



BUILDING PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT WHAT WE HEARD

On October 26, 2018, the Indigenous Research Support Initiative (IRSI) hosted a gathering to begin a process of co-development of *principles of engagement* for Indigenous research collaborations. Held at UBC on Musqueam traditional territory, the gathering convened ninety people, drawing on the unique perspectives of Indigenous and research communities, funding partners, faculty, staff and students. This summary presents the key concepts that were discussed.

Participants cited the need for early and meaningful engagement and the need to build relationships *before* research agendas. Time and trust are required, and project partners need to approach projects with an air of openness and begin by listening. In this way, researchers meet communities where they are at and apply a strengths-based approach to the work.

Cultural awareness and mutual respect are integral to successful collaborations, and are built through listening, learning and opening to new ways of knowing. By striving to understand the land, history and contemporary reality of the community, researchers establish foundations of respect and understanding.

Collaborative research projects are community-led and address community-identified priorities. Researchers must be flexible, open to revising their approaches to projects as well as their expectations for the research outcomes. They must also be willing to adopt practices that work for communities without enforcing conformity to external timelines and funding parameters. A flexible approach catalyzes creativity and empowers communities to choose meaningful metrics of success, ultimately leading to more relevant outcomes for all.

Collaborative Indigenous research requires humility. Researchers must open to the wisdom at their disposal from the community and may need to unlearn certain ways of knowing. To build accountability and integrity, researchers may also need to acknowledge mistakes. Transparency with the community and ongoing self-reflection allow research practices based on trust to emerge.

Collaborative research supports reconciliation, acknowledging the legacy of extractive and exploitative practices of the past and respecting communities' needs for healing and authority over their own data and information.

IRSI will be hosting additional gatherings and workshops in early 2019 to continue to gather feedback about principles of research engagement, including data governance and ethics. The results of these ongoing dialogues will provide the foundations for IRSI's engagement framework and guide us in our focus and priorities going forward.