numbers to achieve the results we want;
- Undertake our own data collection and analysis, and at regular intervals to account for high mobility of our population; and,
- Increase awareness within First Nations communities.

TIMELINE OF DEVELOPMENT

- September 2005 -

Social Development Summit on "Cutting Poverty in Half" called for the need to develop of "positive, goal-orientated indicators" that are user-friendly to Manitoba First Nations.

8 thematic areas were identified:

Economic Development, Education, Health, Housing, Justice, Governance, Independence/Self-Sufficiency and Quality of Life.

- October 2006 -

Manitoba Regional Closing the Gap Implementation Plan

signed by AMC, MKO, and SCO Grand Chiefs and INAC Manitoba RDG to work together to close the gap between Manitoba First Nations and the rest of Canada.

- February 2007 -

Counting for Nationhood: Closing the Gap Indicators Workshop to build on Sept. 2005 Summit, resulting in Draft #1 Manitoba First Nations Indicators Template.

- December 2008 -

Manitoba First Nations Community-Based Indicators Workshop or further feedback on draft template, resulting in *Counting for Nationhood: Manitoba First Nations Community-Based Indicators of Well-Being.*

- March 2009 -

Review user-friendly Template. Plan implementation and evaluation.

- Now and into the Future -

Measuring Change over Time to build Healthy and Strong Communities and Self-Determination in Decision-making and Planning!



Consider these factors, and how they can be used for Change:

- Community Involvement -
- Structures for Community Decision-Making -
- Transparency in Decision-Making -
- Self-Determination in Action -
- Helping Each Other and Connectedness -
- Connections to Language, Culture, and Land -
- Bridging the Old and the New -

INDEPENDENCE AND INTER-DEPENDENCE

- Number of Houses repaired or upgraded by owners/dwellers -
- Number of occasions when traditional foods were shared with elders -
- Number of people living in the city who return home every year for bush/lake/prairie renewal -
- Number of people using lands and waters - traditional livelihood -

GOVERNANCE

- Does Chief and Council share an Annual Report and Audit with citizen? -
- Development of First Nations Constitution -
- Number and types of laws passed - and follow-up enforcement -
- Transparency: Number of Council and community meetings open to the public -
- Community Justice -

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Does your First Nation have an Economic Development Plan? (5,10,15 yrs?) -
- Does your First Nation have an Economic or Business Development Committee? -
- Number of community meetings for Economic Development Plan -
- Number of Training programs and type: # of people trained, # hired -

LANDS, WATERS, ENVIRONMENT, AND IDENTITY

- # and Type of activities on the lands and waters -
- # of Culture camps and ages/genders of participants -
- # and type of practices to reclaim land from misuse or underuse -

IDENTITY & LANGUAGE

- Acknowledge oral teachings (and need to write them down to share with future generations) -
- Number and type of Community events where First Nations language is used -
- "Language immersion - yes or no?" -
- "How Often is language taught in school?" -
- Family trees/ancestry -
- Number of opportunities to learn own First Nations language, culture, and history... -
- ...In school - How often? After school - where, when, how? -
- ...And are there adult and youth opportunities? -
- Does your community have community radio? -
- Does your community have community TV? -
- Are there traditional places or lodges in your community? -

HOUSING

- Does your First Nation have a Housing Plan completed - and for how many years? -
- Does your First Nation have a Housing Committee to plan and advise council? -
- Number of houses in community -
- Number of housing units built compared to number targeted -
- Number of renovations -
- Number of people per house -
- Number of houses with running water and indoor plumbing -

LIFELONG LEARNING

- Number of graduates gr. 8,12, Post-Sec, training programs/year -
- Number of events to celebrate students achievements (type of events) -
- Education plan completed/community skills inventory -

QUALITY OF LIFE

- Number of community events to celebrate family, community, seasons -
- Number of volunteers involved in community events -
- Do you have a community building for gatherings?... -
- ...Who uses it? (youth, elders, kids, school, band staff meetings...) -
- Is your First Nation connected to hi-speed internet? -
- Number of youth in sports -




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Positive Goal Orientated Indicators

- ▶ Community-based and developed with community
- ▶ Indicators to provide achievable, meaningful goals
- ▶ Emphasize strengths
- ▶ Empower people
- ▶ Encourage positive change



Evaluation methods with Indigenous people

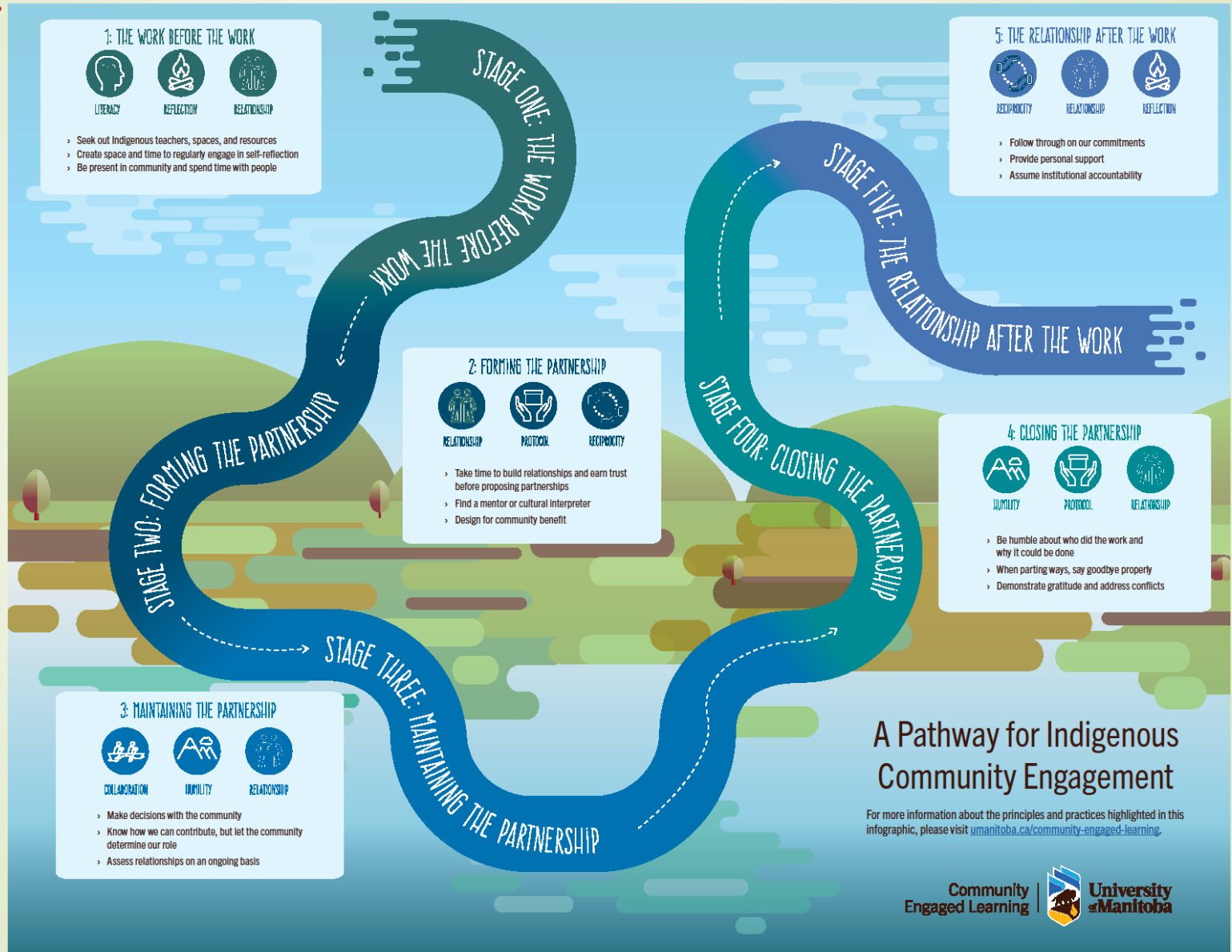
- No one size fits all
- There is no one framework that makes sense for all Indigenous people
- No research “on us” without “us”



Guiding principles for culturally responsive evaluations

- Community/organizational involvement
- Meaningful engagement of Indigenous people
- Self-determination guiding engagement (multiple levels)
- Structures for shared decision-making and governance
- Transparency in decision-making
- Space for Indigenous data sovereignty (OCAP)
- Incorporation of Indigenous history and contextual factors
- Incorporation of Indigenous knowledge
- Bridging and balancing Indigenous and western methods

Framework for engagement



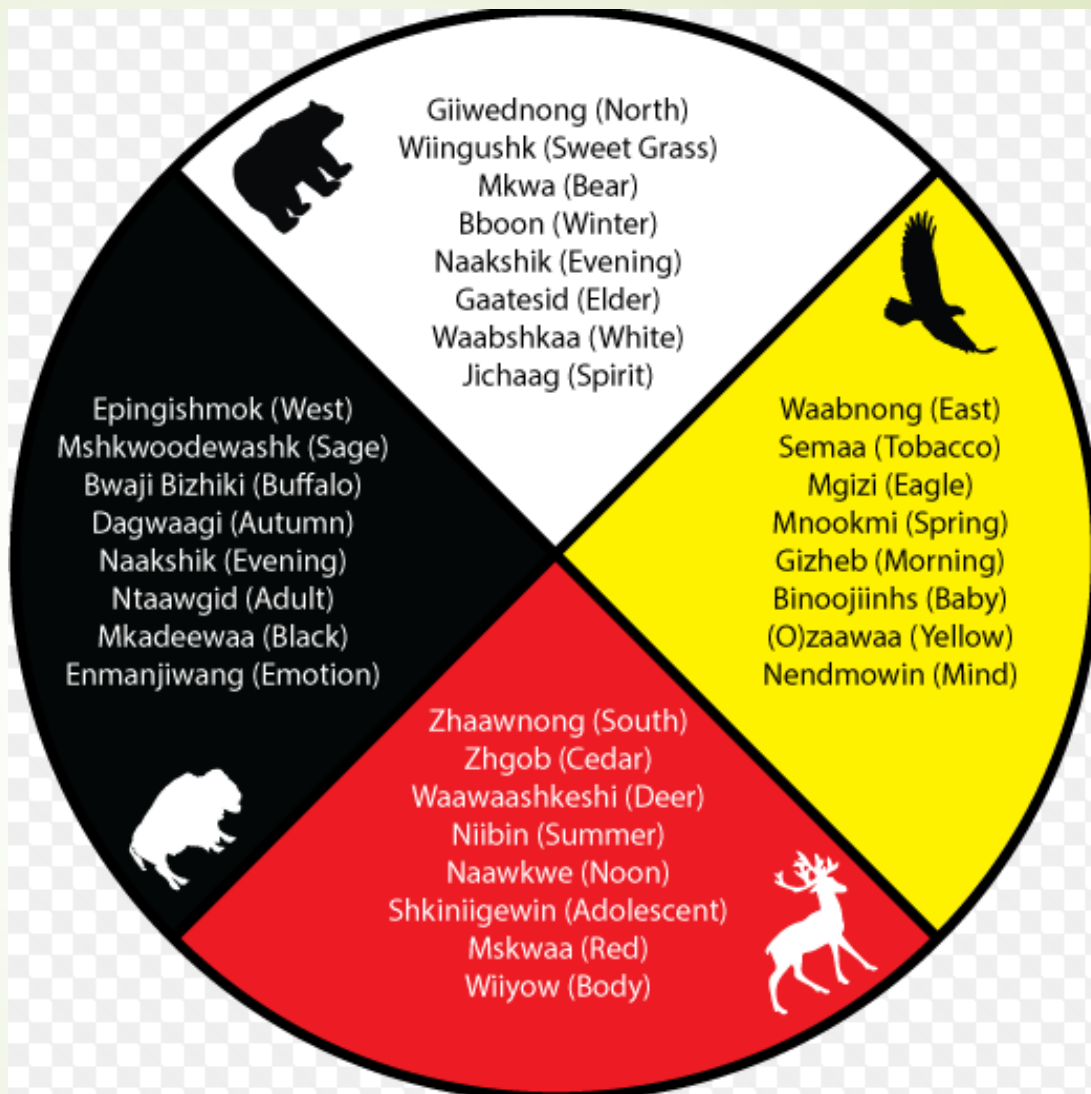


Evaluation type & frameworks

- ▶ Many types of evaluation and evaluation frameworks - most can be adapted & incorporate principles
 - ▶ Process, impact, outcome, summative or developmental evaluation, goals based etc.
 - ▶ Choice is dependent on the purpose of evaluation, big question whether there is good fit for purpose/type in Indigenous context
 - ▶ Some frameworks are tightly structured – often not a good fit
- ▶ Michael Patton' utilization focused evaluation – touches on all those principles

Medicine Wheel

- Now commonly used as an organizing framework, that represents the holistic nature of Indigenous knowledge and experience: it reflects balance between different elements
- Many variation among Indigenous groups
- Can be utilized to frame evaluation using 4 directions: 4 stages of life; 4 directions of being



Indigenous goal-oriented evaluation framework (adapted from Marsh, 1978 by Little Black Bear and Associates, 2010)

Guiding principles

- Community/organizational involvement
- Meaningful engagement of Indigenous people
- Self-determination guided engagement
- Structures for shared decision-making and governance
- Transparency in decision-making
- Space for Indigenous data sovereignty
- Incorporation of Indigenous history and contextual factors
- Incorporation of Indigenous knowledge
- Bridging and balancing Indigenous and western methods

West

- Writing up draft and presenting in plain language
- Goal checking

North
Review and Feedback

East
Goal setting or review
(SMART)

Culturally appropriate / Indigenous Methods
South

Measurements & Data collection methods

Indicator development

Strength/community/nation – based Indicators



Indigenous Methods?

- ▶ Indigenous knowledges comprise a specific way of knowing based upon oral tradition of sharing knowledge. It is described differently by different Indigenous researchers, the world over, identify as storytelling, yarning, talk story, re-storying, remembering (Thomas, 2005; Bishop, 1999; Absolon & Willett, 2004)



Culturally appropriate Data Collection Methods (IM)

- ▶ Conversational Method – (Participant interviews)
 - ▶ Storytelling – (unstructured interviews)
 - ▶ Yarning
 - ▶ Body mapping
- ▶ “Bannock and tea” – (small facilitated sessions)
- ▶ Sharing and talking circles – (focus groups)
- ▶ Q and A - talking survey's – (assisted survey's)



Conversational method (Kovach, 2009)

- ▶ “Protocols are a means to ensure that activities are carried out in a manner that reflects community teachings and are done in a good way. The same principle apply to research” (evaluation).
- ▶ Respects oral tradition of Indigenous people
- ▶ Simple loosely structured conversation with some guided questions in informal settings – usually in home or familiar environment
- ▶ Storytelling or yarning are other way it is described by some Indigenous people



How is conversational method/storytelling done?

Start in a good way:

- ▶ Positioning yourself as outsider, learner.
- ▶ Build trust, relationship
 - ▶ Begin in a good way - use of cultural protocols/gifts to build relationship and engage if appropriate
 - ▶ Less attention to structure/forget your interview guide at home
- ▶ Storytelling – begins with question and allowing uninterrupted story to evolve. I used quilting/knitting to have conversations.
 - ▶ Can you tell me all about the Strengthening Families program and what it was like having a home visitor?
 - ▶ Tell me all about your pregnancy and birth and having a midwife?
- ▶ Some measure of skill in facilitating and directing conversation in a respectful way



Bannock and tea

- ▶ Adaptation of small group facilitated sessions “Café discussion”
- ▶ Begin in a good way, using local protocols
- ▶ Begin with refreshments – Bannock, coffee and tea always a good idea
- ▶ Small groups running concurrently
- ▶ Begin with open ended discussion questions
- ▶ Have markers, crayons, placemat paper at the table
- ▶ Have them go at it and be as creative as they want or can be



Sharing/talking circles

- ▶ Begin a good way using local protocols
- ▶ Use of talking stick, stone or another culturally significant object
- ▶ Ground in Indigenous values – respect, honesty, trust
- ▶ Seek assistance of local Elder/Knowledge Keeper to co-facilitate
- ▶ Begin with purpose, and respectfully framed question



Q and A – talking survey

- ▶ Western survey methods with a twist
- ▶ Use of traditional protocols to initiate dialogue
- ▶ Researcher/data collector sits together, data collector asks the questions and inputs the answers
- ▶ Likert scales adapted using facial expressions



What's the difference?

- The approach and protocols to engage and facilitate
 - Tobacco and other gifts
- Building trust, relationships – community and individuals
- Flexibility, fluidity, openness

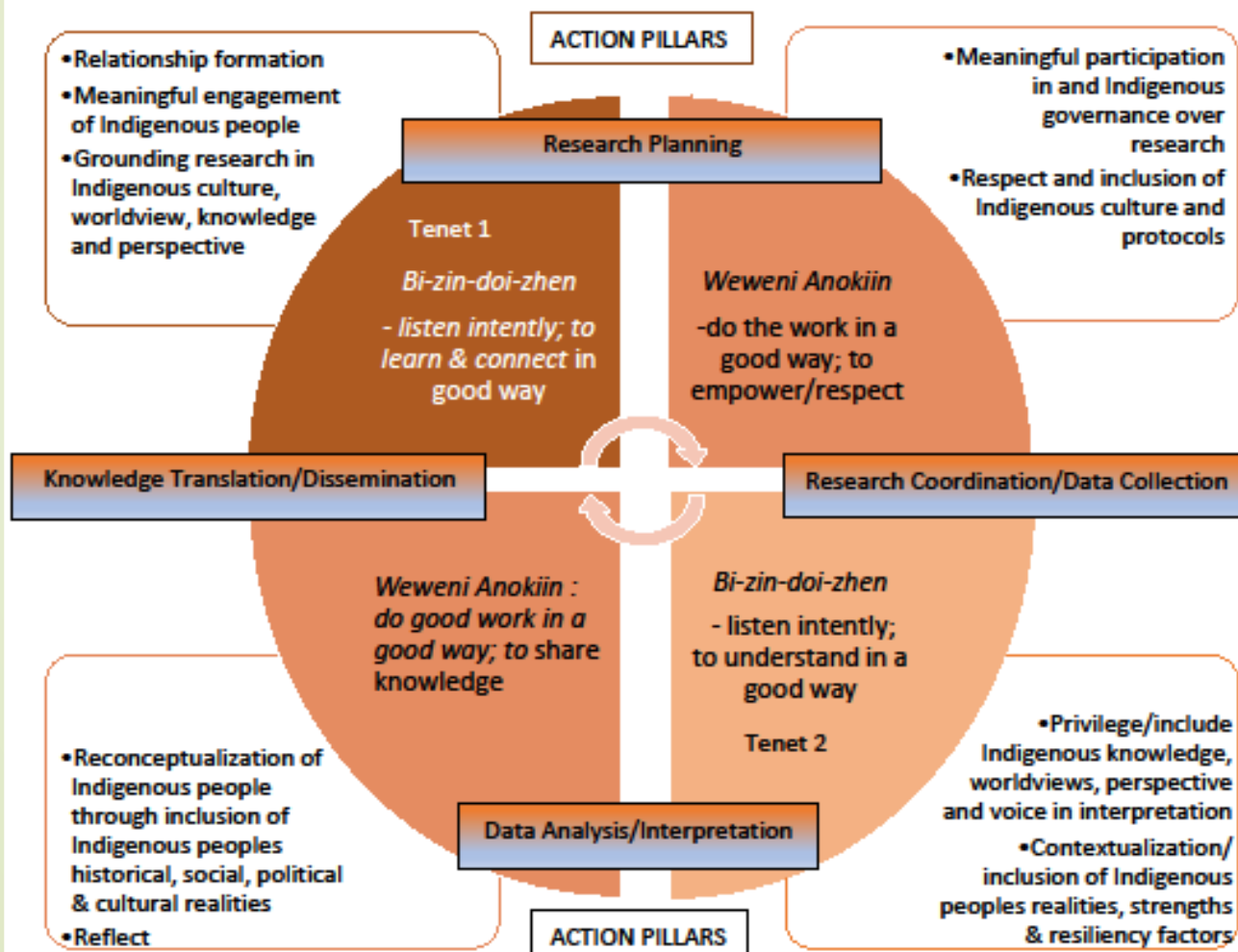


Putting it all together

My dissertation journey

Two Principle Anishinaabe Framework

Figure 3: The intersection of decolonizing research and western research process



Tenet 1
Bi-zin-dio-zhen

Tenet 2
Weweni Anokiin



Miigwetch

➔ Questions??????