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A Path Forward:
Addressing Sexual Misconduct Against Indigenous Women in the Canadian Armed Forces

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Native Women's Association of Canada

L'Association des femmes autochtones du Canada

Table of Contents

Content Warning: This document discusses topics related to colonization, historical and intergenerational trauma, systemic discrimination and violence, and sexual misconduct.

Disclaimer: This toolkit is intended to provide general advice or recommendations for survivors of sexual misconduct in the CAF and DND and other members of the CAF/DND. Everyone is responsible for using their own judgement as to how to best address any case of sexual misconduct.

The Native Women's Association of Canada

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) serves as a national Indigenous organization dedicated to advocating for the rights and representing the perspectives of Indigenous women in all of their diversity, regardless of age, gender, disability, etc. (hereafter, the term 'Indigenous women' will refer to Indigenous women in all their diversity), in Canada. NWAC is inclusive of First Nations – on and off reserve, status and non-status, disenfranchised - Inuit, and Métis, and was established with the goal of promoting the well-being of Indigenous individuals within their communities and Canadian society.[1]

Since 1974, NWAC has engaged in advocacy for legislative and policy reforms aimed at promoting equality for Indigenous individuals. Today, NWAC is deeply involved in national and international advocacy, with the aim of addressing various issues including employment, health, violence prevention, justice, environment, and child welfare. Through dedicated efforts in advocacy, policy analysis, and legislative review, NWAC works towards preserving Indigenous culture and advancing the welfare of all Indigenous women, families and communities.[2]

Introduction to the Toolkit

In February 2024, NWAC held a virtual roundtable with Indigenous women of present and former members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and the Department of National Defence Canada (DND) who have experienced sexual assault or other forms of misconduct during their service.[3] At the roundtable, we heard from current and former members of the CAF and/or DND on the need for relevant services and support within the defence community.[4] In particular, we heard about the unique experiences of Indigenous women who are serving in the CAF/DND and/or family members. Some of our key roundtable findings included:

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1   (Native Women's Association of Canada, n.d.)
2   Ibid.
3   (Native Women's Association of Canada, 2024)
4   Ibid.

Participants shared feelings of not belonging to the patriarchal culture of the CAF/DND and felt marginalized due to their culture and gender identities.

- Participants shared that they experienced bullying and harassment, being led to believe that this treatment was considered part of the institution that they needed to accept.
- Indigenous participants experienced discrimination, harassment, and physical assault.
- All participants recounted experiences of sexual harassment and a continuous barrage of unwarranted attention, which adversely affected their wellbeing.
- All participants agreed that the CAF/DND did not have access to suitable reporting mechanisms and support systems.[5]

This toolkit was developed by NWAC for both CAF and DND members. This toolkit represents an integral piece in our ongoing effort to cultivate an environment free from sexual misconduct and violence against Indigenous women in both the CAF and DND, as well as in Canadian society. Designed with insights from Indigenous perspectives, this toolkit offers invaluable guidance and strategies for understanding and addressing sexual misconduct. This toolkit seeks to empower all armed forced members with the knowledge and tools needed to create a culture of trust, empathy, and accountability.

This toolkit is designed to provide foundational knowledge related to Indigenous perspectives and culturally-appropriate and trauma-informed approaches in the workplace to CAF and DND members. In doing so, this toolkit will engage in the following topics:

1. Historical contexts of Indigenous communities in Canada and how colonial policies have contributed to ongoing violence against Indigenous peoples.
2. Definitions of sexual misconduct and its various forms within a military context.
3. Prevention strategies that emphasize intervention and prevention techniques.
4. Legal rights concerning the reporting of sexual misconduct.
5. Supporting victims of sexual assault, including through supporting access to victim support resources.
6. Indigenous cultural practices and the importance of its inclusion in healing and support mechanisms
7. Indigenous-Centered research and data collection processes

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5   Ibid.

Indigenous Communities in Canada

Canada is home to more than 1.8 million individuals who identify as First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis. These groups possess unique histories, languages, cultures, and traditional practices,

First Nations

According to the 2021 Census, there are approximately 1,127,010 First Nations individuals across Canada, this includes status and non-status people.[6] Canada is home to more than 630 First Nations groups, encompassing over 50 distinct nations and languages from Indigenous communities.[7]

Inuit

Inuit, Inuktitut for "the people", are a distinct group of Indigenous Peoples who inhabit the Arctic – residing in Inuit Nunangat (Canada), Kalaalit Nunaat (Greenland), Alaska, and Chukotka (Russia).[8] As per the 2021 Census, there are approximately 69,705 Inuit in Canada,[9] a significant portion of which resides in Inuit Nunangat - "the place where Inuit live."[10] Inuit Nunangat is comprised of 4 regions:

- Inuvialuit (Northwest Territories and Yukon)
- Nunavik (Northen Quebec)
- Nunatsiavut (Labrador)
- Nunavut[11]

Métis

According to the 2021 Census, there are approximately 585,110 Métis in Canada.[12] Métis are people of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry and is often used to denote a specific community of people - which originated in Western Canada and traces back to the Red River Valley.[13] Members of the Métis Nation have a common culture, ancestral language (Michif), history and political tradition.[14]

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6   (Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, 2024)
7   Ibid.
8   (Simon, 2011)
9   Ibid.
10   Ibid.
11   Ibid.
12   Ibid.
13   (Gaudry, 2009)
14   (Chartier, n.d.)

A Brief Overview of Colonialism in Canada

Through colonization, Indigenous women and girls were discriminated against based on both their Indigeneity and gender identity.[15] Historic and ongoing systemic colonial structures, such as the justice system, have allowed for the continued perpetuation of violence experienced by Indigenous women today. Indigenous peoples are overrepresented among victims of violence in Canada. Indigenous women experience this violence disproportionately - nearly "6 in 10 Indigenous women (56%) have experienced physical assault in their lifetime, while almost half (46%) of Indigenous women have experienced sexual assault in their lifetime. In comparison, about one-third of non-Indigenous women have experienced physical (34%) or sexual (33%) assault in their lifetime".[16] Research has shown the link between violent victimization and the colonial policies that have disrupted many Indigenous communities and family structures. Further, these colonial structures have contributed to lasting intergenerational trauma felt by many Indigenous peoples.

Understanding the profound impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples is crucial for training staff to recognize signs of trauma and respond in a supportive and culturally appropriate manner. It is important not only to learn about Canada's colonial history but also to understand how these historical events continue to impact the lives of Indigenous people today. This section will first cover key historical events and then discuss their ongoing effects on Indigenous communities, including social, cultural, and psychological consequences. These historical and contemporary injustices have deeply affected Indigenous peoples and necessitate informed, empathetic approaches to healing and support. This section will provide brief overviews of significant colonial events, but we encourage further exploration through additional readings and resources provided.

European Arrival and the Onset of Colonization in Canada

The history of colonization[17] in Canada began in the late 15th century and has had a devastating impact on Indigenous people. When European settlers arrived, they imposed their own systems of governance, land ownership and culture onto Indigenous communities, often using force. This process led to the marginalization, oppression and erasure of Indigenous cultures, languages, and ways of life. Further, European settlers sought to use the land as a commodity that could be bought, sold and exploited for profit, overlooking Indigenous ways of life and long-term implications. Following the Confederation, the Crown perceived Indigenous peoples as obstacles to land settlement and used treaties to acquire land and natural resources.[18] Most Indigenous communities were forced to sign treaties due to the early impacts of colonization, including poor living conditions, the exposure to new illnesses that were spreading, and the loss of traditional land and foods.[19]

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15   (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019)
16   (Statistics Canada, 2022)
17   Notably, colonization refers to the processes by which Indigenous Peoples were dispossessed of their lands and resources, subjected to external control, and targeted for assimilation and, in some cases, extermination.
18   Ibid.
19   Ibid.

The Indian Act

The Indian Act (The Act) 1876, created by the Government of Canada controlled and assimilated First Nations peoples into Euro-Canadian society. It had a particularly negative impact on Indigenous women, undermining their political power and autonomy. Contrary to Indigenous practices that placed Indigenous women's decision-making at the forefront. The Act also exacerbated gender inequalities and undermined their autonomy and rights within their communities through:

- **Loss of Status and Identity:** Indigenous women lost their status if they married non-Indigenous men, along with the associated rights and benefits.[20]

- **Loss of Rights for Indigenous Women's Children:** Prior to 1985, women who lost their status couldn't pass it to their children.[21]

- **Cultural Disconnection:** Policies enforced by the Act disrupted Indigenous families and communities, leading to a loss of cultural practices.[22]

- **Limited Economic Opportunities:** Indigenous women were denied property rights on reserve land, hindering economic independence.[23] This limited one's ability to pursue economic independence.

Barriers to Leadership Before 1951, women were excluded from political roles, including band council membership.[24]

Though the Act was amended in 1985 to reduce gender discrimination, it still presents challenges related to self-governance, resource management, and cultural suppression. Further amendments to the Indian Act are still required to remove remaining gender-based discrimination in the Act, and this must be done through meaningful engagement with Indigenous peoples.[25]

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20   (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2022)
21   Ibid.
22   (Hanson, n.d.)
23   Ibid.
24   Ibid.
25   Ibid.

Residential Schools

The Indian Residential School system was created in 1831 by the Catholic Church and later adopted by the Government of Canada. Residential Schools were responsible for the forced assimilation of Indigenous children until the last school closed in 1996.[26] During their operation, more than 150,000 Indigenous children were forced to attend Residential Schools, with many never returning home. [27] Children as young as seven were often taken away from their families to distant schools where the government attempted to assimilate, "civilize and Christianise" Indigenous youth. In addition to removal from their language, culture, community, and family, Indigenous children attending Residential Schools often faced sexual and physical abuse, malnutrition, disease and isolation. In 2008, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) sought to address the legacy of the Indian Residential School system.[28] Ultimately, the TRC findings sought to promote healing and reconciliation in Canada, while also raising awareness and educating non-Indigenous Canadian on the atrocities committed at former Residential Schools.[29] In total, the TRC made 94 Calls to Action to address these atrocities.[30]

Sixties Scoop

Between 1951 and 1984, an estimated 20,000 Indigenous infants and children were forcefully removed from their families by state and child welfare authorities and placed with non-Indigenous families.[31] This is often referred to as the "Sixties Scoop." During this time, the federal government empowered social workers and provincial and territorial governments with the authority to remove Indigenous children from their families, communities, and cultures.[32] Today, families continue to search for their relatives in the chance they may reconnect with their

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26   (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation , 2008)
27   Ibid.
28   Ibid.
29   Ibid.
30   Ibid.
31   (The University of British Columbia , n.d.)
32   Ibid.

families. Today, the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the welfare system is a direct impact of the Residential Schools system and the Sixties Scoop.

The Millenium Scoop closely parallels the systematic removal of Indigenous children that occurred during the Sixties Scoop.[33] According to Statistics Canada (2016), Indigenous children comprised over half of foster children under the age of 14, despite making up only eight percent of that cohort nationally.[34] This phenomenon has been referred to by some as the Millennium Scoop.

> To gain further insight into the impacts of the residential school system, Sixties Scoop, and Millennium Scoop, watch the series "The Child Welfare Industry" produced by APTN News, at Series: The Child Welfare Industry - APTN News.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

In Canada, the genocide of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit+ People (MMIWG2S+) is a human rights and national crisis with deep historical roots, intertwined with centuries of colonization, systemic racism and ongoing violence. Settler colonialism has contributed to the continued racialization and sexualization of Indigenous women.[35] Historically, Indigenous women faced sexualization and were subjected to harmful cultural attitudes and stereotypes that still influence many aspects of Canadian society today.[36]

The social and economic marginalization of Indigenous women, such as racism, poverty, and sexism, coupled with inadequate police protection and excessive policing, increase the vulnerability of Indigenous women and girls to violence.[37] Other factors include the persistent harm to Indigenous communities from the removal of children from families, and the overrepresentation of Indigenous women in Canadian prisons, many of whom are survivors of violence and abuse.[38] While there is no centralized data on MMIWG2S+ in Canada, the data we do have points towards the pervasiveness of this crisis:

- NWAC's Safe Passage platform, which tracks community-based data on MMIWG2S+, currently reports 1,477 cases of MMIWG2S+ between 1929 and 2024.[39]
- Between 2009 and 2021, 490 Indigenous women and girls were victims of homicide.[40]

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33   Ibid.
34   (CBC, 2018)
35   (Brant, 2017)
36   Ibid.
37   Ibid.
38   Ibid.
39   (Native Women's Association of Canada, n.d.)
40   (Burczycka & Cotter, 2023)

- Indigenous women and girls are killed at a rate of 4.27 per 100,000 Indigenous women and girls – a rate that is six times higher than non-Indigenous women at 0.73.[41]
- Each year the rate of Indigenous women and girls being killed is higher than non-Indigenous women and girls, men and boys.[42]

EXPLORE MORE

The crisis of MMIWG2S+ is a complex and far-reaching issue in Canada, which cannot be fully addressed within this toolkit. We strongly recommend exploring the following resources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the matter. Additional resources can also be found in Appendix B for further insight.

1. Learn about genocide and its impacts: Acknowledge the Truth
2. Watch this video on: Why Are Indigenous Women Disappearing Across Canada?
3. Review the 231 Calls for Justice: MMIWG Calls for Justice Booklet

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Intergenerational/Multigenerational Trauma

Intergenerational trauma refers to the transfer of historical trauma experienced by Indigenous peoples across several generations.[43] This trauma stems from acts such as forced relocations, land dispossession, and the loss of spiritual practices, language, and culture. The enduring effects of these events can lead to mental health issues like depression, anxiety, PTSD, and substance abuse if not addressed appropriately.[44].

The perpetuation of intergenerational trauma in Indigenous communities is closely linked to ongoing social process stemming from colonization, including poverty, inadequate housing, discrimination, loss of cultural identity and lack of Elder guidance.[45] These conditions contribute to stress and harmful coping mechanism within families and communities. The legacy of Residential Schools, which severed many children from their families and culture, has had severe impacts on emotional well-being and social structures, leading to high rates of suicide and weakened communities. Addressing these challenges requires culturally appropriate strategies to help break the cycle of trauma and promote healing among Indigenous individuals and communities.

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41   Ibid.
42   Ibid.
43   (Nahulu, Roessel, & Sahlu, n.d.)
44   Ibid.
45   Ibid.

Impact of Colonization on Indigenous Lives Today

It is crucial to understand Canada's colonial history regarding Indigenous Peoples and how it continues to manifest in the daily lives of Indigenous individuals across the nation today.

Riel Dupuis-Rossi, a therapist with Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk), Algonquin and Italian heritage, emphasized that the social, relational, mental health and health issues prevalent in Indigenous communities today are not "our" illnesses.[46] These issues did not originate in or from Indigenous communities, the illnesses such as smallpox epidemic that devastated Indigenous populations, and the current social, relational physical and psychological illnesses were imposed on Indigenous people and communities by the settler societies.[47] Elders had noted that before colonization, Indigenous communities had social structures and practices in place to manage behaviours, and issues like substance abuse and domestic violence were not prevalent. Prior to colonization, Indigenous communities did not have to navigate substance abuse, addiction, child sexual abuse or domestic violence. These are the results of genocidal violence.[48]

Unfortunately, mainstream health systems and colonial frameworks often overlook these historical contexts. They tend to frame the pain and struggles of Indigenous individuals as personal failings rather than acknowledging the broader impact of colonization. This misconception not only misdiagnoses Indigenous pain but also perpetuates ongoing colonial violence.[49] Diagnosing Indigenous pain as a personal issue has been normalized, and it is a manifestation of ongoing colonial violence. The process of receiving a mental health diagnosis stays with people, shaping their experiences and perception of themselves, and how others view them.[50] Rather than the diagnosis be acknowledged as a product of colonization, Indigenous individuals are left with internalizing this as a personal deficit. This sort of process is manifested in many forms of interactions that Indigenous people are part of day-to-day.[51]

Acknowledging this trauma, including intergenerational/multigenerational trauma, is vital for developing effective programs and services that address the unique challenges Indigenous individuals face. The legacies of historical violence and cultural destruction, along with forced separation from traditional lands, have all contributed to high rates of suicide and other mental health issues within Indigenous communities.[52] Yet, because these painful histories are often neglected by settler society and mainstream health systems, Indigenous individuals often bear the weight of these lasting effects alone.[53] This ongoing burden is not only felt personally but also resonates throughout Indigenous communities as a shared experience of loss and trauma.[54]

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46   (Dupuis-Rossi, 2021)
47   Ibid.
48   Ibid.
49   Ibid.
50   Ibid.
51   Ibid.
52   Ibid.
53   Ibid.
54   Ibid.

Explaining Sexual Misconduct

The following sections will define sexual misconduct and the available resources and support for all CAF and DND members. While reading, it is crucial to keep in mind how the historical and ongoing policies and trends have influenced the perpetuation of violence against Indigenous women, including incidents of sexual assault. Identifying sexual assault may be difficult for some Indigenous CAF and DND members, especially in the context of colonialism and intergenerational trauma. Addressing sexual misconduct within the CAF may require addressing past traumas experienced by Indigenous communities. Supporting Indigenous CAF members in acknowledging their experiences of sexual assault requires identifying the impacts of colonization and understanding how Indigenous individuals bear the burden of colonial violence.[55]

Acknowledging and naming the role of colonial violence is essential for addressing sexual misconduct against Indigenous CAF members. This process helps restore a sense of agency by exposing the hidden colonial forces that affect self-identity and worth.[56] By doing so, Indigenous members can externalize the burden and hold these forces accountable.[57] This is a crucial first step in decolonizing practices, empowering Indigenous members to recognize when they are in danger or facing unsafe situations.

Defining Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct is defined as an act that is of sexual nature that causes or could cause harm to an individual or others, and that the person causing harm knew or knows that it would cause harm.[58] More specifically, sexual misconduct could include:

- actions or words that devalue others on the basis of their sex, sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression;
- jokes of a sexual nature, sexual remarks, advances of a sexual nature or verbal abuse of a sexual nature in the workplace;
- harassment of a sexual nature, including initiation rites of a sexual nature;
- viewing, accessing, distributing or displaying sexually explicit material in the workplace[59]

In 2022, Statistics Canada released "Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, 2022", in which it was reported approximately 1,960 (3.5%) Regular Force members were sexually assaulted in the military workplace or an environment involving military members in the prior 12 months.[60] This statistic increased by 1.7% in 2016 and 1.6% in 2018. However, sexual assault was higher among women (7.5%) than men (2.8%). Regular Force members who are Indigenous experienced a higher level of sexual assault at 5.1% in comparison to non-Indigenous members who represented 3.4%.[61]

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55   Ibid.
56   Ibid.
57   Ibid.
58   (Department of National Defence, 2021)
59   Ibid.
60   (Cotter & Burczycka, 2023)
61   Ibid.

In 2022, more than four in ten women in Regular Force who are Indigenous experienced sexualized or discriminatory behaviour (42%) in comparison to women who did not identify as Indigenous (34%).[62] It was a similar pattern among Indigenous men compared to non-Indigenous men.[63]

Intersectionality

The CAF is made up of a diverse tapestry of individuals representing several intersecting identities. According to recent CAF census data, these intersecting identities are growing within the CAF, and can be seen with:

- 16.3% of currently serving military members are women.
- Four in five (80.5%) of currently serving members were cisgender men, with one in five (19.1%) being cisgender women.
- Approximately 0.1% of active service members identified as transgender men and transgender women, with 0.2% of military members identifying as non-binary.[64]
- In 2019, approximately 2.8% of the CAF Regular Force and Primary Reserve Force combined self-identified as Indigenous.[65]

> ### REFLECTION
>
> Based on your experience in the CAF and/or DND, how might the intersection of multiple identities (such as race, gender, ability etc.) impact an individual's experience, opportunities, and challenges within the CAF and/or DND? Consider both potential advantages and barriers, and how these intersecting factors might shape their overall experience.
>
> The Culturally Relevant Gender-based Analysis (CRGBA) Starter Kit delves deeper into the details of gender-diversity and intersectionality.

The relationship between sexual misconduct and intersecting identities among members of the CAF are often higher among women, those who are younger, identify as Indigenous, have a disability, or who do not identify as heterosexual.[66] In 2022, it was reported that more than four in ten women in the Regular Force who have a disability (46%), who are not heterosexual (45%), or who are Indigenous (42%) experienced sexualized or discriminatory behaviour.[67] Additionally, within the military context, considerations should be made regarding current power structures and reporting cases of sexual misconduct. For example, CAF members may not report sexual misconduct that occurs in the workplace due to a fear of negative repercussions. This means that CAF members with intersectional identities are more likely to experience oppressive behaviour throughout their careers.[68]

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62   (Cotter & Burczycka, 2023)
63   Ibid.
64   (Statistics Canada, 2022)
65   (National Defence Canada, 2019)
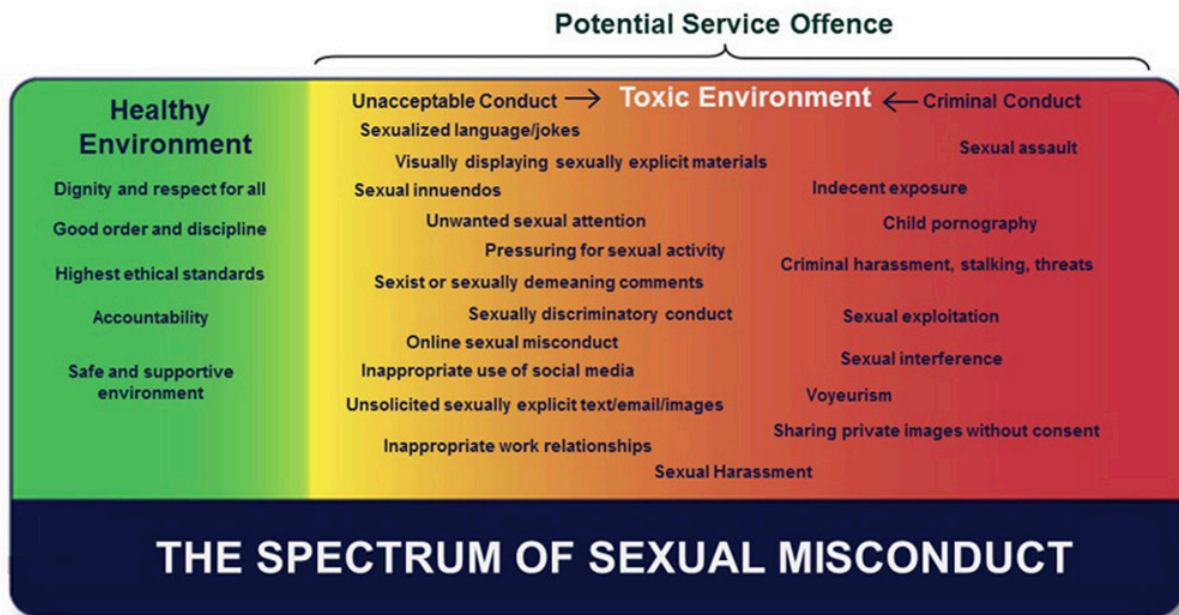66   (Cotter & Burczycka, 2023)
67   Ibid.
68   (Peach & LeBlanc, 2022)

Understanding the distinct experiences of intersectional identities can help inform responses to additional needs for support. For example, historically, Indigenous communities have supported gender fluidity, placing people of various genders and sexualities in important roles within their communities. Many Indigenous communities recognized Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer identities, which fall outside typical gender roles. Recognizing that there are increased risks for individuals who are Indigenous and do not identify as heterosexual in CAF/DND through an intersectional lens, one can better understand the unique aspects of these individuals' identity to respond to instances of misconduct and develop resources that protect them from or prevent future misconduct and abuse within CAF/DND.

The Operation HONOUR Manual

In 2015, the CAF established Operation Honour, to eliminate sexual misconduct in the CAF.[69] Alongside Operation Honour, the CAF released the Operation Honour Manual, which discusses the spectrum of sexual misconduct that encompasses the various attitudes, beliefs and action that foster a toxic work environment.[70] This spectrum includes negative behaviours ranging from unacceptable actions (yellow zone) to Criminal Code violations (red zone). However, actions within the yellow zone could lead to charges under the Code of Service Discipline.[71] Below is the spectrum of sexual misconduct chart provided through the Operation Honour Manual:

Potential Service Offence

Healthy Environment
Dignity and respect for all
Good order and discipline
Highest ethical standards
Accountability
Safe and supportive environment

Unacceptable Conduct → **Toxic Environment** ← Criminal Conduct
Sexualized language/jokes
Visually displaying sexually explicit materials
Sexual innuendos
Unwanted sexual attention
Pressuring for sexual activity
Sexist or sexually demeaning comments
Sexually discriminatory conduct
Online sexual misconduct
Inappropriate use of social media
Unsolicited sexually explicit text/email/images
Inappropriate work relationships
Sexual Harassment

Sexual assault
Indecent exposure
Child pornography
Criminal harassment, stalking, threats
Sexual exploitation
Sexual interference
Voyeurism
Sharing private images without consent

THE SPECTRUM OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

[72] (The Spectrum of Sexual Misconduct table)

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69   (National Defence Canada, 2021)
70   Ibid.
71   Ibid.
72   Ibid.

> In the context of sexual misconduct, consent is defined as a voluntary and continuous agreement to participate in sexual activity, given freely and without any coercion, threats, fear, deceit, or abuse of authority.[73]

Below are examples of what constitutes as sexual harassment. It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list but rather should be used to help identify sexually harassing behaviors:

A. Sexual advances which may or may not be accompanied by threats or explicit or implicit promises;

B. Making rude, sexually degrading or offensive remarks or gestures;

C. Engaging in reprisals for having made a complaint of sexual harassment;

D. Discrediting, ridiculing, or humiliating an individual by spreading malicious gossip or rumours of a sexual nature;

E. Questions, suggestions or remarks about a person's sex life.

F. Sexual or sexually suggestive name calling in private or in front of others; and

G. Belittling a person by making fun of their sex, sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression (as described in Canadian Human Rights Act).

H. Placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment or on any career opportunity including but not limited to training or promotion;

I. Displaying pictures, posters, or sending e-mails that are of a sexual nature; and

J. Unwelcome social invitations, with sexual overtones or flirting, especially when there is a rank or power differential between the individuals involved.**[74]**

Prevention Strategies

Identifying Explicit and Implicit Biases

While it is important to practice prevention strategies, it is important to address the possible explicit and implicit biases within non-Indigenous individuals that may be causing the violence against Indigenous CAF/DND members. Addressing explicit and implicit biases and the process of self-assessment is essential in confronting the systemic violence that Indigenous CAF/DND members experience. Canadians are urged to reflect on their own histories and connections to colonization. Canada has perpetuated a different standard of tolerance for violence against Indigenous women, and why is that? It's important for settlers to "unsettle" their understanding of history and their role in perpetuating colonial violence.[75] This involves recognizing their complicity in maintaining oppressive systems and acknowledging the harm that has been done to Indigenous peoples. This self-reflection can lead to a painful encounter with shame, particularly

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73   Ibid.
74   Ibid.
75   (Koelwyn, 2018)

settler shame, which, rather than pushing individuals toward avoidance, can be a powerful tool for initiating change.[76] This process of reconciling with shame is necessary to move forward in a way that acknowledges and corrects the impact of colonial violence.[77]

It is critical for CAF/DND to create an environment that rather than shying away from discomfort, leaders can use these encounters with shame to foster growth and responsibility. As shame can be a productive force when used in a restorative manner—one that encourages reintegration, dialogue, and repair, rather than stigmatization.[78] For settlers, this process involves understanding their role in colonialism, acknowledging the harm done, and committing to actions that support reconciliation. This shift from avoidance to ethical responsibility is crucial in addressing the violence against Indigenous CAF/DND members and advancing toward genuine reconciliation.[79] By integrating such approaches into CAF/DND, members can work towards unsettling dominant narratives and embracing a more responsible and caring relationship with Indigenous communities.[80] Reconceiving reconciliation as a journey of confronting and working through shame can help heal the historical wounds caused by colonial violence and contribute to the broader goal of ending violence against Indigenous members of the CAF.[81]

Applying Indigenous pedagogy to address both explicit and implicit biases involves utilizing conversational methods, such as facilitated self-reflection, storytelling, land-based activities, and participation in ceremonies, all of which align with Indigenous ways of knowing.[82] These approaches emphasize the importance of building meaningful relationships, which are foundational to connection and understanding. These methods aim to build relationships and require commitment from all participants to share within a collective tradition.[83]

The following exercise is centred on Indigenous pedagogy and relationship-building while acknowledging the diversity of worldviews. Group activities that emphasize dialogue and relationship-building are essential for fostering genuine understanding and growth amongst CAF/DND members.

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76   Ibid.
77   Ibid.
78   Ibid.
79   Ibid.
80   Ibid.
81   Ibid.
82   Ibid.
83   Ibid.

ACTIVITY: CHALLENGING BIAS AND BUILDING ALLYSHIP

1. Scenario Distribution – Divide participants into small groups of 3-5 people. Provide each group with one scenario related to implicit biases against Indigenous CAF members.
2. Sample Scenarios
   a. During a team meeting, a member of the unit makes a joke about Indigenous people that makes an Indigenous member uncomfortable.
      Discussion Points: How might implicit bias be affecting the team's perception? What could be done to change this? How would you, as a team member, address this bias?
   b. An Indigenous CAF member confides in a colleague about experiencing sexual harassment but fears their report won't be taken seriously because of stereotypes about Indigenous peoples.
      Discussion Points: How does this affect the Indigenous member and the overall team dynamics? What can the group do to create a more inclusive environment and prevent such comments in the future?
   c. An Indigenous member of the CAF, has been consistently overlooked for leadership opportunities. During a debrief, a non-Indigenous peer in private makes the following comment, "I just don't think this member has the disciple needed for leadership – Indigenous members tend to focus more on their cultural practices than the military structure."
      Discussion Points: What assumption or implicit biases are reflected in the statement? How should the chain of command respond to foster an inclusive and respectful environment?
3. Group Sharing and Reflection
   a. Ask each group to present their scenario and the action steps they discussed.
   b. As each group shares, facilitate a brief discussion to highlight common themes across all groups, such as:
      i. The importance of allyship and being an active bystander.
      ii. The need to challenge stereotypes and assumptions.
      iii. Strategies for creating a safer and more inclusive environment for Indigenous CAF members.

Bystander Intervention Strategies

Bystander Intervention paired with the [Six Steps to Bystander Intervention](#) [84] is another effective violence prevention strategy.

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84   Ibid.

Bystander Intervention Strategies are an effective way for all CAF and DND members to intervene in or prevent sexual misconduct. Bystander intervention is a collective first line of defence to stop any acts of sexual misconduct.[85] Intervening at the appropriate time, often as early as possible, is a shared responsibility that helps keep the work environment healthy and respectful.[86] It is not just the right thing to do; it is what we all are expected to do. By intervening, we are all working towards a culture of respect and dignity for all.

The five bystander interventions known as the 5D's include **distract**, be **direct, delegate, delay** and **non-verbal disapproval.**[87] The 5D's can be used independently but combining them is more effective. However, it is important to use your own discretion when choosing an intervention. The 5D's strategies are:

Distract	**Shift attention away** from the affected person. Approach either the perpetrator or the person affected with a harmless question or comment that interrupts the current situation and alters its tone.88
Be Direct	**Confront the behaviour directly.** This can involve directly telling the perpetrator that their actions are unacceptable, or it can be less obvious by expressing concern about the negative effects of their behavior. It might feel uncomfortable, but it can be the **most effective** way to stop unacceptable behavior.[89]
Delegate	**Seek assistance.** Taking an action is vital, even if you recognize that you may not have the skills or ability to handle the situation alone. This could involve brainstorming with other bystanders on next steps, contacting security or the police, or seeking guidance from a leader like your supervisor or unit harassment advisor, RSM (Regimental Sergeant Major) or CO (Commanding Officer).[90]
Delay	Wait for the situation to calm down, then approach the affected person to **offer support and check on their well-being.** If possible, have a private conversation with the perpetrator after the incident. Provide calm feedback on the potential consequences of their behavior.[91]
Non-verbal Disapproval	Refrain from participating when derogatory, degrading, abusive, or violent behaviors are displayed. **Use non-verbal cues to indicate disapproval** and make it clear that such behavior is noticed and not supported.[92]

85   Ibid.
86   Ibid.
87   Ibid.
88   Ibid.
89   Ibid.
90   Ibid.
91   Ibid.
92   Ibid.

ACTIVITY: APPLYING BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

1. **Scenario** - During a routine training exercise, you witness a fellow service member being subjected to inappropriate and unwanted sexual comments from others in the unit.
2. **Apply the Strategies** - Briefly write down how you would use each of the five bystander intervention strategies in this military context.
3. **Reflect** - After considering each strategy, write a short reflection on which strategies you feel most comfortable using in this scenario and any potential challenges you might face in the military environment.

For more training and educational materials on sexual misconduct visit the National Defence resources.

Indigenous Healing Practices

Traditional healing and wellness encompass health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs rooted in Indigenous concepts of healing and wellbeing. These methods usually involve ceremonies, natural medicines derived from plants, animals or minerals, energetic therapies, and physical or hands-on techniques. Studies have shown incorporating traditional healing and wellness into health services will improve the health and wellness of Indigenous people. Traditional and holistic wellness will lead to better long-term results for individuals, families, communities and nations.

Elder Involvement

In Indigenous communities, Elders hold a significant and respected role as knowledge keepers, teachers, healers, and advisors. They are recognized by their communities for their life experiences, wisdom, and understanding of Indigenous traditions, enabling them to offer guidance and teachings.[93] According to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, an Elder is described as someone who is considered exceptionally wise in the ways of their culture and the teachings of the Great Spirit.[94] They are recognized for their wisdom, stability, humor, and ability to know what is appropriate in a particular situation. The community looks to them for guidance and sound judgment.[95] They are caring and known to share their knowledge and experience with others in the community.

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93   (Council on Aboriginal Initatives, 2011)
94   Ibid.
95   Ibid.

CAF/DND members can request Elders support to perform various roles such as:

→ Ceremony conductor
→ Opening/closing events
→ Lead classes and workshops
→ Participate in research and committees
→ Take part and lead in Sharing Circles
→ Provide teaching, healing, and guidance
→ Share and teach and perform traditional ceremonies
→ Teach, demonstrate, and conduct traditional art and other practices[96]

Indigenous Approaches to Healing

Contrary to the practice of Western medicine, which is centered around the physical and mental diagnosis of disease and issues, Indigenous approaches are centered around a journey that is equal parts physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. One such example is the Medicine Wheel, which has been used for generations among various First Nation and Métis communities for health and healing practices.

The Medicine Wheel, which is divided into four equal parts, is not a linear process but rather a circular process moving clockwise with no start or finish. Although each Indigenous community may have a different interpretation of the medicine wheel, each direction is typically represented by the same colors (black, red, yellow, and white) and is taught with the four directions in mind.[97][98] The four directions can also represent:

• Cardinal directions: North, South, East and West
• Stages of life: birth, youth, adult (or elder), and death
• Seasons of the year: winter, spring, summer, and fall
• Aspects of life: spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical
• Elements of nature: fire (or sun), air, water, and earth
• Animals: Eagle, Bear, Wolf, Buffalo and many others
• Ceremonial plants: tobacco, sweet grass, sage, and cedar[99]
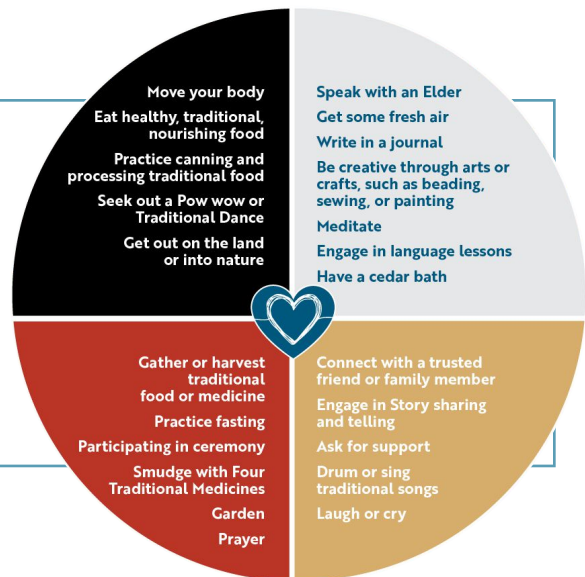
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96   Ibid.
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98   (Native Voices - Native People's Concepts of Health and Illness , n.d.)
99   Ibid.

The Self-Care Medicine Wheel

Members are encouraged to utilize the Self-Care Medicine Wheel. This resource aims to provide support during challenging circumstances or when seeking to engage in regular self-care.

Move your body
Eat healthy, traditional, nourishing food
Practice canning and processing traditional food
Seek out a Pow wow or Traditional Dance
Get out on the land or into nature

Speak with an Elder
Get some fresh air
Write in a journal
Be creative through arts or crafts, such as beading, sewing, or painting
Meditate
Engage in language lessons
Have a cedar bath

Gather or harvest traditional food or medicine
Practice fasting
Participating in ceremony
Smudge with Four Traditional Medicines
Garden
Prayer

Connect with a trusted friend or family member
Engage in Story sharing and telling
Ask for support
Drum or sing traditional songs
Laugh or cry

Cultural or ceremonial practices grounded in Indigenous knowledge, cultures, and traditions can also be healing. Like the Medicine Wheel, there are several variations and interpretations of such practices that vary between different Indigenous cultures and communities. Some common practices include:

1. Healing Circles
   Healing circles are group meetings that provide a safe space for individuals to speak one at a time as they passed around a symbolic object. The healing circle is held to help with pain and heal physical and emotional wounds.[100]

2. Sweat Lodge
   The sweat lodge is used in spiritual healing and cleansing and is often led by Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Healers.[101] Sweat lodges are dome-shaped structures draped with animal skin and are kept warm by heating a stone in a fire and pouring water on the hot stone to create steam.[102]

3. Smudging
   Smudging is usually led by an Elder and performed by burning sage or tobacco in a shell, smudge stick or ball to create smoke which is said to have healing powers and carry the prayers of the people to the Creator.[103] The smoke is then wafted over the person being smudged, place or room.[104]

Offering Indigenous CAF/DND members, the opportunity to engage in Indigenous cultural and ceremonial practices, such as healing circles, sweat lodges, and smudging, can greatly enhance their well-being, healing, and resilience. These practices, rooted in Indigenous traditions, provide unique approaches to addressing physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, complementing the conventional support systems offered by the CAF and DND.

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100 (Aboriginal Healing Practices of Ancient Canada, n.d.)
101 (Gadacz, 2017)
102 (Aboriginal Healing Practices of Ancient Canada, n.d.)
103 (Robinson, 2018)
104 (Aboriginal Healing Practices of Ancient Canada, n.d.)

Safe Passage – an Initiative of NWAC

Cultural healing practices are offered across the nation provide vital support and traditional practices, and through NWAC's Safe Passage website members can find culturally-relevant support on the Community Resource Map

Additionally, NWAC encourages all members to use the Unsafe Experience Submission Form to report any unsafe or concerning experiences you encounter, if you feel comfortable and safe doing so. This contribution will support the collection of data necessary for NWAC's work on unsafe and MMIWG2S+ experiences occurring nationwide. This, in turn, will assist NWAC in developing refined policies, programs, and services to address unsafe experiences faced by Indigenous women.

Data Collection and Governance

NWAC encourages CAF/DND to leverage the following section to create safe environments for Indigenous colleagues when conducting research and data collection. This can be achieved by adopting Indigenous approaches to data collection and governance. Indigenous data collection is crucial to creating specialized programs and services that address the unique needs of Indigenous peoples, responding to gaps left by current Western data collection frameworks. This lack of nuanced data, broken down by factors such as gender, age, distinction, etc., limits the ability to understand and respond to the diverse experiences of Indigenous people, leading to a gap in support and representation. By applying culturally-relevant and trauma-informed methodologies, we can develop programs and services that genuinely address the needs of Indigenous communities within CAF/DND.

Indigenous Approaches to Data

Indigenous approaches to data are deeply rooted in the common history and shared experiences of Indigenous peoples, particularly in the context of colonization. As colonization dismantled Indigenous governance systems, knowledge, and ways of living, it also imposed a false narrative about the inferiority of Indigenous people, framing their knowledge as primitive.[105] This process of marginalization is known as epistemic racism, which refers to the belief that certain ways of knowing, thinking, and understanding the world are superior to others.[106] Specifically, this concept highlights how the knowledge systems of colonizing societies, often Western in origin, are seen as more "superior" or "legitimate" than those of Indigenous peoples. Epistemic racism perpetuates the idea that Indigenous knowledge is not valid or worthy of recognition.

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105   (Self-Governing Indigenous Governments Data Steering Committee, 2023)
106   Ibid.

Over time, Indigenous knowledge systems have been taken away and claimed by non-Indigenous peoples, who have used this knowledge to control Indigenous peoples through policies and legislation aimed at gaining and maintaining control over their lands and resources.[107] Despite this history of appropriation and marginalization, Indigenous peoples have continuously fought against this narrative by advocating for their rights - leading to the development of initiatives such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).[108] These efforts aim to restore control over Indigenous knowledge and data, asserting the need for Indigenous peoples to manage and govern their own information. The following are key truths about Indigenous approach to data:

- Indigenous data sovereignty is critical to Indigenous approaches to data governance. This encompasses the ownership of information and intellectual property related to their unique identities and cultures, including language, traditions, worldviews, history, and practices.

- Indigenous knowledge systems are broad and sophisticated, incorporating qualitative, oral, empirical, and scientific knowledge. This wealth of knowledge has significantly contributed to advancements in fields like medicine and environmental management, though it has often gone uncredited or been misattributed to non-Indigenous peoples.

- Indigenous knowledge systems are also dynamic and evolving, blending ancestral traditions with new methods and technologies. These systems are never fixed or complete; they grow continuously, incorporating diverse and evolving methods, viewpoints, and approaches.

- Furthermore, history has shown that using external data systems has not been effective for Indigenous peoples. When Indigenous communities lead and participate in managing their own data, it ensures that the data remains relevant, aligns with their worldview, and ultimately benefits future generations.[109]

Indigenous Worldview in Data Collection

Worldview is important in data collection, as worldviews are our ways of knowing, being and doing. It is how people, both individually and collectively, perceive, comprehend, and interpret their surroundings and position themselves within that context.[110] It shapes our values and belief systems and creates the perspectives through which we view everything. Worldviews are what guide the approaches to data, how we gather data, the methods used, the values and beliefs used to analyze the data and how it is then reported and managed.[111] Yet, these core belief systems are often unconscious and tend to emerge only when confronted with direct questions, challenges, or opposing worldviews.[112] This is why much of the data gathered about Indigenous peoples has not benefited them as it was collected and utilized to support a different worldview.[113]

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107   (Self-Governing Indigenous Governments Data Steering Committee, 2023)
108   Ibid.
109   Ibid.
110   Ibid.
111   Ibid.
112   (Self-Governing Indigenous Governments Data Steering Committee, 2023)
113   Ibid.

There is no single Indigenous worldview, so engaging in distinctions-based approaches is essential. The experiences of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people are distinct and, therefore, may have different approaches to data and research. The First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) has developed a set of principles known as OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) used when researching First Nations.[114] Similarly, there are principles of research that must be followed when gathering data from Inuit and Métis individuals and communities.

The First Nations Principles of Research

The First Nations Principle of Ownership, Control, Access, Possession (OCAP) as outlined by the First Nations Information Governance Centre, ensures that First Nations have control over the data collection process and have ownership and authority over how the information is utilized.[115] The OCAP principle can be understood through the following:

Ownership: Indigenous communities have ownership of their information, similar to how individuals own their personal data.

Control: Indigenous communities and Nations have the right to control research data and manage it at all stages of the research process.

Access: Indigenous communities and Nations must be able to access data related to them and have the right to make or participate in decisions regarding access to that data.

Possession: The physical control of data should reside with the First Nation or an Indigenous-controlled steward, or alternatively with a third-party data steward chosen by the Indigenous community or Nation, ensuring that ownership, control, and access principles are upheld.[116]

National Inuit Strategy on Research

Developed by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the National Inuit Strategy on Research outlines the priorities and approaches for conducting research that reflects Inuit values and perspectives. It emphasizes the importance of Inuit leadership in research, and data collection that is beneficial to Inuit communities, respects their culture and ensures the need for Inuit to have control over research and data.[117] The National Inuit Strategy on Research outlines key priority areas and objectives to advance research in Inuit communities:

1. **Advance Inuit Governance in Research:** This area focuses on enhancing Inuit self-determination in research, including increasing Inuit representation in research governance, reforming related policies, and ensuring Inuit control over research governance.

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114   Ibid.
115   (University of Calgary, n.d.)
116   Ibid.
117   (University of Calgary, n.d.)

2. **Enhance the Ethical Conduct of Research:** This priority seeks to improve ethical research practices in Inuit communities, supporting Inuit-led ethics review processes and creating Inuit-specific guidelines.

3. **Align Funding with Inuit Research Priorities:** This area emphasizes the need to align research funding with Inuit priorities, advancing Inuit self-determination in data collection, investing in Inuit-led data technology, and ensuring Inuit data ownership.

4. **Ensure Inuit Access, Ownership, and Control over Data and Information:** This priority stresses the importance of Inuit control over data, with objectives to build capacity in Inuit regions, establish an Inuit Nunangat university, and improve research infrastructure.

5. **Build Capacity in Inuit Nunangat Research:** This area focuses on strengthening research capacity in Inuit Nunangat, with objectives to expand funding criteria to recognize Inuit methodologies, invest in broadband access, improve infrastructure, and develop Inuit-specific training programs.[118]

Principles of Ethical Métis Research

The [Principles of Ethical Métis Research](#) emphasize the importance of Métis self-determination, cultural respect, and active involvement in all stages of research and data collection, ensuring that research is conducted with transparency, consent, and accountability, prioritizing the benefits and rights of Métis communities.[119] These principles should be viewed as a starting point for ethical research and data collection in Métis communities, not as rigid rules.[120]

- **Reciprocal Relationships:** Researchers should develop equal partnerships with the Métis community, engage with community members, and ensure that responsibilities and benefits are shared.

- **Respect:** Researchers should show respect for individual and collective perspectives, community practices and protocols, confidentiality, autonomy, identity, and gender diversity.

- **Safe and Inclusive Environments:** Research must be inclusive of all age groups, genders, sexual identities, and various understandings of Aboriginality, and should maintain inclusivity throughout the research process.

- **Diversity:** Researchers should acknowledge and account for the diversity within Métis communities, including differences in beliefs, values, worldviews, and geographic locations.

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118   Ibid.
119   Ibid.
120   Ibid.

- **Research Should Have Outcomes:** Ethical research should lead to outcomes that are relevant, accurate, beneficial, responsible, and recognize the contributions of participants and community partners.
- **Métis** Context: Researchers should possess a deep understanding of Métis history, values, knowledge, and context, involving Métis experts and addressing the complexities of Métis worldviews and cultural perspectives.[121]

The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance

The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance are a set of guidelines aimed at ensuring that data related to Indigenous peoples is collected, managed, and used in ways that are respectful, beneficial, and aligned with Indigenous values, emphasizing its role in supporting Indigenous self-determination. "CARE" stands for:[122]

- **Collective Benefit:** Indigenous Peoples should derive benefits from the data, and the research should align with the community's needs and objectives.
- **Authority to Control:** Indigenous Peoples have the right to make decisions regarding data governance and their representation in the data. Indigenous communities must have access to their own data.
- **Responsibility:** Researchers are accountable to Indigenous communities and must show how their use of Indigenous data supports the well-being and self-determination of those communities. Evidence of benefits must be shared, and resources should be rooted in Indigenous knowledge and perspectives.
- **Ethics:** Indigenous rights and wellbeing should be a priority throughout every phase of the data lifecycle. Risk assessments must be evaluated through an Indigenous lens.[123]

Best Practices for Indigenous Research Methodology:

When collecting data from Indigenous CAF and DND members, it is essential to follow Indigenous Research Methodology. This approach is described as "research by and for Indigenous Peoples, using techniques and methods drawn from their traditions and knowledge".[124] It emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting Indigenous cultures, histories, and worldviews. Key components include:

- Acknowledging colonial history and Indigenous Peoples
- Challenging colonial narratives
- Revitalization of Indigenous knowledge and ways of life
- Insider/Outsider research
- Avoiding the exploitation of research

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121   (University of Calgary, n.d.)
122   Ibid.
123   Ibid.
124   (Loyer, 2024)

- Supporting Indigenous self-determination
- Addressing power imbalances in conventional research methods[125]

Indigenous Research Methods:

When engaging with Indigenous communities, it is important to incorporate Indigenous research methods. These methods should be applied with care, ensuring that both an Elder and an external Facilitator are present to create a safe and trauma-informed environment for Indigenous CAF/DND members. These methods include:

- Storytelling
- Personal reflection
- Visiting
- Sharing Circles
- Ceremony (Formal and informal)
- Art creation
- Dance[126]

Indigenous-Centered Research:

Indigenous-Centered Research prioritizes the perspectives, knowledge, and methodologies of Indigenous peoples. This approach seeks to decolonize traditional research practices, which often marginalize or exploit Indigenous communities.[127] It emphasizes the values, priorities, and ways of knowing inherent in Indigenous cultures and worldviews.[128] Key characteristics of Indigenous-centered research include:

- Community-led
- Incorporates Indigenous World Views
- Purposeful
- Personal
- Based on relationships
- Pushes back against colonial boundaries
- Focused on resiliency and resistance
- Raises up Indigenous voices and peoples[129]

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125   Ibid.
126   Ibid.
127   Ibid.
128   Ibid.
129   (Loyer, 2024)

Guidelines for Indigenous Research

The University of Alberta has developed a set of guidelines to ensure the proper collection of Indigenous data and research. These guidelines help researchers approach Indigenous research with respect, responsibility, and awareness.[130] The following steps should be considered:

1. Situate yourself in your work and the research
   - Where are you from?
   - Who are you accountable to?
   - What are your biases?
2. Follow Cultural Protocols
   - This will ensure that the research is done in a respectful and responsible way, while following community traditions, governance structures, and guidelines.
3. Engage Collaboratively
   - The goal is to research with Indigenous peoples
   - Questions to ask are;
      - Who are we researching for?
      - How will the community benefit from this research/project?
      - What are your current relationships with the community?
      - How transparent is your research to the community?
      - At what points in your research are you connecting with the community?
4. Consent and Ownership
   - Do not assume anything is in the public domain
   - Who is claiming "ownership" of any research data and research materials?
   - Consent must be given by the community before any research material is published
   - Were Cultural Protocols followed?
5. Compensation
   - Collaboration and consultation take time and effort, it can also take emotional labour. Everyone deserves to be compensated for their time and energy.[131]

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130   Ibid.
131   (Loyer, 2024)

Incorporating Indigenous Research Methodology is essential for conducting ethical research and responsible data collection with Indigenous communities. Researchers empower Indigenous individuals and support their self-determination by prioritizing decolonization, cultural respect, and collaboration. Using Indigenous-centered methods like storytelling, sharing circles, and ceremonies ensures that Indigenous voices and knowledge are respected. Ultimately, centering Indigenous perspectives in both research and data collection helps challenge colonial legacies, improve data collection, and foster stronger, more equitable relationships with Indigenous communities that enhance the programs and services that impact them.

Conclusion

This training toolkit aims to equip CAF and DND members with a comprehensive understanding of sexual misconduct as it relates to Indigenous communities. By exploring the historical context and acknowledging the impact of colonial policies, we set the stage for recognizing and addressing the ongoing violence experienced by Indigenous women. Upon completing this training toolkit, we encourage you to reflect on what you have learned through responding to the reflection questions provided below.

Reflection Questions

1. **Personal Growth:** How has this training changed your understanding of the challenges faced by Indigenous members and survivors of sexual misconduct?

2. **Action Plan:** What specific actions will you take to apply the knowledge gained from this training in your daily interactions and responsibilities within the CAF?

3. **Culturally-Relevant:** How will you ensure that your approach to supporting Indigenous members is both culturally-relevant and effective?

4. **Building Trust:** How can you ensure that your actions and responses contribute to a safe and trustworthy environment for Indigenous members?

5. **Supporting Survivors:** How can you ensure that Indigenous survivors of sexual misconduct are aware of, supported and have access to appropriate support services within the CAF?

6. **Effective Communication:** How can you effectively communicate with Indigenous survivors of sexual misconduct, considering their unique experiences and possible mistrust of institutional systems?

7. **Integrating Indigenous Healing Practices:** What steps can you take to educate yourself and your team about Indigenous healing practices and their role in recovery and support?

8. **Biases and Challenges:** What biases or assumptions might you need to address in yourself to better support Indigenous members who are survivors of sexual misconduct?

9. **Knowing Your Rights:** Reflect on how you would support a colleague who is considering reporting an incident of sexual misconduct, ensuring they are aware of their legal rights.

10. **Ongoing Learning:** What additional resources or training might you seek to further your understanding and capability in supporting Indigenous colleagues and addressing sexual misconduct in the CAF?

Finally, we encourage members to further their understanding by accessing the link below to assess their knowledge of Indigenous peoples through the complimentary courses offered by University of Alberta – Indigenous Canada.

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APPENDIX A

1. Legal rights and resources

This section provides information to CAF and DND employees, including officers, about sexual misconduct. It details how to report incidents and lists the support services available to help maintain a safe and respectful environment in the CAF/DND.

If you're unsure whether the incident qualifies as sexual misconduct, reach out to the Sexual Misconduct Response Centre (SMRC) to have a confidential conversation with a counselor.

Resource	Link	Use
Reporting	Sexual Misconduct Response	For all CAF members
Roles and Responsibilities	Sexual Misconduct Response	Commanding Officers & other Members of the Chain of Command

It is important to note that in QR&O article 19.15 Prohibition of Reprisals, no member of the CAF can retaliate against an individual who has reported sexual misconduct in good faith or has cooperated in an investigation related to such a report. If a report of retaliation or any other form of threatening, intimidating, ostracizing, or discriminatory behaviour in response to a report of sexual misconduct is made, the commanding officer is required to investigate. Any CAF member engaged in such behaviour may face administrative or disciplinary consequences, or both.

2. Support Services for Survivors

The Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre (SMSRC) provides support to those impacted by sexual misconduct of any kind. The SMSRC provides support to those:

- currently serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)
- former members of the CAF
- Department of National Defence (DND) public service employees
- former DND public service employees
- Cadets aged 16 and older
- Junior Canadian Rangers aged 16 and older
- family members of the above aged 16 and older
- members of the Defence community and caregivers who support those affected

Resource	Link	Use

Get Support Services
  - Initial Support
  - Reporting sexual misconduct
  - Continued support
  - Guidance for leaders
	SMSRC	All CAF and DND members

Get Support Services
  - Marital and family
  - Work related harassment
  - Personal and emotional
  - Prescription drug, alcohol
	Member and Family Assistance Services	All CAF members and their families

CF Member Assistance Program - Mental health support	Phone at 1-800-268-7708 (TTY: 1-800-567-5803 for person who are deaf or hard of hearing)	All CAF members and their families

Important to Note: You can contact an SMSRC counselor at anytime, day or night, toll-free at 1-844-750-1648 for **confidential support**, information about available options, advice on supporting others, and referrals to care and service organizations. The counsellors and coordinators are public service employees for DND and are not bound to report to the CAF.

If these resources are not suitable for your unique situation please refer to the Government of Canada – Get Help on Sexual Misconduct for additional resources.