Indigenous Evaluation Methodologies

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Disclaimer: This document was developed by a cis-gender, heterosexual woman who is of European ancestry. As a non-Indigenous researcher, I recognize that for this work to be meaningful, Indigenous voices must be amplified. As such, the content in this document was carefully selected based on seminal texts and research by and with Indigenous peoples.
It is my hope that other settlers seeking to collaborate with Indigenous communities approach their work in a good way, with a foundational understanding of the importance of relationships with their Indigenous partners throughout the research process.

"Indigenous peoples' interests, knowledge and experiences must be at the center of research methodologies and construction of knowledge about Indigenous peoples."

(Rigney, 1999, p. 119)

Glossary

Note: All concepts in the glossary are bolded throughout the text.

All my relations: An English term for a phrase used by many Indigenous peoples to represent the "extended relationship we share with all human beings… [and] the web of kinship to animals, to the birds, to the fish, to the plants, to all the animate and inanimate forms that can be seen or imagined. It is an encouragement for us to accept the responsibilities we have within the universal family by living our lives in a harmonious and moral manner" (Kainai Board of Education, 2004, p. 71).

Culture: A holistic way of life that includes, "language, ways of perceiving, categorizing and thinking about the world, forms of nonverbal communication and social interaction, rules and conventions about behavior, moral values and ideas, technology and material culture, art, science, literature and history" (Argyle, 1972, p. 139f).
Cosmology: A branch of astronomy regarding the origins of the universe. For some Indigenous peoples, cosmic views pertain the immortality of the soul and the belief that ancestors become spiritual beings (Akoto, et al., 2008).

Decolonization: "A distinct project from other civil and human rights-based social justice projects" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 2). It is a process through which "the colonized liberate themselves politically and psychologically" (Etherington, 2016, p. 157). It has also been defined as reclaiming power (Jacobs, 2017) and is "accountable to Indigenous sovereignty" (Tuck & Yang, 2012 p. 35).

Ecological perspective: An ecological perspective takes into consideration multiple levels of environmental influence. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model is a prominent and holistic approach for explaining how a child develops through interaction with various systems, from direct systems such as family and school to cultural elements and environmental changes (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994).

Evaluation research: The process of gathering insights into program goals, activities, strengths, and areas for improvement.

Epistemology: Theory of knowledge and how one comes to know about reality (Wilson, 2008).

Methodology: The approach one takes to conduct research in a systematic way in order to answer a research question (Mishra & Alok, 2017).

Methods: Specific tools and procedures used to collect and analyze data.

OCAP: The First Nations principles of OCAP are ownership, control, access, and possession. OCAP "asserts that First Nations have control over data collection processes, and that they own and control how this information can be stored, interpreted, used, or shared". (The First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2022, para. 1)

Ontology: Beliefs about the nature of reality (Wilson, 2008).

Positivism: A research philosophy based on the idea that truth is objective and can only be gained through observable and quantifiable measurement.

Residential schools: "A systematic, government-sponsored attempt to destroy [Indigenous] cultures and languages and to assimilate [Indigenous] peoples so that they no longer existed as distinct peoples. For a period of more than 150 years, First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation children were taken from their families and communities to attend schools … More than 150,000 children attended Indian Residential Schools. Many never returned." (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2022, para 1 and 3).

Relationality: An Indigenous ontology and epistemology holding that "relationships do not merely shape reality, they are reality" (Wilson, 2008, 7).

Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP): An organization established in 1991 "to investigate and propose solutions to the challenges affecting the relationship between Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Inuit, Métis Nation), the Canadian government and Canadian society as a whole" (Government of Canada, 1991, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples page).

Settler: a non-Indigenous individual whose ancestors established permanent residence in a land that had been inhabited by Indigenous people, often to colonize the area (Eidinger & York-Bertram, n.d.)

Sixties Scoop: Coined by Patrick Johnson in acknowledgement of the drastic overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system during the 1960's and beyond. Indigenous children were apprehended at an alarming rate and placed in non-Indigenous foster homes or adopted out to White families (Blackstock, 2007; Sinclair, 2007).

Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS2) Chapter 9: The TCPS2 is a Canadian guideline that "promotes the ethical conduct of research involving humans." (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2018, p. 3). Chapter 9 provides core principles and ethical frameworks for research involving Indigenous peoples.

Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit): A theoretical and methodological framework developed by Bryan Brayboy (2005) to understand the unique and complex experiences of Indigenous peoples. The theory holds that colonization is ongoing and shapes Indigenous peoples' political status, while also highlighting Indigenous traditions and knowledges. TribalCrit is guided by nine tenets that when implemented, may lead to culturally sustainable practices.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP): An international declaration that was adopted by the United Nations in 2007. This "comprehensive international instrument […] establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of indigenous peoples" (United Nations, n.d., United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples page).

Value systems: Refers to the order and priority of core ethical and ideological beliefs. Values reflect a persons' sense of right and wrong.

Worldview: "Worldviews are cognitive, perceptual, and affective maps that people continuously use to make sense of the social landscape and to find their ways to whatever goals they seek. They are developed throughout a person's lifetime through socialization and social interaction" (Hart, 2010, p. 2)

Introduction to Indigenous Methodologies

Research methodologies in Canada have a long history of being rooted in Eurocentric/colonial ways of knowing, being, and doing. As a result, they tend to produce knowledge that is dismissive of alternative worldviews. Indigenous methodologies present an alternative way to think about the process of research and what constitutes knowledge (Kovach, 2010). Broadly, **methodology refers to the approach one takes to conduct research in a systematic way in order to answer a research question** (Mishra & Alok, 2017). The **methodology** chosen will inform the research design and data analysis technique, thus determining how knowledge is gathered and interpreted (Mishra & Alok, 2017). Given the weight that a **methodology** has on the production of knowledge, critically and carefully deciding on the methodology for a given research project is a very important step, and can contribute to decolonization depending on the methodology selected (Smith, 2012).

Evaluation research is the process of gathering insights into program goals, activities, strengths, and areas for improvement. Program evaluation occurs in many health and education sectors with the Eurocentric goal of maximizing benefit for participants. When the program is being evaluated with Indigenous folks, research ethics requires that Indigenous peoples are equitably included in the evaluation process. This ensures the evaluation is serving the needs of, and centering the many strengths of, Indigenous peoples, and that further colonial harm does not occur. However, there are still unfortunately many stories of non-Indigenous researchers' appropriating, devaluing, and misinterpreting Indigenous peoples (Absolon & Willett, 2004; Smith, 2012). In Canada's history, research was often conducted without informed consent and results were not given back to the community (Guillemin et al., 2016). In the **Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples'** final report (1996), there was a **call for active involvement of Indigenous peoples on topics affecting them**. When non-Indigenous program evaluation researchers collaborate with Indigenous communities, critical discussions on culturally safe and respectful research must occur. Some important topics to consider include **decolonizing** methodologies (Smith, 2012); Indigenous **epistemologies** (Bishop 1996, Wilson, 2008); ownership and control (Smith, 2012; First Nations Centre, 2007); attending to issues of power, privilege, and justice (Smith, 2012); dissemination, and the importance of relationships and/or **relationality** (Smith, 2012, Wilson, 2008). To support settlers to collaborate in this work, many Indigenous scholars have shared frameworks and tools for ethically engaging in program evaluation. It is critical to note that this work should only be done in full partnership with, and when requested by, Indigenous communities. In this review, recommendations for respectful and ethical work will be provided. ***Topics include***:

- Tribal Critical Race Theory
- Partnership approaches to research
- Two-eyed seeing
- An Indigenous evaluation framework

A Note on Terminology

The literature reviewed for this resource used various terms including tribal, Native American, and Aboriginal. To maintain consistency, this paper uses the term Indigenous. **Indigenous** is a global reference to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis persons who collectively were the first inheritors of the land (Canadian Tri-Council, 2014; Indigenous Services Canada, 2018). While an inclusive term is used, it is acknowledged that Indigenous peoples are diverse, with distinct histories, languages, beliefs, and traditions (Canadian Tri-Council, 2014). The intent of this document is not to promote pan-Indigenous approaches. Rather, the research methodology needs to be community specific.

Indigenous context refers to any setting where traditional culture is alive (Groh, 2018). It is not exclusive to a legal territory (Groh, 2018). **Culture** is a holistic way of life that includes, "language, ways of perceiving, categorizing and thinking about the world, forms of nonverbal communication and social interaction, rules and conventions about behavior, moral values and ideas, technology and material culture, art, science, literature and history" (Argyle, 1972, p. 139f).

A term commonly used in Indigenous literature is **decolonization**. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) discusses the intersection between colonization and research methodologies, highlighting how many researchers continue to invalidate or ignore Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. As such, **decolonization** is the process of removing those colonial elements. To colonize is to take control of another groups' land, resources, culture, etc. Thus, researchers must carefully position themselves, consider power dynamics, and consider who is controlling the topic being explored and the methods being used. If the removal of colonial elements is decolonizing, then the addition of Indigenous elements is **Indigenization** (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). For example, including Indigenous ideas, concepts, protocols, methods, or data analysis tools into the research process. Indigenizing moves beyond simply acknowledging Indigenous customs and protocols to acting with them.
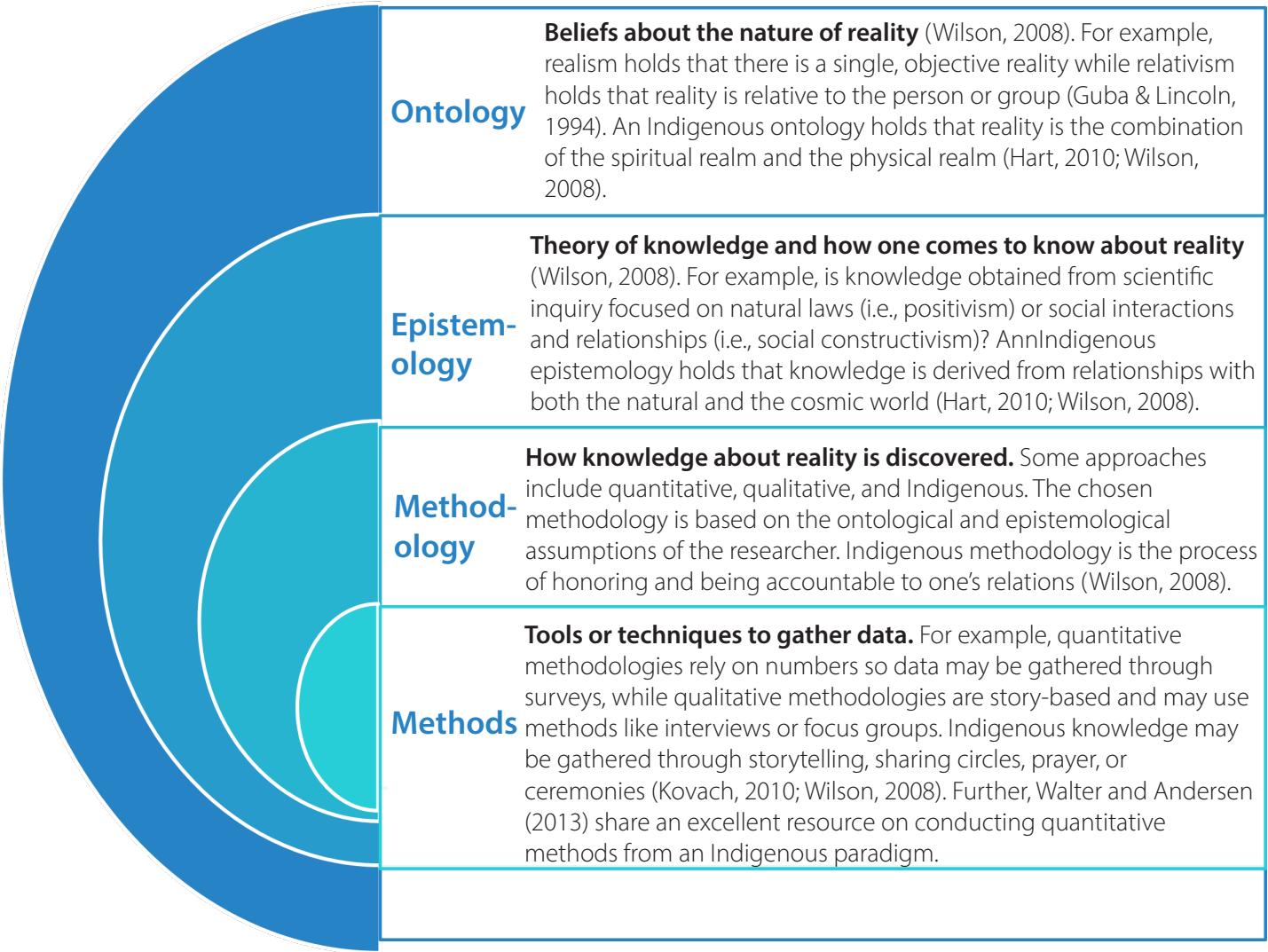
Research Paradigm

Methodology is a core piece of the research process. Methodology is influenced by ones' theoretical orientation and will influence the **methods** chosen. A broad overview of what we mean by the term research paradigm is provided in Figure 1. This overview is meant to provide a foundation for thinking about how one's own lived experiences and understanding of the world influences the methodology they choose. **Evaluation research** has historically been dominated by what is referred to as (post)-**positivist** paradigms, meaning that research was designed with the belief that there is an objective truth that can be discovered through standard measures (McEvory & Richards, 2003). As will be discussed throughout this paper, Indigenous methodologies are relationship-based and thus, do not claim objectivity (Kovach, 2010).

As shown in Figure 1, **ontology** is a branch of philosophy that explores concepts like existence and reality (Scotland, 2012). For example, a common colonial ontological standpoint is realism which is the belief in an absolute and value free reality that is shared by all people. As such, one set of rules govern all beings regardless of time or place. However, others hold the ontological belief that reality is dependent on **culture**, time, and place. For example, the ontological standpoint of relativism presumes reality to be subjective and unique among people (Scotland, 2012). Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008) shares that in an Indigenous ontology, there are multiple realities. Reality exists when a relationship exists. Therefore, reality is not an objective or universal event, it is a set of relationships (Hart, 2010; Wilson, 2008)

Epistemology is a branch of philosophy exploring the scope and nature of knowledge. More specifically, epistemology deals with how people come to know what they know, and what kind of knowledge is possible (Wilson, 2008). There are a range of epistemological beliefs, from knowledge being gathered through scientific inquiry to knowledge being gathered from relationships. Some believe that knowledge is objective (e.g., **positivism**) while other epistemologies state that knowledge is socially constructed through human experiences (e.g., social constructivism). An Indigenous epistemology holds that knowledge is derived from relationships with both the natural and the cosmic world (Hart, 2010).

Methodology refers to the contextual framework of the research process whereas **methods** are the specific tools. One's epistemology will shape the methodology chosen. For example, from a (post)-positivist lens, experimental research has been considered the gold standard in social sciences. Experimental research is concerned with identifying error to understand the quality of knowledge, whereas qualitative research embraces ambiguity and knowledge being contextually situated (Bahari, 2010). In experimental research, knowledge is quantified and controlled which can lead to valuable insights, but it often misses the personal stories, narratives, values, and experiences to situate the knowledge. From an Indigenous ontological belief that reality is rooted in relationships and an **epistemology** that we come to know through personal interactions, an Indigenous methodology is the process of honoring and being accountable to one's relations (Wilson, 2008). As such, methods could include storytelling, dreams, vision quests, etc. (Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008). Relational accountability is further discussed on page 18.

Figure 1. Research Paradigm

Ontology	**Beliefs about the nature of reality** (Wilson, 2008). For example, realism holds that there is a single, objective reality while relativism holds that reality is relative to the person or group (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). An Indigenous ontology holds that reality is the combination of the spiritual realm and the physical realm (Hart, 2010; Wilson, 2008).
Epistem-ology	**Theory of knowledge and how one comes to know about reality** (Wilson, 2008). For example, is knowledge obtained from scientific inquiry focused on natural laws (i.e., positivism) or social interactions and relationships (i.e., social constructivism)? AnnIndigenous epistemology holds that knowledge is derived from relationships with both the natural and the cosmic world (Hart, 2010; Wilson, 2008).
Method-ology	**How knowledge about reality is discovered.** Some approaches include quantitative, qualitative, and Indigenous. The chosen methodology is based on the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the researcher. Indigenous methodology is the process of honoring and being accountable to one's relations (Wilson, 2008).
Methods	**Tools or techniques to gather data.** For example, quantitative methodologies rely on numbers so data may be gathered through surveys, while qualitative methodologies are story-based and may use methods like interviews or focus groups. Indigenous knowledge may be gathered through storytelling, sharing circles, prayer, or ceremonies (Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008). Further, Walter and Andersen (2013) share an excellent resource on conducting quantitative methods from an Indigenous paradigm.

What is Evaluation Research?

Evaluation research involves gathering specific information about a program, service, or policy, and making judgements about the program's effectiveness and utility (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2013). Generally, **evaluation research** seeks to answer three questions:

- **What** is the program about and what needs to be known?
- **So what?** Is the program relevant and making a difference? If so, why does the program or service work the way it does?
- **Now what?** With the information gathered, what needs to be done to make the program better or sustainable? (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2013).
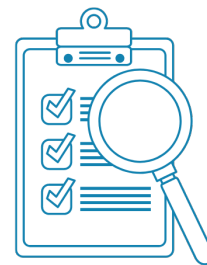
Program evaluation research often involves various stakeholders such as youth program participants, program facilitators, organization managers, other researchers, and/or policymakers (Rodriguez-Campos, 2012). Stakeholders may act as an advisory group throughout the evaluation process, and their input is often critical to designing a well-done study (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2013). Given that **evaluation research** has the overarching goal of benefiting the program participants, it is critical that culturally relevant frameworks are used to guide evaluation practice. For Indigenous peoples, the evaluation should be reframed to honor their **worldview** and cultural protocols (e.g., respect for oral traditions or cultural ceremonies). Evaluations will also require consideration of cultural factors like historical events and traditional languages (e.g., in terms of translation of materials). Finally, to ensure the evaluation is measuring valuable factors as determined by the community, and the interpretation of findings is culturally relevant, Indigenous peoples must be meaningfully and equitably included throughout the entire evaluation process when the focus is on Indigenous communities.

Infusing Theory into Evaluation Research

In this section, **Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit)** will be described, along with considerations for its use in **evaluation research**. TribalCrit grew out of critical race theory (CRT), which holds that ongoing overt and covert institutional racism is an everyday experience in Western society as it is woven into legal systems, which trickles down to affect people of color in schools, medical systems, and the criminal justice system (Bell, 1995; Brayboy, 2005). CRT also works to expose connections between race, racism, and power (Crenshaw, 2011; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). CRT is firmly committed to advancing social justice. While CRT was initially developed in the 1970s to support African American's civil rights (Bell, 1995), it has since spurred sub-theories like Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) and **Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit**; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Brayboy, 2005).

TribalCrit focuses specifically on unmasking and confronting the colonization experienced by Indigenous peoples. Brayboy (2005) share nine central concepts of TribalCrit, with the most important being that colonization is pervasive in our society. See Table 1 for a review of the nine concepts. TribalCrit is grounded in Indigenous knowledge and offers valuable considerations for researchers as they deliberate research processes and methods. **Key takeaways** of **TribalCrit** include:

- Recognizing that colonization exists, and that colonization impacts positions of power and privilege (i.e., who is in the position of researcher, and who is in the position of researched).
- Indigenous people have political and legal rights, and they have the right to sovereignty.
- Indigenous knowledge is timeless and thus oral transmission of knowledge (through stories) is valid and reliable.
- Research must be action-oriented and contribute positively to the community.

TribalCrit offers a meaningful theory to ground one's **evaluation research**, but any theory should not be used at the expense of the lived Indigenous experience in the community you are working with (LaFrance et al., 2012). It is critical that evaluation research with Indigenous communities emerges from the people themselves. While theories are highly advantageous for explaining phenomena, Indigenous peoples are the best sources of knowledge on issues affecting them.

Table 1. Tribal Critical Race Theory (summary of ideas from Brayboy, 2005)

Tenets of TribalCrit	Description	Considerations for Evaluation Research
1. Colonization is endemic to society	Since Europeans' first contact with Indigenous peoples, they have sought to dominate and control Indigenous lives and land. European settlers devalued Indigenous ways of knowing, and believed them to be 'primitive'. As such, they attempted to disband the Indigenous family unit by placing Indigenous children in residential schools where they were forbidden from speaking their language or practicing their culture. Implicit and explicit acts of colonization continue today , and Indigenous ways of knowing continue to be devalued.	Acknowledge the role of colonization in today's society and how it has affected oneself as a researcher (e.g., biases, privilege). For example, as a White settler, what methodologies am I drawn to? Why? How might my choices contribute to the continued devaluing of Indigenous knowledges?
2. Policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.	European settlers arrived on Indigenous land, which is currently known as Canada, with the belief that they had a moral obligation to take over as the land was being 'underutilized'. The supposed right to exploit and displace Indigenous peoples is rooted in White supremacy. White supremacy holds that Eurocentric ways of knowing, being, and doing are superior to non-Eurocentric ways of knowing, being and doing.	Consider the ways in which evaluation research continues to hold Eurocentric practices as superior to Indigenous. Consider how program policies and practices for evaluation may be rooted in White supremacy.
3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.	A liminal space refers to a transitional or ambiguous space. This space often feels familiar to an individual but is described as uncomfortable for outsiders. Brayboy (2005) shares that while society frames Indigenous peoples by their race and ethnicity, they occupy a liminal space in that the discourse on what it means to be Indigenous is contentious and misunderstood. Further, while Indigenous peoples' political and legal status is well documented in public policy, it remains a point of debate for some settlers. For example, their identity, Indigenous status, or land rights are often attacked.	Consider how programs or policies may be framing Indigenous people and what assumptions are made about their identity or status. When conducting evaluations, consider how such framings may impact results.
4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.	Indigenous communities have the right to control their land. What Indigenous peoples do with this right is known as self-determination. Self-identification is the right to determine how one looks and represents their culture (e.g., whether one chooses to wear traditional cloths, beads, or feathers does not determine the degree to which they are Indigenous).	Ask research partners and participants how they identify. Document appropriately and do not place them in an "other" category. Honour Indigenous communities' right to self-determination throughout the evaluation process.
5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.	How Western systems view culture differs from how Indigenous peoples view culture. McKinley and Brayboy (2006) liken culture to an anchor, as it is largely fixed but can flow with the changing tides. As such, Indigenous culture is largely rooted in their relationship to the land, to the spiritual realm and to each other, but this is subject to change within and across communities. Knowledge is a broad concept that is best considered within a given social, historical, and political context. McKinley and Brayboy (2006) identify three types of knowledge: cultural knowledge, knowledge of survival, and	Combining the strengths of academic knowledge with the strengths of cultural knowledge is akin to Barlett and colleagues' (2008) notion of Two-eyed seeing. See below for more on this concept.

	academic knowledge. While cultural and academic knowledge may seem to oppose one another, when combined they can be powerful.	
6. *Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.*	A careful exploration of Canadian federal, provincial, and municipal policies reveals that many are designed to assimilate Indigenous peoples into Eurocentric ways of knowing, being and doing. Eurocentric education policies are those that eradicate Indigenous values, languages, and customs. When education only teaches one way of knowing and understanding history (i.e., Western/Eurocentric), other ways of knowing and histories are inferred to be lesser than.	Consider if the programs and policies under evaluation are promoting assimilation. If so, how can space be made for alternative ways of knowing, being, and doing? And how can these alternative ways be shared in a manner that is affirmative and not othering?
7. *Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.*	This component speaks directly to evaluation. In this component, McKinley and Brayboy (2006) specify that when working with Indigenous communities, Indigenous peoples' traditions must be the foundation for analysis. Indigenous peoples' beliefs, philosophies, and customs vary across individuals and groups. As such, Western researchers must build a relationship with the community to prevent pan-Indigenizing. Indigenous culture is vital to who Indigenous peoples are, to their self-education, and their self-determination.	Rather than Eurocentric/Western and Indigenous ways of knowing competing in research evaluation, find a way for them to cooperate and strengthen each other. For more, see "Two-eyed seeing" section.
8. *Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.*	Stories are an important way of sharing knowledge and morals. Given that oral language is privileged in Indigenous cultures, oral storytelling must be regarded as legitimate. "TribalCrit recognizes that the statistical power of the 'n' is not necessarily the marker of a 'good, rigorous' study. Stories may also be informative of structural barriers or weaknesses. In this respect, 'proof' is thought of in different ways" (McKinley & Brayboy, 2006, p. 440).	When doing evaluation work, consider methods of communication between collaborators, and modes of data collection that honour stories (e.g., talking circles that are analysed using storywork).
9. *Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change.*	Action or activism is central to research that stems from tribal critical race theory.	Ask your Indigenous partners if the evaluation is relevant or how it can target specific needs. Consider how your evaluation will contribute to settler recognition of Indigenous peoples' rights.

In addition to **TribalCrit** theory, broad based research considerations are provided by Barlett and colleagues (2012) who summarize eight lessons learned when conducting Indigenous research. Barlett and colleagues (2012) share that following decades of personal experience weaving Indigenous and Eurocentric/Western knowledges within education and research projects, they have found eight key conceptual practices to be integral to success. These lessons learned are summarized in Table 2 to provide an introductory guide on best practices for equitably weaving Indigenous and Eurocentric/Western approaches into research.

Table 2. Eight Lessons Learned (Barlett et al., 2012, p. 334)

Lessons Learned	Description
1. Acknowledge that we need each other and must engage in a co-learning journey	All parties must believe that they need each other if Indigenous and mainstream knowledges are attempted to be woven together. This lesson is fundamental to building a collaborative relationship. This process requires humility and a willingness to learn.
2. Be guided by Two-Eyed Seeing	Considered the most profound lesson as it legitimatizes Indigenous knowledge as a distinct knowledge system. This lesson is shared in more detail on page 22 of this document.
3. View "science" in an inclusive way	Requires making room for alternative ways of understanding science. Bartlett (2011) shares that Indigenous science is spiritual, a living knowledge, and emphasizes wholeness and balance while Western science is heavily book-based and detached from the spirit.
4. Do things (rather than "just talk") in a creative, grow forward way	Requires ideas to be put into action. If your Indigenous partners suggest an idea, method, dissemination strategy, etc., act on it.
5. Become able to put our values and actions and knowledges in front of us, like an object, for examination and discussion	Requires self-awareness and reflexivity. This can lead to an understanding of the **ontology, epistemology, and methodology** underpinning the knowledge systems of all stakeholders. This lesson ensures that **value systems** are at the forefront.
6. Use visuals	Visuals can be helpful at all stages of the research. Consider providing visual examples of forms, instruments, or databases. Visuals are also helpful when disseminating findings. Visuals can help enact Lesson 5.
7. Weave back and forth between our **worldviews**	Requires the research partners to reflect on the current circumstances and choosing to use the different strengths of Indigenous and Eurocentric/Western knowledge systems as appropriate.
8. Develop an advisory council of willing, knowledgeable stakeholders, drawing upon individuals both from within the educational institution(s) and within Aboriginal communities	Elder guidance is essential for ethical research and collaborative partnerships

Relationships and Collaboration

At the heart of Indigenous methodologies are relationships. Given that Indigenous **ontology** (nature of reality) and **epistemology** (theory of knowledge) are relationship-based, a contextual framework for Indigenous research must also be relationship-based (Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008). The centrality of relationships is emphasised in the term '**all my relations**', whereby all living, spiritual, and environmental beings are connected (Kainai Board of Education, 2004). '**All my relations**' reminds Indigenous peoples of their connection to all beings and the responsibility to live in a kind and harmonious way (Kainai Board of Education, 2004).

To support culturally relevant research, there is an urgent need for **settler** researchers to approach Indigenous communities with humility and **relationality**. Given that Indigenous peoples have long been subject to harmful research done 'on them' rather than 'with them', centering relationships is core to preventing such unethical work from continuing (Kovach, 2010; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008; Wilson, 2008). Further, participatory research contributes to reconciliation through the development of relationships (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2013). Cardinal and Pepler (2021) use the term 'relational determinants of health' to emphasise how Indigenous wellness is built on the foundation of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual relationships with people, the land, **culture**, ceremony, and language. Restoring relational determinants of health that have been disrupted by colonization (e.g., **residential schools, Sixties Scoop**) may lead communities to wellness. The relational path towards a "Circle of Wellness" includes (Cardinal & Pepler, 2021, pp. 5 & 7):

Physical
- Healthy land, water, air, and living environment
- Relationship with and access to the land, traditional foods, and medicines
- Physical and social safety

Spiritual
- Reconnection to all my relations and creator
- Living cultural and individual gifts
- Resilience and resistance

Mental
- Grounded in traditional ways of knowing, being, and doing
- Self-determination
- Self and community responsibility and accountability

Emotional
- Healthy, stable, and harmonious relationships
- Support during difficult experiences to build resilience
- Support and connectedness in family and community

In depicting holistic wellness from a relational perspective, settlers working with Indigenous communities are encouraged to consider whether and how their work contributes to wellness or to harm and ongoing colonization (if to the latter, then the project should not go forward). Given the foundational nature of developing authentic relationships as part of a successful research partnership within Indigenous-focused research, the research team must consider if they are willing to take the time to develop relational capacities (Racine et al., 2022). If they are not, the project should not go forward. Relationships are fostered through respect, community accountability, and the researcher's willingness to always be an active listener (Kovach, 2010). For example, relationships can be fostered by taking time to meet with and get to know community partners before asking them to share Indigenous knowledge, by providing a traditional gift such as tobacco or venison (though researchers always need to ask about and follow local protocols for gift-giving), and following through on your word.

Figure 2. Relational Accountability

RELATIONAL

- Knowledge is shared with all creation
- Everything is connected
- Community partnership is neccessary

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Respect
- Reciprocity
- Responsibility

Indigenous research must also be **context-dependent** (e.g., what are the needs of this community, what is valid in this culture; LaFrance et al., 2012). Key knowledge holders should be consulted to assess if the research is necessary and appropriate. This requires humility and a willingness to listen (Peltier, 2018). Wilson (2008) uses the term **relational accountability** to highlight how an Indigenous methodology is one that is grounded in the community (relational) and where actions demonstrate respect, reciprocity, and responsibility (i.e., accountability; Figure 2). For example, researchers can demonstrate respect in how they gather stories and honor the original meaning of these stories (Peltier, 2018). Reciprocity refers to an exchange for mutual benefit. Community partners and research participants may have different beliefs about what constitutes a mutual benefit and should discuss this from the outset. For example, research may ask for participants' knowledge in exchange for gifts, yet some individuals are willing to share for the benefit of knowing they are helping their community (Guillemin et al., 2016; Peltier, 2018). Finally, responsibility means that researchers honor their commitments and strive to do good work that showcases the strengths of the community they are working with.
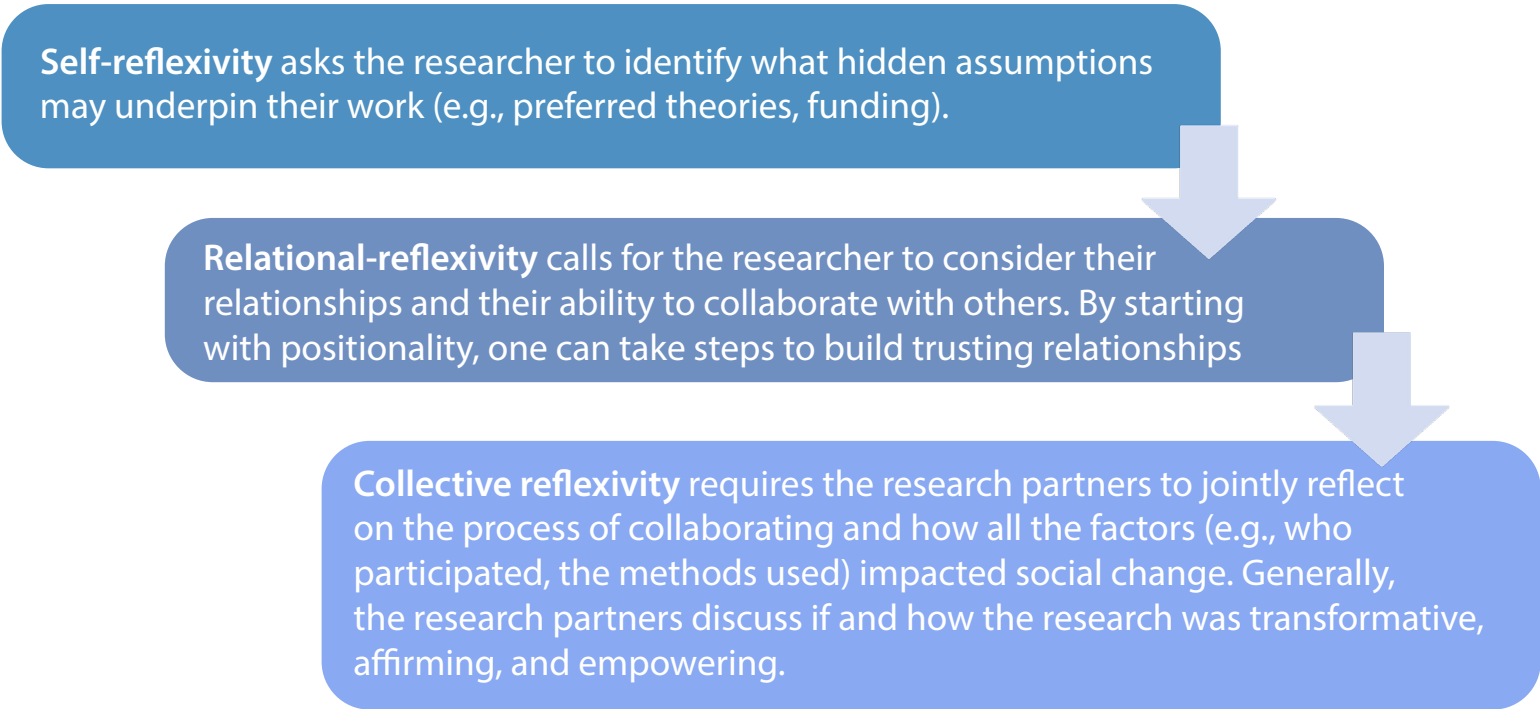
Wilson (2008) articulates how an Indigenous **ontology** and **epistemology** of **relationality** informs an Indigenous **methodology**: *"your methodology has to ask different questions: rather than asking about validity or reliability, you are asking how am I fulfilling my role in this relationship? … This becomes my methodology, an Indigenous methodology, by looking at relational accountability or being accountable to* **all my relations***"* (p. 177). Given the value of relationships within Indigenous methodology, evaluation research is not an objective process (Absolon & Willett, 2005; Bowman et al. 2015). Specifically, Hampton (1995) shares that "*it is not possible to be accountable to your relationships if you are pretending to be objective*" (as cited in Wilson, 2008, p. 101).

Positionality and Reflexivity

One way to acknowledge how our lived experiences may impact our beliefs, attitudes, and understandings is to share one's **positionality**. Positionality involves (1) being authentic about who one is as a researcher; (2) where they come from and who their ancestors are; (3) what their intentions and purpose are for doing the work; and (4) what their responsibilities are (Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008). Nicholls and colleagues (2009) also discuss the importance of **reflexivity**, which is the process of reflecting on how research is conducted and how the methods will shape outcomes. Nicholls and colleagues (2009) discuss three layers of reflexivity: self, interpersonal, and collective. See Figure 3.

To this end, the process of conducting research is equally, if not more, important than the outcome. When done right, the process has the capacity to amplify Indigenous voices, to identify what is working, and to collaborate for program sustainability.

Figure 3. Reflexivity (summary of ideas from Nicholls et al., 2009).

Self-reflexivity asks the researcher to identify what hidden assumptions may underpin their work (e.g., preferred theories, funding).

Relational-reflexivity calls for the researcher to consider their relationships and their ability to collaborate with others. By starting with positionality, one can take steps to build trusting relationships

Collective reflexivity requires the research partners to jointly reflect on the process of collaborating and how all the factors (e.g., who participated, the methods used) impacted social change. Generally, the research partners discuss if and how the research was transformative, affirming, and empowering.

Community-Based Participatory Research

An increasingly common approach among Western researchers who wish to partner with Indigenous peoples is **community-based participatory research (CBPR)**. CBPR is an orientation to research that was designed to equalize power relations between researchers and participants, and to promote a process of co-learning (Castleden et al., 2012; Wallerstein & Duran, 2010). Through this approach, research is conducted in full partnership with ones' community collaborators. Thus, there are opportunities to learn from Indigenous knowledge holders about community ethics and protocols (Israel et al., 2018). As CBPR is an approach that places relationships at the forefront, it may be useful for equitably collaborating with Indigenous communities and choosing methods that are congruent with community customs (though we note that CBPR is not a method developed by and for Indigenous peoples). By designing meaningful research using CBPR, there is greater opportunity for capacity building, action, and social change. Israel and colleagues (2018) have produced a set of **10 guiding principles** for researchers wishing to undertake CBPR. These principles are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Israel and colleagues (2018) 10 guiding principles for CBPR
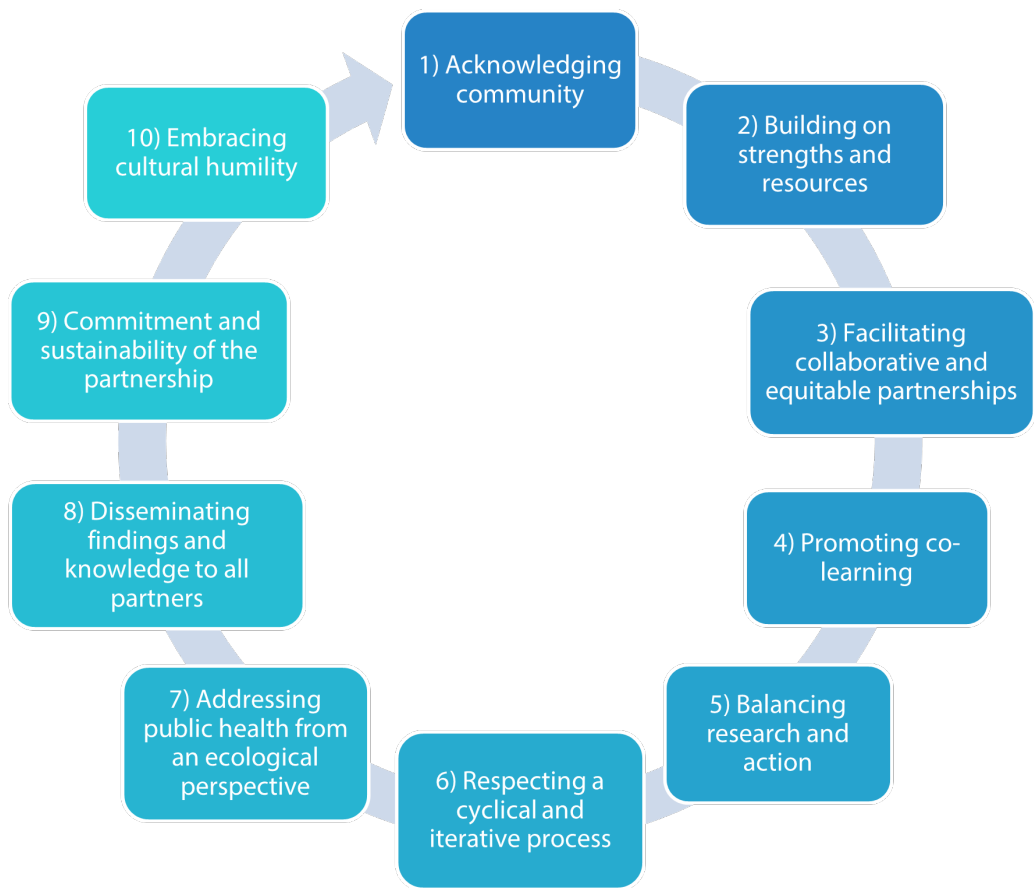
The process of undertaking CBPR can be daunting as significant time and commitment must go into the work. An excellent example of the time and care it takes to foster community relations for participatory research is found in the work of Castleden and colleagues (2012), who share that their first year was "*spent drinking tea … because it took several visits to the community, a lot of patience and … getting them to a point where they trusted me to be a partner in doing research*" (p.168). Castleden et al. (2012) exemplify how relationship building led to meaningful knowledge exchange. When adopting a CBPR approach, the research team recognizes that community voice must be prioritized as the community is most directly affected by the research issue being explored and are in the best position to make use of the results.

Community Organizers in Community-Based Research

There are different approaches to put CBPR into practice. One approach is the use of Community Organizers (COs; Bends et al., 2014). COs are also sometimes referred to as cultural knowledge brokers or community liaisons (Goforth et al., 2021). When working with Indigenous communities, COs should be Indigenous peoples who act as a liaison to facilitate deeper understanding and knowledge for both the university researchers and Indigenous community partners (Bends et al., 2014), including by:

- Understanding the community and university research structures, processes, and policies
- Gathering community members' insights and improving community member participation
- Enhancing researchers' understanding of community needs and protocols
- Developing networking opportunities

In Bends et al.'s (2014) study, the COs shared that their role required a willingness to learn the CBPR process so they could apply it in a user-friendly manner and ensure tribal protocols were followed (Bends et al., 2014). In turn, this was intended to negate the trauma that Indigenous peoples can experience when partaking in research. The COs consistently shared that the key to successfully implementing CBPR was communication. **Communication** facilitated transparency, which built relationships. Second, it was important for all parties to follow through on what they said they would do. This **dependability** also built relationships. It is also important for researchers to recognize the social risk that Indigenous community members may be taking on by becoming a CO (e.g., because they may be seen in the community as a representative for the research, and may be held accountable if the research team does not follow through on their word; Goforth et al., 2021). Thus, engaging with CO's is a serious commitment that should be honored with financial payment.

Two-Eyed Seeing

As aforementioned, Barlett and colleagues' (2012) eight lessons learned has many practical considerations for Indigenous research. One of those lessons is Two-eyed seeing, which was deemed to be the most profound lesson by Crowshoe (2022), and thus will be discussed in more depth. Related wisdom that also draws on a "two-eyed" seeing approach includes the concepts of ethical space (Ermine, 2007) and parallel processes/paths (Crowshoe, 2022; University of Calgary, 2019).

Elder Albert Marshall developed **Two-eyed seeing** as a guiding principle for collaboration. Two-eyed seeing can be understood as the "*gift of multiple perspectives*" because one eye is used to see the strengths of Indigenous knowledges while the other eye is used to view the strengths of Western knowledges (Barlett et al., 2012, p. 338). When both eyes are utilized, there is likely to be maximum benefit for all. See Figure 5 for a visual depiction of Two-eyed seeing.

Figure 5. Two Eyed Seeing
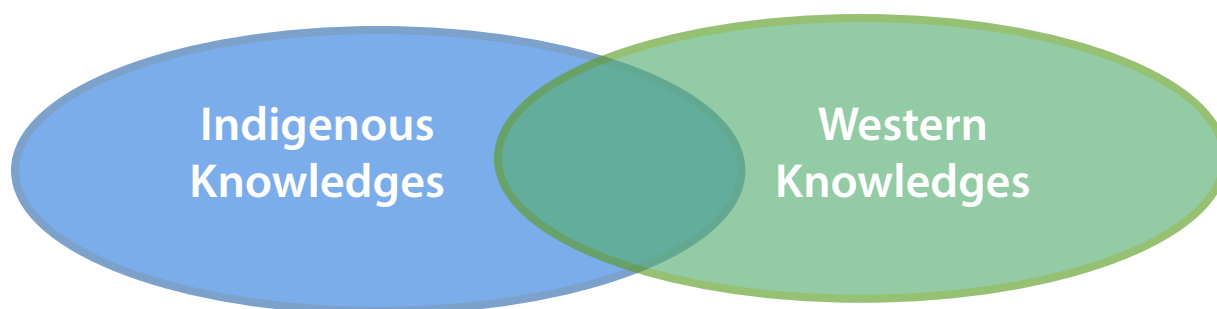
When collaborating on research, individuals' various beliefs, values, and knowledge (collectively, their **worldview**) come together. Collaboration comes with the potential for disagreements and confusion which is why a Two-Eyed Seeing approach can be a helpful reminder that multiple perspectives often lead to more favorable results. Learning together and from one another is highly advantageous for designing a study that is ethical, respectful, rigorous, and beneficial for the Indigenous community (Barlett et al., 2012, p. 338). However, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to 'doing' Two-eyed seeing. For example, in Peltier's (2018) work with an Anishinaabe community, they sought to explore Anishinaabe adults lived experiences with cancer and their healing methods. **Peltier (2018) shares how the Western eye contributed a participatory action framework that informed the design of action-oriented research, while the Anishinaabe eye brought cultural safety and culturally relevant interpretations to the stories shared**. Further, these two eyes contributed to meaningful data dissemination in the forms of academic publications, a video project, and a model that could be used to teach health-care providers.
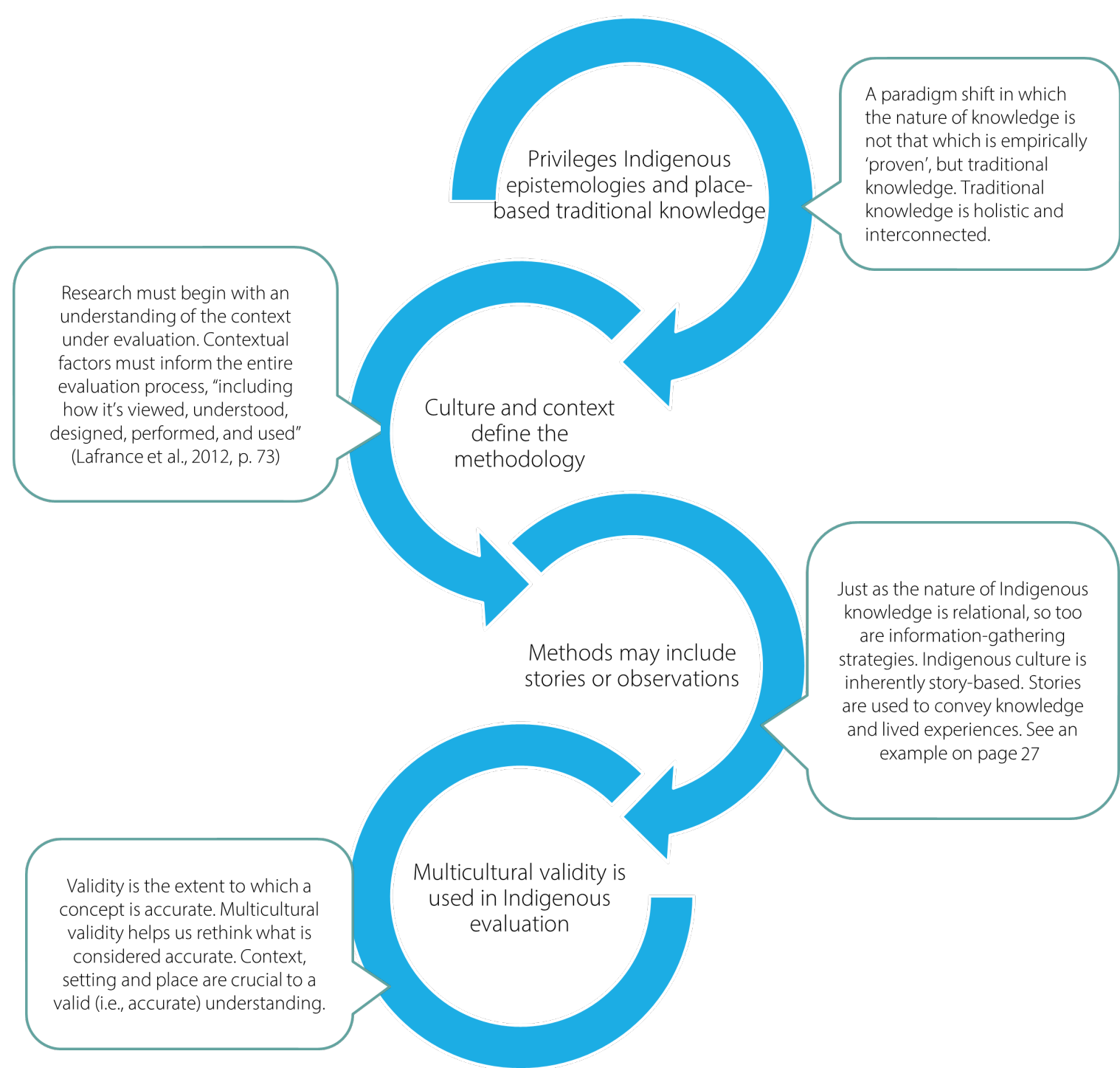
Indigenous Evaluation Methodology

In Cote and Ready's (2021) Indigenous Ways of Knowing article, they share the Sky Woman Creation Story by Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples of Canada and the United States. In this story, Turtle Island (now known as North America) sat on the back of **Grandmother Turtle** who carried the land until it expanded and became host to Mother Earth. In Cote and Ready's (2021), visual depiction of Grandmother Turtle (see Figure 6), there are **thirteen pieces on the shell**, representing the thirteen moon cycles as Earth revolves around the sun, and there are **twenty-eight pieces around the Turtle's shell**, representing the cycle of the moon. These parts represent the knowledge and truths carried by Grandmother Turtle. When completing Evaluation Research with Indigenous peoples, consider these teachings and principles in order to guide actions, and like a turtle, do not rush. Remember that "**the journey is as important as the destination**" (Cote & Ready, 2021, 2). By taking time along the journey, one is able to create meaningful, authentic relationships, and listen to the advice and wisdom of Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

Figure 6. Legend of Change: Combining the Old Ways and the New Ways. Created by Cote and Ready, 2021.
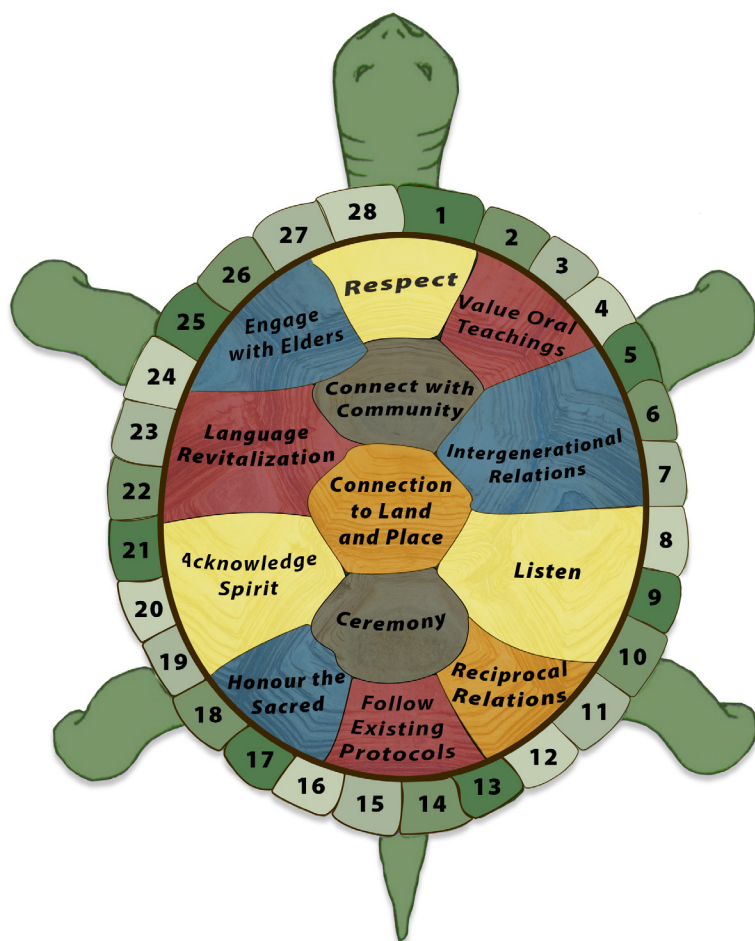
1. Cedar **2.** Provide Medicines **3.** Feed Elders First **4.** Be Open to Modifications **5.** Follow Guidance of Cultural Helpers **6.** Storytelling **7.** Openness to New and Different Teachings **8.** Tobacco **9.** Use Mute Button **10.** Do not Interrupt **11.** Space for Everyone to Speak **12.** Offer Yourself Compassion Regarding Mistakes **13.** Initiate Relations with Protocols **14.** Arrange for and Share Food **15.** Sweetgrass **16.** Calling in Songs **17.** Begin with a Smudge **18.** Offer Gifts **19.** Research and Learn Protocols for the Land You Are On **20.** Learn the History **21.** Continue to Learn **22.** Acknowledge and Create Space for Differences between Elders and Communities **23.** Sage **24.** Elders Speak First **25**. Learn about the Peoples You Are Working With **26.** Learn About the Land You Are On **27.** Acknowledge the Land **28.** Space for Language to be Shared. (Cote and Ready, 2021, 3).

In this section, two frameworks specific to **evaluation research** are presented. First, Indigenous Evaluation Methodology (IEM) is a culturally respectful method stressing that a program is inseparable from the context. Knowledge is developed within a context, and as such this context must be acknowledged. Some of the main components of IEM are shared here (LaFrance et al., 2012).

Privileges Indigenous epistemologies and place-based traditional knowledge

A paradigm shift in which the nature of knowledge is not that which is empirically 'proven', but traditional knowledge. Traditional knowledge is holistic and interconnected.

Research must begin with an understanding of the context under evaluation. Contextual factors must inform the entire evaluation process, "including how it's viewed, understood, designed, performed, and used" (Lafrance et al., 2012, p. 73)

Culture and context define the methodology

Methods may include stories or observations

Just as the nature of Indigenous knowledge is relational, so too are information-gathering strategies. Indigenous culture is inherently story-based. Stories are used to convey knowledge and lived experiences. See an example on page 27

Multicultural validity is used in Indigenous evaluation

Validity is the extent to which a concept is accurate. Multicultural validity helps us rethink what is considered accurate. Context, setting and place are crucial to a valid (i.e., accurate) understanding.

Phases of IEM

An Indigenous Evaluation Methodology is presented by LaFrance and colleagues (2012; *Figure 7*).

The outer circle represents Indigenous ways of knowing. These ways of knowing underpin an Indigenous worldview and are thus foundational.

The second circle represents core Indigenous values. These values must be respected throughout the evaluation.

The **inner four quadrants** represent the four phases of an Indigenous evaluation.

Figure 7. Indigenous Evaluation Methodology (LaFrance and colleagues, 2012, p. 63)

Phases of IEM according to LaFrance and colleagues (2012) include:

1. **Understand the context**. Before beginning the evaluation, the researcher must spend time exploring what social, historical, and political context surrounds the program/service/policy. By understanding context, the researcher will better understand:

   - what constitutes a social problem in that community
   - appropriate responses to the problem in that community
   - meaningful evaluation of the problem in that community
   - useful knowledge to advance the well-being of the tribal community (LaFrance et al., 2012, p. 60).

2. **Create the story.** Once the researcher has gained the background knowledge of the community's context, the first step is to develop the story of the program and the research. As opposed to Eurocentric/Western methods of developing a logic model, story creation and metaphors are instead the first step when using the IEM. These stories and culturally rooted metaphors have meaning withing the context that the program and research are taking place. For example:

A Plains tribe's Winter Count—a buffalo hide calendar with pictures or symbols depicting memorable events—was used as the metaphor for a comprehensive project to introduce students to science, nursing, and mathematics. Among tribes of the Great Plains, the Winter Count was used to record important events over the course of a year, from first snowfall to next first snowfall. The group used this metaphor to represent key relationships and activities of the program. These included environmental restoration, engaging youth with elders, and using the outdoors as classrooms (LaFrance et al., 2012, p.67, 68) This program metaphor emphasizes the power of story in communicating ideas and lessons learned.

3. **Build the scaffolding.** The scaffolding refers to a respectful and culturally appropriate method for constructing the evaluation design and process. For example, researchers seek to build an authentic relationship with Indigenous elders or knowledge holders and then work together to design the project. Further, it may also be appropriate to offer traditional gifts and ask before taking notes (this is something that should be checked with your local knowledge broker/CO; see page 27). As Indigenous knowledge is sacred, it may not be appropriate to have a written record. With a deep respect for the relationships established, researchers can work with their community partners to build the scaffolding (i.e., evaluation design and process). Steps in building the scaffolding include:

   a. Factors are selected for examination and then evaluation questions are developed. Work with the community to phrase questions appropriately.
   b. Determine what data needs to be gathered
   c. Determine the best sources of data
   d. Consider what methods fit the context
   e. Establish a timeline for collecting data
   f. Determine how data will be analyzed and reported
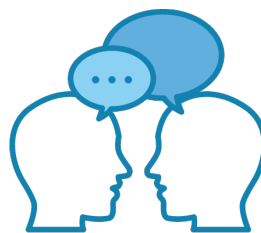
4. **Planning, implementing, and celebrating evaluation.**
   a. All parts of the evaluation must be an inclusive process. The evaluator is a partner in the lived experience of the program. The evaluator should engage in ongoing reflection and learning.
   b. Negotiate ownership of the information. Consider OCAP principles during this process (See more about OCAP in the resource section).
   c. Seek permission to disseminate data and work collaboratively when doing so.

5. **Engaging community and building capacity**
   Engage the community to learn how evaluation findings can enhance programs or services. As Indigenous research must be action-oriented, the findings should inform meaningful action that benefits the community.

Power of Story

Telling stories is fundamental to the lives and **cultures** of Indigenous peoples (Kovach, 2010). Stories are a method and means for understanding lived experience and for sharing advice and knowledge. Thus, Indigenous evaluation is about gathering stories. LaFrance and colleague (2012) collaborated with an Indigenous advisor to demonstrate the power of story. The Indigenous advisor, Eric Jolly, used the following story of a Cherokee basket (which was gifted to him by his grandmother) to exemplify the IEM framework.

"The basket-making process begins by interweaving two pairs of thin honey suckle vines into a square or cross that forms the base of the basket and which symbolizes the four directions and elements of creation. On the journey of life, this represents the beginning of spiritual awareness. Additional pairs of vines are woven together, and with the original crossed sets of vines, they begin to form interwoven triangles that give shape to the basket. The inter Connection symbolizes the spiritual relationships of the creator with humanity, animals, and all that is on earth. As the weaving continues, there are sets of concentric circles that form inner and outer walls that are held in tension, giving the basket its strength. It is this strength that gives the basket its integrity, for a strong basket is a useful basket. Also, as the basket is being woven, it is continuously turned to ensure that it forms a balanced whole.
The story of the Cherokee basket became a metaphor for the relationship of indigenous evaluation to program implementation: Each is interlaced with the other. Evaluation requires this continuous reflection and learning to ensure that multiple perspectives are included in the interpretation of the program experience." (LaFrance et al., 2012, p. 67)

Culturally Responsive Evaluation

The second framework is known as **Culturally Responsive Evaluation** (CRE). CRE is a strengths-based, social justice-focused, holistic framework that centers evaluation within a given culture. CRE acknowledges that culture is key to understanding peoples' attitudes, behaviors, and motivations (Thomas & Parsons, 2017). Thus, by include culture and context in the study design, the method becomes rigorous (Bowman, et al., 2015).

Centering culture requires numerous considerations at multiple stages of the evaluation process. For example, paying attention to the context in which an evaluation will be conducted (e.g., history, location, people), and asking questions like:

"Is the program operating in ways that respect local culture?"	"How well is the program connecting with the values, lifestyles, and worldviews of its intended consumers?"	"How are the burdens and benefits of the program distributed?" (Hood, et al., 2015, p. 292)

Specific to Indigenous evaluation work, considerations should include:

- **Awareness of diversity** among Indigenous peoples. Customs, worldviews, traditions, and other teachings differ by community (Bowman et al., 2015).

- Throughout the research, **Indigenous voice** must be treated as legitimate. Honor Indigenous voice and perspective as the community's insight is key to designing a culturally safe and meaningful evaluation (Bowman 2015; Thomas & Parsons, 2017).

- Adopt a **strengths-based approach** by focusing on opportunities rather than problems or deficits (Thomas & Parsons, 2017).

- Draw on elements of **Tribal Critical Theory (TribalCrit)** which holds that colonialism is embedded in all aspects of Western society (Bowman, et al., 2015). Many government policies and social systems still enforce assimilation. Thus, evaluators must find spaces for advocacy, self-determination, and autonomy of the community (Bowman, et al., 2015).

- Recognize that **oral tradition** is often more sacred and respected than written protocols (Absolon & Willett, 2004; Bowman, et al., 2015)

- The evaluator must be **intentional when selecting research designs and methods** by considering the context, the participants, and the stakeholders (Bowman, et al., 2015). While quantitative methods are often helpful for gathering evidence on if a program is working (from a Western perspective), they may miss the knowledge generated from qualitative methods including voice and personal experiences that can enrich the results (Thomas & Parsons, 2017). A multitude of methods are available and should be carefully selected depending upon the context and community's preference.

- **Research dissemination** should honor Indigenous choice and control. Provide educational research for communities, and seek to disseminate scholarly discourse within Indigenous and non-Indigenous publications, policy forums, and/or public debates (Bowman et al., 2015). Using Two-eyed seeing, results can meaningfully be shared with a variety of audiences (Peltier, 2018).

In Bowman and colleagues' (2015) evaluation on Health Promotion and Diabetes Prevention, they designed a culturally-responsive project by meeting with evaluators and participants to co-create the evaluation plan. The evaluation was **culturally responsive in three ways**:

- It was designed to honor the "seven-generations" teachings, which is a belief based on ancient Haudenosaunee philosophy that today's actions will affect seven generations past and seven generations forward. Bowman and colleagues' (2015) research honored the past by including traditional protocols and intended to honor and positively impact the future generations.
- Existing data sources were used to avoid burdening community members or imposing data collection (e.g., agendas, media releases, community center sign-in sheets, etc.).
- Ongoing meetings were held so the researchers could update the Indigenous advisory team, ask for guidance, and ensure the research was meeting community needs.

Methods

While methodology is the framework of the research project, methods are the specific tools or techniques that can be used to gather data. Methods used to obtain knowledge are vast but can be categorized into several types including quantitative methods, qualitative methods, mixed methods, and Indigenous methods. As previously shared, any method can be used in an Indigenous Evaluation framework if the methodology driving the research is based on an Indigenous framework and epistemological standpoint. The interplay between the methodology and the method determines appropriateness (i.e., protocols for carrying out research in a good way; Kovach, 2010). The following methods offer some examples of the many that are available to conduct evaluation research.

Research Conversations

Research conversations are unstructured, reflexive, and open-ended conversations that are meant to be non-hierarchical between the researcher and storyteller (Kovach, 2009). Both individuals equally engage and collaborate in the conversation to produce knowledge (Kovach, 2009). This method aligns with the tradition of sharing knowledge through oral storytelling. Indeed, research conversations, or the conversational method according to Kovach (2009), is akin to other phrases used such as storytelling, talk story, or re-storying (Kovach, 2010). In Eurocentric research, it is analogous to narrative inquiry. However, when done from an Indigenous framework, it is linked to a tribal epistemology, is done purposely with a decolonizing aim, is flexible, relational, and collaborative (Kovach, 2010). As both parties are collaborating in conversations, or storytelling, there is a relational element that align with the Indigenous methodology of **relationality** (Wilson, 2008).

Photovoice

Ultimately, there is a need to ensure the relational way of knowing and being is enacted in the method chosen (Higgins, 2014). An increasingly popular method in social science research is photovoice. Photovoice is the process of taking photos that represent a given topic (Wang, 1999). Participants then have the opportunity to come together to discuss and interpret the photos (Wang, 1999). The developers of photovoice, Wang and Burris (1997), note three key benefits of the method including its ability to document community's strengths and concerns, promote critical dialogue, and reach policymakers. Further, it can be adapted to the developmental level of participants, and it is considered engaging (Fernandez Conde & Exner-Cortens, 2021). Wang (2006) shares a nine-step process for using photovoice. These steps are shown in Table 3. Given the benefits of using photovoice there has been an increase in its use with Indigenous communities to emphasize a participatory approach (Halsall & Forneris, 2016; Tremblay et al., 2018). For example, Tremblay and colleagues (2018) hosted a series of photovoice exhibits with participants' pictures of strengths and resilience in order to alter negative perceptions of the community (Tremblay et al., 2018). Further exemplifying]the relational aspect of the method, Castleden and colleagues (2008) held regular potlucks with their community so they could review pictures and discuss next steps for taking photographs. As such, the nine steps laid out by Wang (2006) are adaptable to the needs of one's community partners.
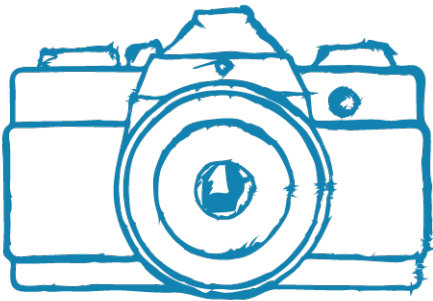
Table 3. Wang's (2006) nine-step Photovoice method (Fernandez Conde & Exner-Cortens, 2021, p. 10)

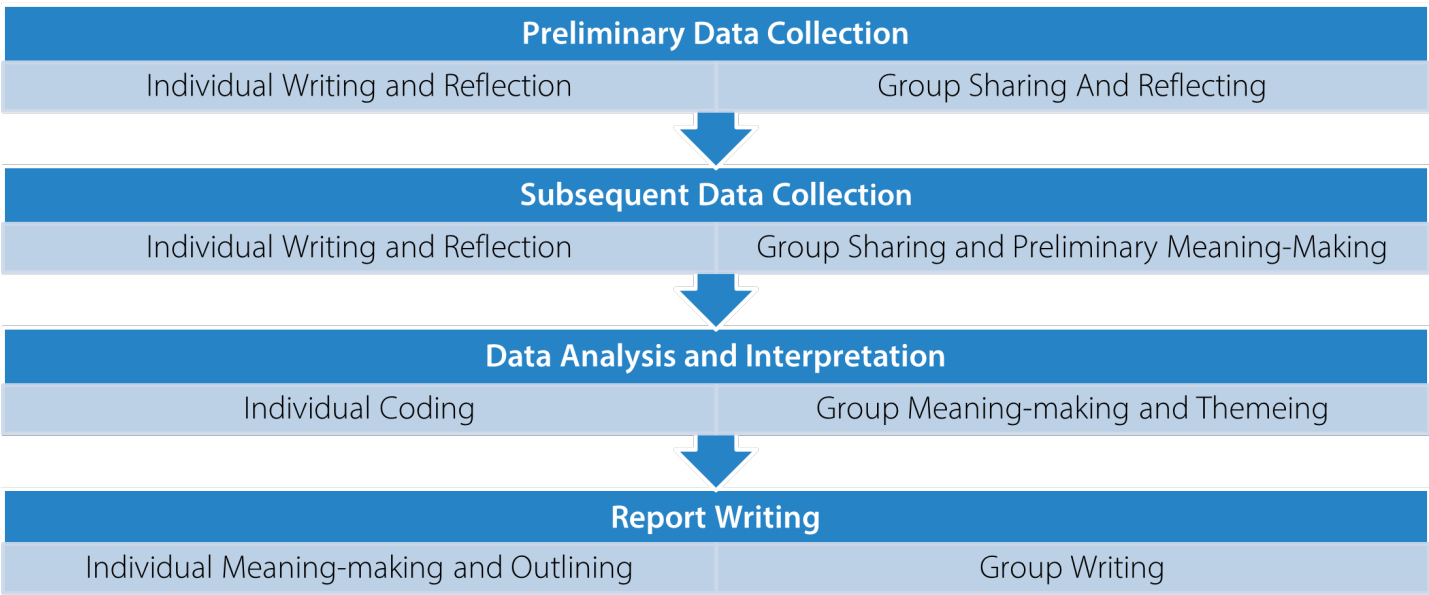| Photovoice Step	Description
1.Include policy makers or leaders as the target audience	While this step may depend on the goals of the project, influential community members are often included as participants, since a common goal of photovoice is to implement recommendations that stem from the project.
2. Recruit participants	Recruiting 7-10 participants is recommended.
3. Present methodology to participants	Present the photovoice method through workshops that incorporate ethics, power, and the use of cameras.
4. Informed consent	Obtain informed consent from all participants (and their caregivers when working with children and youth).
5.Propose a theme for taking pictures	Participants can brainstorm a topic, or it can be presented to them.
6. Distribute the cameras	Give each participant a camera and review how to use it. Participants can also use a phone camera if they have access to this.
7. Give participants time to take the photos	Let participants know how long they have to take the photos.
8. Meet and discuss the photos	First, ask each participant to choose a photo or two and talk about it. Next, Wang (2006) recommends using the SHOWeD method (see below) so participants can frame stories through a critical lens. Finally, ask participants (as a group) to identify the themes that they see arising from the photographs.
9. Plan how to share the photographs and stories	Collaborate with participants to decide the format with which the findings will be shared. For example, the format could be a digital slideshow or an exhibition. Include community leaders and poli-cymakers as part of the audience when sharing results, to promote uptake of project recommendations.

Autoethnography

In continuing to explore **decolonizing** research methods, autoethnography (AE) may be applicable. AE is a qualitative method whereby the researcher is immersed in the evaluation process to "*feel moral dilemmas [and] to think with our story instead of about it*" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 735). AE involves self-reflection and self-observation to describe beliefs, practices, and experiences. As such, AE differs from traditional ethnography (i.e., observation of people and cultures), in that the researcher acknowledges their subjectivity and shares their own stories (Lapadat, 2017). The researcher is the primary participant as the data is comprised of personal stories and reflections (auto) about culture (ethno).

The focus on self in AE is a distinguishing feature and thus lends itself well to exploring various ways of knowing as valid knowledge. Too often, from a Eurocentric/Western perspective, research is framed as an objective process, conducted by an objective person (Blalock & Akehi, 2018). However, researchers are always influenced by their bias and positionality. In AE, the emphasis on subjectivity and personal experiences aligns well with Indigenous ways of knowing (Blalock & Akehi, 2018).

Autoethnography provides the opportunity for "people who were formally the subjects of ethnography to become the authors" (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 2). As such, AE as a research method with Indigenous peoples can be liberating. Further, the process of telling one's story through AE methods has many similarities with Indigenous research methods such as storytelling, research conversations, and inner knowing (McIvor, 2010).

Building on AE is **collaborative autoethnography (CAE)** (Lapadat, 2017). CAE is the process of intertwining a researcher's personal narrative into the greater collective experience (e.g., of the full research team; Blalock & Akehi, 2018). This group process is focused on shared experiences and vulnerabilities which can build trust and flatten power differentials (Lapadat, 2017). For example, Goforth and colleagues (2021) used CAE to examine and reflect on their community engagement (as predominately settler researchers) while developing a school-based mental health program for Indigenous youth. Goforth and colleagues (2021) chose CAE as a means to **decolonize** their research by "becoming those who are being researched" (p. 16). In doing so, the research team reflected on the value of relationships and partnerships, immersion into the community, the role of story, and the need to honor tribal sovereignty. A model for carrying out collaborative autoethnography is provided by Ngunjiri and colleagues (2010, Figure 8).

Figure 8. Process of conducting collaborative autoethnography (Ngunjiri and colleagues (2010, p. 7)

Preliminary Data Collection	
Individual Writing and Reflection	Group Sharing And Reflecting

Subsequent Data Collection	
Individual Writing and Reflection	Group Sharing and Preliminary Meaning-Making

Data Analysis and Interpretation	
Individual Coding	Group Meaning-making and Themeing

Report Writing	
Individual Meaning-making and Outlining	Group Writing

Conclusion

When working with Indigenous communities, it is critical that evaluation researchers recognize how Eurocentric/Western research practices serve to prioritize the transmission of Eurocentric thought, thus contributing to ongoing colonization (Bowman, 2020). Despite many policy and programs' claims of 'evidence-based decision making', Indigenous voice is underrepresented in this evidence. In addition, evaluation research projects do not often recognize Indigenous oral history as evidence. Given the multitude of calls for Indigenous people to be included on issues that affect them, evaluation research must also follow suit.

This means that research is conducted in full partnership with Indigenous stakeholders and the intent is to positively contribute to the community (Peltier, 2018). Researchers must seek to co-create through frameworks like community-based participatory research, collaborative-autoethnography, and Two-eyed seeing. Community engagement and participatory frameworks are central to ethical research with Indigenous communities.

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Resources

Key Readings

For a deeper exploration of some of the core methodological concepts discussed in this paper, see the following book recommendations.

- Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods, by Shawn Wilson
- Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts, by Margret Kovach
- Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples (3rd Ed.), by Linda Tuhiwai Smith
- Indigenous Research Methodologies, by Bagele Chilisa

Also consider these three articles on Indigenous methods and community relations:

- Aboriginal research: Berry picking and hunting in the 21st Century, by Kathy Absolon & Cam Willett
- "I spent the first year drinking tea": Exploring Canadian university researchers' perspectives on community-based participatory research involving Indigenous peoples, by Heather Castleden, Vanessa Sloan Morgan, & Christopher Lamb
- Decolonization is not a metaphor, by Eve Tuck & K. Wayne Yang

Resources for Ethical Considerations

Given Canada's history of unethical research on Indigenous peoples, several organizations have developed ethical protocols. First, the Tri-Council Agencies developed a chapter on ethical community engagement, research procedures, and research agreements when working with Indigenous communities. Any research and/or evaluation project in Canada with Indigenous peoples must follow the principles outlined in this chapter. Second, the First Nations Principles of OCAP® discuss how data should be collected and protected, in particular with First Nations communities (though the principles are relevant for good research practice with many Indigenous communities).

- TCPS 2 (2018) – Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada
- The First Nations Principles of OCAP (i.e., Ownership, Control, Access, Possession)

Both the TCPS2 and OCAP training offer core ethical considerations for engaging in respectful and meaningful research with Indigenous communities. However, while this guidelines are necessary, they are not sufficient. Evaluators must also speak with the community and learn their ethical protocols. Researchers must also check what reviews are required from within the community (e.g., a formal Research Ethics Board, a research advisory council, Chief and band council). In addition, researchers should (Bowman et al., 2015):

- Consider local, federal, and Indigenous laws and policies when planning an evaluation project
- Use existing Indigenous forms/ instruments/ databases when available
- Obtain permission to share, present on, or publish information outside of the Indigenous context

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