



TREATY 7  
INDIGENOUS  
ALLY  
TOOLKIT



# TREATY 7

## KAINAI/BLOOD TRIBE

Akánaa translates to Many Chief. Aká meaning many and nínaa meaning chief. Káína translates directly to Many Chief people. Today, the Blood Tribe is in southern Alberta on the Blood Reserve, the largest Reserve in Canada at 1,342.9 square kilometers with a population of over 12,250 members. It is approximately 200 km south of Calgary. The Blood Tribes' major economic base has traditionally been agriculture. (bloodtribe.org)

## SIKSIKA

Prior to the 1800s, Siksika was made up of thirty-six (36) clans for a total population of 18,000. Clans grouped themselves into three main tribes which were each responsible for maintaining the boundaries of the Nation. The North Blackfoot camped along the North Saskatchewan River. The South Blackfoot protected lands as far South as the Missouri River. The Middle Blackfoot were responsible for all lands between the Rocky Mountains and the Cypress Hills. The Siksika Nation is a member of the Blackfoot Confederacy and located 45 minutes east of Calgary. (siksikanation.com)

## PIIKANI (SCABBY ROBE)

Before the 1870s, the Piikani people occupied territory on both sides of what is now the Canada–United States border. The Piikani are currently divided between the Blackfeet Nation (Aamsskáápipikani or Southern Piikani) located in Montana, and the Piikani Nation (Aapátóhsipikáni or Northern Piikani) in Alberta. The Piikani Nation has approximately 3,600 registered members of which an estimated 40% live off reserve in nearby urban centres to meet their education, housing and employment needs. (piikanation.com)

## IYAXE NAKODA (STONEY NAKODA)

Íyaxe Nakoda, or Mountain Nakoda, self identify as Íyethkabi or Íyethka, which translates roughly as speakers of the concise, pure or clear language of the Nakoda Sioux language. Among other tribes, the Íyaxe Nakoda warriors were known as the Wapa Makthe, a homage to the care used in their taking of enemy scalps. Stoney is a settler term used to recognize the Íyaxe Nakoda and refers to their method of cooking with heated stones.

## TSUUT'INA

Once part of the more northerly Danezaa ('Beaver Indians') nation, the Tsuut'ina are part of the Athapaskan group who migrated south onto the Great Plains during the 1700s, prior to any written records of the area. The Tsuut'ina Nation is adjacent to the southwest city limits of Calgary. The northeast portion of the reserve was used as part of CFB Calgary, a Canadian Army base, from 1910–1998. In 2006, the land was returned to the Nation by the Government of Canada. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsuut'ina\\_Nation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsuut'ina_Nation))

## MÉTIS

Métis are a post-contact Indigenous people with roots in the Red River or other historic Métis communities while the word métis refers to people with mixed European and Indigenous ancestry. Alberta has the largest Métis population in the country with over 114,000 Métis people living in the province. Alberta is the only province in Canada with a recognized Métis land base entrenched in provincial statute – the Métis settlements.

# SAY HELLO

"OKI" BLACKFOOT

"DANIT'ADA" TSUUT'INA

"ĀBA WATHTech" ÍYAXE NAKODA

"TANSI" CREE

# THE CITY

Traditional names of the landscape now known as Calgary:

Moh-kins-tsis (Blackfoot)

Guts'ists'i (Tsuut'ina)

Wichîspa (Stoney)

Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy)



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is appropriate to provide a land acknowledgement at the beginning of an event or gathering. Those delivering the acknowledgement are encouraged to form deeper connections and grow their knowledge of the original people of the land.

To avoid land acknowledgements becoming rote or repetitive and losing significance, acknowledgements should come from a personal place – a solid understanding and appreciation of the land, the language and the people.

To learn more about Treaty 7 land acknowledgements, visit [calgaryfoundation.org](http://calgaryfoundation.org)

“This land has to be acknowledged. The people who took care of this land for a long time have to be acknowledged. At least find the truth about us.”  
- Beverley Hungry Wolf



# WHAT IS AN ALLY?

Being an ally is about disrupting oppressive spaces by educating others on the realities and histories of marginalized people.

When it comes to creating a positive & sustainable impact on the lives of Indigenous people, it is important to understand the role that individuals play within the collective experience. An ally recognizes that every person has a basic right to human dignity, respect, and equal access to resources.

An ally acknowledges that building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is work of the heart. It requires a certain humbling to allow our hearts and minds to accept new, and often challenging, information.

## AN ALLY...

- Transfers their privilege to those who have less.
- Speaks up. When scared or uncomfortable.
- Allows space to express thoughts and feelings.
- Walks alongside one another.
- Listens deeply and from the heart.
- Plants seeds of truth in conversations with others.
- Believes and validates the stories they hear.
- Takes on the battles and burdens of those who are weary.

In addition to becoming an ally, settlers can also explore the following:

### ACCOMPLICE

An accomplice works within a system and “directly challenges institutionalized/ systemic racism, colonization, and white supremacy by blocking or impeding racist people, policies, and structures”.<sup>1</sup>

### CO-RESISTOR

Being a co-resistor is about standing together in resistance against oppressive forces. It is combining theory and practice by establishing relationships and being deeply involved within a community that informs how one listens critically, and works to disrupt oppressive institutions and systemic systems. <sup>2</sup>

1. *Opportunities for White People in the Fight for Racial Justice.* (2016)

2. *As we have always done: Indigenous freedom through radical resistance.* (2017)



# THE REALITY

## THE INDIAN ACT

- Although the Indian Act was enacted in 1876, Indigenous people have only recently begun to obtain the same rights as other people in Canada. The Indian Act still gives absolute power and authority to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs over every aspect of registered status First Nations people on a reserve – from birth to death.
- The Indian Act does not allow registered status First Nations persons to own property on reserves or borrow funds to build a house on reserve. Home titles always remains in the Crown's name.

## PAN-INDIGENIZING

- A perspective that Indigenous people are one homogeneous group. "Indigenous culture" is too broad a term, considering the diversity that exists among the many Indigenous communities, nations, languages, cultures values and beliefs. Similarly, one Indigenous person does not speak for all Indigenous people.

### Decolonize:

Build genuine relationships with the community to find their uniqueness and respectfully acknowledge true identities (e.g. Blackfoot, Dene, Na'koda, etc).

## MYTH: COLONIALISM AND RACISM HAS ENDED

- Indigenous people in Canada continue to face discrimination, not only from an individual perspective but through many settler-created systems in society.

- Indigenous people are disproportionately represented when it comes to incarceration, unemployment rates, low educational attainment, and overall poor health and wellbeing.
- False stereotypes perpetuate many barriers to reconciliation. Such stereotypes continue to foster systemic policies that prevent the incorporation of Indigenous paradigm and cultural ways to inform our work (e.g. the act of smudge, ceremonies and other oral practices).

### Decolonize:

Create knowledge systems that centre the true, often untold, history that we all share. Then, make efforts to embed this knowledge within your circle of family, friends and workplaces.

## PROTOCOLS & TRADITIONS

Indigenous ways of being were disrupted centuries ago. There was a time within our shared history when all Indigenous cultural protocols were against the law. Today, there are strong efforts being made to incorporate traditional protocols into everyday practice so that Indigenous ways of knowing, in all their diversity, survive and thrive.

- Not all protocols are the same. Protocols vary from Nation to Nation.
- Elders are the knowledge-keepers of true and appropriate territory protocol.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions and resist the urge to assume or judge based on a single story – there is no single experience.

# AS AN ALLY YOU CAN

**01** ENCOURAGE YOUR WORKPLACE TO HIRE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE to be involved in the creation and ownership of initiatives that are about/for them.

**02** 'PASS THE MIC' TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLE at events, meetings, and in making decisions that affect them.

**03** RESPECT CULTURAL PROTOCOLS AND TRADITIONS (e.g. tobacco, smudge). Consider incorporating them in your personal or professional life.

## REMEMBER:

Indigenous people are grandparents, parents, children, & siblings. They are doctors, teachers, social workers, entrepreneurs and artists – they are human beings.

Indigenous people are present, thriving and resilient.

Being an ally is about a way of being and doing.

This means self-reflection on motivations and regularly debriefing with community members.

**04** BE CRITICAL OF ANY MOTIVATIONS

ASK YOURSELF:

- ⌘ Does my interest derive from the fact that the issue is currently “buzzing”?
- ⌘ Does my interest stem from the fact that the issue will meet quotas or increase chances of any funding?
- ⌘ Does my involvement hijack the message and insert my own opinions or values, instead of respecting those of the Indigenous communities?

**05** START LEARNING

Education is an ongoing process. Change will not be easy and while individuals may never become experts on Indigenous challenges and realities, they can work in allyship.

ASK YOURSELF:

- ⌘ What steps can I personally take to amplify marginalized voices that are too often silenced?
- ⌘ How can I use my position & privilege to listen, shift power dynamics and take steps towards action?

# PROTOCOLS AND TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

## TOBACCO

Offering made to an Elder or helper, often with a request or proposal. Tobacco has always been used in ceremony, and will likely be used later for ceremonial purposes, or as offerings to the land or additional knowledge keepers.

## ELDERS

Elders have earned rights and responsibilities. Their knowledge is lived, and that knowledge is shared with permission to pass on to others. Elders are the encyclopedias of Indigenous nations, in all their diversity.

## SMUDGE/WORDS TO CREATOR

Used to open or begin a process, meeting, workshop, event and ceremony. Smudging changes the energy of a space and spiritual words/language are often offered to invite creator into spaces for further guidance into the discussion, work or for the people involved/impacted.

# WITH GRATITUDE

The content and design of the ally toolkit was informed by the wisdom of Elders and members of the Indigenous Network Gathering in Treaty 7 Territory.

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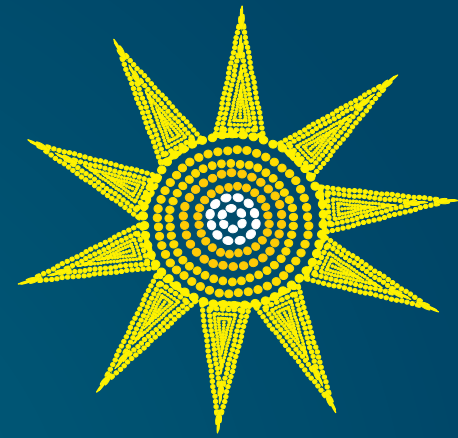
[ReseauMtlnetwork.com](http://ReseauMtlnetwork.com)

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